



COMMISSION FOR ASSISTANCE TO A FREE CUBA

**REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT
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HASTENING CHANGE IN CUBA: TRANSITION, NOT SUCCESSION

Since the publication of the 2004 Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba (CAFC) report, there have been important changes both on and off the island that the Commission has weighed in making this new set of recommendations. Today, we see in Cuba a more active civil society, one energized by a growing sense of what is possible. At the same time, there are clear signs the regime is using money provided by the Chavez government in Venezuela to reactivate its networks in the hemisphere to subvert democratic governments. The Castro regime's international meddling is done at the expense of the needs of the Cuban people. There is a growing sense of frustration among ordinary Cubans with a dictatorship that asks them to sacrifice, but expends considerable resources in the far flung reaches of the hemisphere and beyond.

Cubans continue to be imprisoned for activities that Americans take for granted each and every day: reading and viewing what they wish; accessing information from the outside world, including the Internet; meeting in their homes to discuss the future of their country; running a lending library; or conducting petition drives. Despite the savage campaign against them by the regime, the Cuban people are losing their fear and continue to risk life, limb, livelihood, and imprisonment in search of a better future for their families and their nation.

The Commission's recommendations to hasten democratic change in Cuba reflect recognition of the leadership and bravery of the Cuban people. They also reflect the Commission's view that the United States and other friends of democracy should acknowledge and honor the courage of Cuban democracy activists by supporting their efforts to recapture their sovereignty for their fellow Cubans.

Yet at the same time that we see hope and growth in Cuban civil society, Fidel Castro and his inner circle have begun a gradual but intrinsically unstable process of succession. The regime is unquestionably attempting to insulate itself from the consequences of Fidel Castro's incapacitation, death, or ouster. The regime continues to harden its edges

and is feverishly working to forestall any opportunity for a genuine democratic transition on the island.

The current regime in Havana is working with like-minded governments, particularly Venezuela, to build a network of political and financial support designed to forestall any external pressure to change. This state of affairs highlights the urgency of working today to ensure that the Cuban transition is genuine and that the Castro regime's succession strategy does not succeed.

It is against this back-drop that the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba again assembles and looks at the question of how to help the Cuban people hasten and ensure a genuine democratic transition on the island. This is a time for bold, decisive action and clarity of message.

Recommendations to hasten the end of the Castro dictatorship include: measures to empower the Cuban people to prepare for change by strengthening support to civil society; breaking the regime's information blockade; a diplomatic strategy to undermine the regime's succession strategy by supporting the Cuban people's right to determine their future; and measures to deny revenue to the Castro regime that is used to strengthen its repressive security apparatus and to bolster the regime against pressure for change.

HELPING CUBANS RESPOND TO CRITICAL HUMANITARIAN AND SOCIAL NEEDS

The Castro regime is failing to address even the most basic humanitarian needs of the Cuban people. Chronic malnutrition, polluted drinking water, and untreated chronic diseases continue to affect a significant percentage of the Cuban people. Conditions will not improve as long as Fidel Castro remains in power.

With the end of the Castro regime, however, the Cuban Transition Government will face daunting challenges as it begins to address the basic human needs of the Cuban people. The Cuban people will expect rapid and effective action by this new government.

The U.S. Government stands ready to help the Cuban Transition Government begin to address the immediate water, sanitation, health, food, shelter and education needs of the Cuban people. Helping the Cuban Transition Government meet these basic needs is essential to a rapid and successful transition period, the establishment of the new government's credibility, and timely democratic elections.

By providing assistance in these areas, the U.S. Government can help the Cuban Transition Government guarantee political freedom, economic opportunity, and hold free and fair multiparty elections.

HELPING CUBANS GET TO FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS

Cubans have the right to see their sovereign will expressed through free and fair, multiparty elections. The transition to an open environment, free of intimidation and other impediments, and sufficiently in advance of elections to meet international standards, implies that a Cuban Transition Government will need certain types of assistance from the international community. The United States should be prepared to respond. U.S. preparations should be structured to provide assistance bilaterally but should also focus on building an international consensus for assistance focused around supporting the process of rebuilding democracy in Cuba.

A Cuban Transition Government cannot be expected to rectify, in a few months, the consequences of decades of dictatorship. Accordingly, the U.S. should encourage the Cuban Transition Government to focus on those steps that will allow the election of a truly democratic, representative government that can take on that historic challenge.

The principal purpose of any U.S. assistance should be to help Cubans create a stable, open environment where free and fair elections can take place. U.S. assistance should be offered to help Cubans overcome obstacles to democratic elections and move rapidly to create an environment conducive to free and fair multiparty elections.

If requested by a new Cuban government, U.S. assistance could be made available to help in the release of political prisoners; eliminating obstacles to free speech, a free press, and freedom of association; preparing for competitive multi-party elections; in establishing a free and fair election

administration; and in preparing the Cuban military forces to adjust to an appropriate role in a democracy.

HELPING CUBANS CREATE MARKET-BASED ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

The economic potential of the Cuban people has for too long been suppressed, held hostage to a failed economic model that sustains the regime but does nothing to bring prosperity to the people of Cuba. A Cuban Transition Government will face significant pressure to take quick action to increase economic opportunities and give the Cuban people hope for an economic stake in the new system. Quick and visible economic progress will give important legitimacy to the Cuban Transition Government.

A Cuban Transition Government will face critical issues ranging from stabilizing the Cuban macroeconomic condition to creating a microeconomic framework that will allow private enterprise to grow. It will confront a long history of poor labor relations and demands to respect the rights of workers to form unions and bargain collectively. It will need to ensure that its critical infrastructure is not only adequately functioning, but on the road to recovery and keeping pace with the demands of a growing, free economy.

In addition, other actors, including Cubans abroad, the international community, and the U.S. Government, will have an important role to play in responding to requests from the Cuban Transition Government for support and advice. We need to prepare now to maximize the benefit each of these actors can bring to the table at a key moment in Cuban history.

Should a Cuban Transition Government request United States assistance in its economic transition, the U.S. Government can provide help in establishing macroeconomic stability; reintegrating Cuba to the international trade and financial systems; encouraging small business development; ensuring labor rights are respected; stabilizing existing Cuban agricultural capability and local markets; and improving broad-based access to and accountability for sustainable essential infrastructure.

THE ROLE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

The international community will be instrumental in assisting a Cuban Transition Government that guarantees political freedom, economic opportunity and holds free and fair elections. Support from the international community will also help accelerate Cuba's reintegration into the world economy, bring useful experiences to bear from other countries that have succeeded in transitions, and ease the humanitarian and financial burden on the Cuban Transition Government. The United States and its neighbors have committed to representative democracy as the standard for the Inter-American system and have an obligation under the Inter-American Democratic Charter to support and defend democracy and all that it represents. These commitments will guide our approach to a transitional Cuba.

If the Cuban Transition Government requests help, the U.S. Government will work with international organizations, bilateral donors and international and assistance organizations to ensure coordinated and complimentary assistance in helping Cubans create market-based economic opportunities; respond to critical humanitarian and social needs; conduct free and fair elections; and, in helping prepare Cuba's military forces to adjust to an appropriate role in a democracy.

THE VITAL ROLE OF CUBANS ABROAD

As part of a broader effort by the international community, Cubans around the world can play a crucial role in providing assistance in all of the areas covered by this report to secure the success of the transition to a Free Cuba. Cubans living abroad can provide much needed resources in the form of information, research and know-how, as well as material support, remittances, loans and investment capital. Reconciling and reuniting the Cuban family in freedom will also be essential to the successful, rapid return of sovereignty to the Cuban people.

The Commission strongly believes that the Cuban community abroad should re-double their efforts to foster reconciliation on and off the island and to undertake steps now to organize and prepare to assist a Transition

Government in Cuba. In addition, the U.S. Government should work with the Cuban community to ensure that their support to the transition, and the planning for it, is coordinated in a way that is consistent with overall reconstruction efforts.

PREPARING NOW TO SUPPORT THE TRANSITION

With this report, the Commission continues an ongoing planning and coordination process to hasten democracy in Cuba and institutionalizes ongoing planning to support, if requested, a Cuban Transition Government that guarantees political freedom, economic opportunity, and holds free and fair multiparty elections.

This is an ongoing process to accompany Cubans in their transition to freedom. We will need to update and adapt our preparations to keep pace with Cubans themselves. This will ensure that, when asked, we will be able to offer appropriate support that meets needs identified by Cubans.

The U.S. Government will need to be prepared well in advance to help in the event assistance is requested by the Cuban Transition Government. U.S. preparations should be structured so that assistance can be offered immediately to the Cuban Transition Government bilaterally as necessary and then folded into a broader international effort as that develops.

In establishing a strong foundation on which to build, the first six months of any requested U.S. assistance program is of paramount importance. This critical 180-day period could mean the difference between a successful transition and the stumbles and missteps that slowed other states as they moved toward democracy.

In addition to the steps recommended by the Commission to help hasten the transition, several steps can be taken to ensure broad-based involvement of the U.S. Government, international partners and organizations, as well as our own civil society and private sector. The Commission makes a number of practical recommendations that the United States can implement today in preparation for the inevitable transition. These include the areas of government organization; electoral preparation; and anticipating critical humanitarian and social needs.

INTRODUCTION

This second report to the President from the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba continues and builds upon the recommendations implemented through the Commission's first report submitted in May 2004. This report contains seven chapters and a series of recommendations, consistent with U.S. law, designed to help Cubans secure real and lasting change in their country. It recommends that the United States be prepared to offer prioritized assistance to a Cuban transition government that moves rapidly to free and fair, multiparty elections.

This report broadly summarizes resources and expertise the U.S. Government could make available, in accordance with U.S. law, should a Cuban Transition Government committed to free and fair elections ask for our help. This report seeks to unify U.S. Government efforts under a strategic goal to help manage and coordinate ongoing efforts to plan for Cuba's transition. It also recognizes that the international community and Cubans abroad will have an important role to play in Cuba's transition. This document represents the work of over 100 participants from seventeen federal departments and agencies over the course of several months.

As long as the regime abuses the people of Cuba our policy will remain firm. Implementing the Commission's recommendations for hastening a transition has helped break the regime's information blockade on Cubans and is denying resources that the regime would otherwise use to repress its citizens. This report's recommendations for helping hasten the transition are centered on a substantial increase in our efforts, in concert with other nations, to empower Cubans to define a democratic future for their country.

In keeping with the first Commission report, this document sets forth specific assistance and programs the United States can offer to help Cubans quickly recover their sovereignty through free and fair multiparty elections. This report was developed on the basis of U.S. law and we recommend that implementation be done with due regard for international law and treaty obligations, internationally recognized human rights, and democratic principles. It reflects the commitment we and the other nations of the

Western Hemisphere made in the Inter-American Democratic Charter to the promotion and defense of democracy.

The prospective recommendations and proposals in this report are not prescriptions or dictates. They only become possible when the President determines that there is a transition government in place and they only remain possible if that government continues to work toward free and fair multiparty elections. In implementing this assistance, we will need to ensure that we are reinforcing a process of democratic change and not reinforcing anti-democratic regime elements.

The existence of the Commission and the recommendations in this report provide a formal process within the United States government to support the freedom movement in Cuba today and to take actions now to develop appropriate plans to support a democratic transition tomorrow. The U.S. Government, at the highest levels, is engaged in this effort.

This is an ongoing process to accompany Cubans in their transition to freedom. We will need to update and adapt our preparations to keep pace with Cubans themselves. This will ensure that, when asked, we will be able to offer appropriate support that meets needs identified by Cubans.

The American people understand and support the aspirations of people all over the world, including Cubans, to live in freedom. Americans have not only opened their hearts but also our shores to the Cuban people. We are confident that a free and prosperous Cuba will once again be a friend to the United States.

The Cuban dictatorship remains a danger, especially to its own people, even in its twilight. It still seeks to frustrate democratic governance in the region and to actively undermine United States interests. Cubans endure the grim reality of life in their country. Living under a dictatorship means a daily struggle to satisfy needs and wants, with immorality, and, above all, with hopelessness.

Cubans need to know there is hope in freedom. Accordingly, we cannot falter or fail to support the Cuban people as they approach the opportunity for real change. When the time comes, the generosity Americans have always extended to Cubans will surely be redoubled.

With the horizon marking the end of the long struggle against tyranny in Cuba approaching, the Commission's fundamental premise is that Cubans themselves will define their own destiny. Only Cubans can chart a path to liberty, prosperity, and reconciliation. It is they who will ensure that the dictatorship which advocated nuclear war against our nation will end.

Cubans in Cuba, at great personal risk, are already talking about a democratic transition for their country. It is what Cubans say about the future of Cuba that truly matters. The civic opposition movement is creating momentum for democratic change in Cuba. With our offer of support, advice, and help to all who seek democratic change in Cuba, we hope to add to this momentum and to keep pace with the Cuban people as they press for democratic change.

Continued dictatorship will result in neither stability nor opportunity in Cuba. The world's democracies can work together now to support the right of Cubans to define a democratic future for their country. Just as Cubans will face an inevitable opportunity for change, the international community will face a choice. Half measures and partial reforms by an unelected successor regime short of free and fair elections should not be rewarded with recognition or support from the free nations of the world.

As a community of free nations, we can intensify our efforts now to help Cubans who support liberty, prosperity, and reconciliation. We hope this report will find resonance with the people of Cuba, the world's democracies, and the people of the United States. Together, we can reassure the Cuban people that they can count on democratic allies as they move to see their sovereign will expressed through free and fair, multiparty elections.

CHAPTER 1: HASTENING THE END OF THE CASTRO DICTATORSHIP: TRANSITION NOT SUCCESSION

This is an unclassified report. For reasons of national security and effective implementation, some recommendations are contained in a separate classified annex.

INTRODUCTION

Three years ago, the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba began the most significant review of U.S. policy toward Cuba in decades, developing a specific set of recommendations focused on hastening a democratic transition in Cuba. The 2004 CAFC report identified the “survival strategies” of the Castro regime and its cynical manipulation of United States humanitarian policies and examined its relentless pursuit of hard currency to maintain its repression of the Cuban people and their aspirations for freedom. Recommendations designed to limit the regime’s access to hard currency were implemented and have subsequently helped to restrict the funds available to the regime to sustain itself in power.

The 2004 report made the case for offering more direct U.S. support to Cubans on the island who advocate real change and for breaking down the information blockade erected by the regime across the island. The Commission has re-affirmed the direction taken in the 2004 report as a solid foundation upon which to make additional recommendations designed to hasten and consolidate a democratic transition in Cuba.

Since the publication of the 2004 report, there have been important changes both on and off the island that the Commission has weighed in making this new set of recommendations. Today, we see in Cuba a more active civil society, one energized by a growing sense of what is possible.

At the same time, there are clear signs the regime is using money provided by the Chavez government in Venezuela to reactivate its networks in the hemisphere to subvert democratic governments. The Castro regime’s international meddling is done at the expense of the needs of the Cuban people. There is a growing sense of frustration among ordinary Cubans with

a dictatorship that asks them to sacrifice, but expends considerable resources in the far flung reaches of the hemisphere and beyond.

Cubans continue to be imprisoned for activities that Americans take for granted each and every day: reading and viewing what they wish; accessing information from the outside world, including the Internet; meeting in their homes to discuss the future of their country; running a lending library; or conducting petition drives. Despite the savage campaign against them by the regime, the Cuban people are losing their fear and continue to risk life, limb, livelihood, and physical freedom in search of a better future for their nation.

The Commission's recommendations reflect recognition of the leadership and bravery of the Cuban people. They also reflect the Commission's view that the United States and other friends of democracy should acknowledge and honor the courage of Cuban democracy activists by supporting them as they work to secure the rapid return of sovereignty to the people of their nation.

Yet, at the same time that we see hope and growth in Cuban civil society, we also know that Fidel Castro and his inner circle are engaged in an effort to ensure a succession within the revolution. The regime is attempting to insulate itself from the consequences of Fidel Castro's incapacitation, death, or ouster. The regime continues to harden its edges and is feverishly working to forestall any opportunity for a genuine democratic transition on the island by putting hardliners into key positions and rolling back even minimal economic openings. And, as noted above, the repressive instruments of the regime are working assiduously to stamp out civil society initiatives, but without success.

The current regime in Havana is working with like-minded governments, particularly Venezuela, to build a network of political and financial support designed to forestall any external pressure to change. This state of affairs highlights the urgency of working today to ensure that the Cuban transition is genuine and that the Castro regime's succession strategy does not succeed.

It is against this back-drop that the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba again assembles and looks at the question of how to help the

Cuban people hasten and ensure a genuine transition on the island. This is a time for bold, decisive action and clarity of message.

DETERMINATIONS

- In order to lead genuine change, the Cuban people must have hope for a better future in a Free Cuba.
- Our goal is to support the growing consensus for democracy in Cuba itself. A perpetuation of the status quo in Cuba through a succession among the current ruling elites would be a tragedy for the Cuban people. They have endured decades of dictatorship and deserve to regain their sovereignty and chart a new course for their country.
- It is the Cuban people on the island who will chart the course of their future. They are increasingly active and brave in the face of the regime's brutality; they deserve U.S. and international support, both through creative, well-funded programs designed to empower them, and through diplomatic efforts to help build an international consensus around action to promote a genuine democratic transition in Cuba.
- The greatest guarantor of genuine stability in Cuba is the rapid restoration of sovereignty to the Cuban people through free and fair, multiparty elections. The notion that the consolidation of continued dictatorship under Raul Castro or other undemocratic successors will lead to stability is an illusion.
- There should be no misunderstanding: the Cuban dictatorship today is a destabilizing force in the region; a demonstrated threat to our citizens and their own; and has proven willing to manipulate for its own self-serving purposes humanitarian U.S. immigration policies and the desire of the Cuban people for freedom.
- U.S. policymakers need to understand and address the fact that there are "spoilers" in the international community who seek to accommodate or otherwise support the Cuban dictatorship's

succession strategy at the expense of a democratic Cuban transition and U.S. national interests.

- If the Cuban people are to succeed when the inevitable opportunity for change occurs, the United States must support their democratic aspirations by informing the international community of the historic nature of the choice they must make about whether or not to support a genuine transition in Cuba. Our top diplomatic objective must be to build an international consensus around an understanding that the Cuban people have a right to determine their future and that their sovereignty should be returned to them.
- The democracies of the Western Hemisphere should take a leading role in guiding Cuba on a path that leads to representative democracy. The mileposts along that path are the benchmarks set forth in the Inter-American Democratic Charter.
- We must help the Cuban people define an alternative future for themselves – one where Cubans can live in peace, justice prevails, and alternative views are respected.
- We need to help reassure Cubans on the island who seek to preserve the status quo out of fear of what lies beyond the end of the dictatorship. We must also advance an alternative view of the future for Cubans currently in the regime who support democratic change. They need to know that they and their families will also have a future in a Free Cuba. It is only Castro's "*esbirros*" (henchmen) who need to fear justice.
- For all Cubans, we must underscore that the future is theirs to define and that the U.S. and our citizens pose no threat to their security or their homes. We must also be clear that there is but one Cuban people and that reconciliation will be essential to securing a Free Cuba.

EMPOWERING THE CUBAN PEOPLE

Since 1952, Cubans have lived under a succession of dictators, first under Fulgencio Batista, and then Batista's totalitarian successor, Fidel

Castro. Until recently, the Castro dictatorship had been able to maintain its grip on the Cuban people by repressing the development of independent civil society and keeping the Cuban people on a desperate hunt for dollars and basic necessities, thereby preventing the emergence of a viable alternative to its failed policies. By promoting fear about the future and distrust amongst each other, the regime has sought to keep civil society stunted and the Cuban people under its control.

That control is increasingly being degraded by a Cuban society fed up with broken promises and the failure of the regime to meet its basic needs. Growing popular discontent, the failure of regime-sponsored *Actos de Repudio* to intimidate the opposition, and increasing negative international opinion have weakened the regime and placed it on the defensive. There now is a growing consensus among the Cuban people on the need for democracy.

Offering to help Cubans meet their basic and unmet social desires and humanitarian needs will be a powerful force for change and the best guarantor that the transition to freedom will succeed in rapidly restoring sovereignty to the Cuban people through free, multi-party elections. Cubans can better face the uncertainty of change if they are reassured that their basic humanitarian needs will be met.

The Rising Cuban Democratic Opposition

The last several years have witnessed a sustained increase in the ability of the Cuban opposition to engage in acts of resistance, mobilize greater segments of the Cuban population, and communicate a positive vision for the future to the Cuban people and the international community.

At the grassroots level, youth, women, and Afro-Cubans are key constituencies for the continued growth of Cuba's civil society movement. More than half of Cuba's population is under age 35 and has the weakest attachment to the Castro revolution and the strongest desire for real change. Afro-Cubans and mixed-ethnicity Cubans comprise 62 percent of the population and are increasingly aware of their gross under-representation in leadership positions. They continue to be socially marginalized by the regime elite, and Afro-Cuban youths are a consistent target of police harassment, intimidation, arrest, and expulsion out of Havana and other parts

of Cuba. Castro's Cuba has become a major sex tourism destination and is a source country for women and children trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation.

Despite Castro's efforts to repress and intimidate, the opposition has made great strides in mobilizing these groups. Women and Afro-Cubans are at the forefront of the opposition which includes Martha Beatriz Roque of the Assembly to Promote Civil Society; imprisoned activists such as Dr. Oscar Elias Biscet; the scores of organizers of Oswaldo Paya's Varela Project; and independent journalists such as Guillermo Fariñas, who is engaged in a sustained hunger strike for uncensored access to the Internet for ordinary Cubans. The *Damas de Blanco*, the mothers and wives of the 75 activists imprisoned during the regime's March 2003 crackdown on the peaceful opposition, remain a powerful and visible domestic and international symbol of the current struggle for freedom and democracy in Cuba and a focal point for non-violent resistance efforts.

Significant challenges remain, however, before the democratic opposition and civic movement can move beyond protest and non-cooperation with the regime and become the catalysts for and implementers of a sea change within Cuba. Above all, the civic movement needs additional support to present to their fellow Cubans a viable alternative to the failed policies of the Castro regime. The experience of East European civic movements in organizing resistance that ended repressive dictatorships, and then in assuming leadership that led to freedom, prosperity, and reconciliation in their respective countries, could be particularly helpful for Cuba's developing opposition movement. In addition, if requested, civil society groups could benefit from greater training to prepare to help lead a democratic transition and future government in Cuba.

It is critical that independent Cuban civil society groups continue to gain greater access to basic modern equipment to help expand distribution of independent information and facilitate pro-democracy activities. Continued access to these types of equipment help Cuba's civil society disseminate information to the Cuban people and counter regime efforts to maintain its grip on the Cuban people through exclusive control over all forms of communication.

In particular, the Cuban people, and especially the civic opposition movement, need access to the Internet. Currently, the Castro regime strictly controls all access to the Internet, limiting access to a few websites to hand-picked regime supporters and foreigners at specially identified internet cafes, which are out of the reach of the average Cuban.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommendations include the following:

Cuba Fund for a Democratic Future

To empower the Cuban people and the Cuban democratic opposition to take advantage of these new opportunities, the Commission recommends the Cuba Fund for a Democratic Future: **\$80 million** over two years to increase support for Cuban civil society, expand international awareness, break the regime's information blockade, and continue developing assistance initiatives to help Cuban civil society realize a democratic transition. The Commission also recommends consistent yearly funding of Cuba democracy programs at no less than \$20 million on an annual basis thereafter until the dictatorship ceases to exist.

This fund should include:

- Support to independent civil society on the island (*\$31 million*);
- Funding for education and exchanges, including on-island university training from third countries and scholarships for economically disadvantaged students from Cuba identified by independent non-governmental entities and civic organizations at U.S. and third country universities (including historically-black and faith-based institutions) (*\$10 million*);
- Efforts to break the Castro regime's information blockade and expand the Cuban people's access to independent information, including through the Internet (*\$24 million*); and
- Support for international efforts at strengthening civil society and in transition planning (*\$15 million*).

IV. BREAK THE REGIME'S INFORMATION BLOCKADE

The Castro regime continues to control all means of mass media and communication on the island. The regime exerts absolute control over newspapers, radio, and television through a pervasive system of repression, intimidation, seizures of equipment, and arrest. The regime fears the day that the Cuban people have full access to independent information. The lack of access to independent information enables the government to maintain a climate of fear of repression and fear of change across the island necessary to its continued survival.

The recommendations of CAFC I to break the information blockade have been successful in getting a greater flow of information to the Cuban people than ever before. Broadcasts of Radio and TV Marti from an airborne platform have reached Cubans across the island in unprecedented numbers and have overcome the ability of the Cuban regime to jam and disrupt broadcast signals. The expanded distribution of media, including newsletters and videos, and equipment have empowered even greater numbers of the Cuban people to obtain reliable information on events in Cuba and on alternatives to the failed policies of the Castro regime.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Selected recommendations include the following:

In conjunction with the recommended measures to strengthen civil society and international solidarity with the Cuban democratic opposition, the Commission recommends measures to intensify efforts to break the regime's information blockade and aid the Cuban people in the ongoing transition:

Broadcasting

Advances in the development of new and improved technologies make it increasingly possible to expand broadcasts of reliable information to the Cuban people and to equip them to receive and disseminate such information across the island. The Commission recommends the following

measures be taken to expand on the work already underway by U.S. broadcasting entities in support of Cuban civil society:

- Fund the transmission of TV Marti via Satellite TV into Cuba by the most effective means possible;
- Within 90 days conduct a comprehensive and independent review on ways to improve Cuba broadcasts;
- Fund civil society groups to provide equipment to receive international broadcasts and independent media on the island to the Cuban people;
- Expand use of third-country broadcasting into Cuba;
- Replicate the successes of other U.S. broadcast programming in developing a larger audience, by developing non-traditional programs addressed to Cuban youth;
- Support the training and equipping of independent print, radio, and TV journalists in Cuba and improve their capacity and capability to inform the world and the Cuban people of events in Cuba; and
- In connection with and/or as part of the strategic communication plan, establish quarterly meetings between appropriate U.S. Government agencies to coordinate strategy on broadcasting and communications to the Cuban people.

IV. UNDERMINING THE REGIME'S SUCCESSION STRATEGY

Diplomacy and information must be employed to create momentum for genuine change in order to undermine the regime's succession strategy.

There should be no misunderstanding: the Castro brothers' dictatorship has every intention of continuing its stranglehold on power in Cuba, regardless of the cost to or the will of the Cuban people. Just as Fidel Castro replaced Batista in 1959, Cuba's current dictator wants to impose his brother on the Cuban people. The regime's goal is to pass power from Fidel

Castro to his selected successor, Raul Castro, and the ruling elite around him. Regime loyalists are relentlessly pursuing a strategy whereby the international community will recognize and work with a successor regime, regardless of whether or not the dictatorship has been dismantled. In furtherance of this goal, the regime is actively strengthening its repressive apparatus, re-consolidating its absolute control over all political, social and economic aspects of Cuban society, and using Venezuelan money to acquire international support and legitimacy.

The Castro regime is actively seeking to control the policy environment on transition in concert with opponents of peaceful, democratic change, led by the Chavez government in Venezuela. The regime is implementing information and influence campaigns to develop support networks outside of Cuba to provide it additional revenue streams today, to act as advocates on its behalf against U.S. policy toward Cuba and the region, and to support and secure international legitimacy for a succession within the revolution. These networks undermine the opportunity for a democratic future for Cuba; U.S. national security interests in Cuba and in third countries; and our interest in a democratic and stable Venezuela.

The regime will seek to create domestic and international pressure on the U.S. Government to unilaterally change our Cuba policy and establish a new relationship with the regime regardless of whether or not the dictatorship has been dismantled or the economy freed.

Fidel Castro senses his own mortality and the mortality of the economically bankrupt regime he leads. He works relentlessly to hold it together through a mix of political alliances, bartering and debt extensions, and savage denial of political and economic freedoms to the Cuban people. Today, he and his inner circle are implementing a succession strategy designed to ensure the survival of the regime beyond his own incapacitation, death, or ouster.

Cuba's ever-deepening relationship with Venezuela parallels the earlier failed relationship with the Soviet Union, only this time not as the junior partner: Fidel Castro is calling the shots.

This Castro-led axis must be understood as part of the regime's succession strategy and an effort to insulate Cuba from pressure for

democratic change. This axis is designed to secure energy and financial resources and create an external support network to help ensure the regime is insulated.

This axis also undermines our interest in a more democratic Venezuela and undermines democratic governance and institutions elsewhere in the region. Together, these countries are advancing an alternative retrograde and anti-American agenda for the hemisphere's future and they are finding some resonance with populist governments and disenfranchised populations in the region. Castro hopes a political shift in the region will be his legacy and offer a measure of protection for his "esbirros" and opportunists in the Cuban Communist Party upon his departure from power.

The weak flank of the Cuba-Venezuela axis is Cuba itself. Unlike "Bolivarian" President Hugo Chavez, the Castro regime lacks even the patina of electoral legitimacy. History will remember that Castro always avoided the verdict of the Cuban people. Castro today must worry about the growing frustration of the Cuban population about the failings of the revolution and with expenditures in far-flung reaches of the world when their needs are unmet at home. There are signs the axis with Venezuela is beginning to grate on Cuban nationalist sensibilities. The more than 11 million people in Cuba are, in fact, our natural allies in breaking both the dictatorship and the Cuba-Venezuela axis that protects and sustains it.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Selected recommendations include the following:

- The Commission recommends that Cuba, specifically Cuba's impending transition, continue to have a high profile in public messages and statements by U.S. officials to build a sense of momentum for change. The Commission is also recommending a diplomatic strategy to consistently advance our view that there is an opportunity for transition if we act today; that the Cuban people are more active than ever despite intense pressure from the regime; and that we need to commit to defending the right of the Cuban people to define their own future;

- In making a recommendation that a suspension of Title III of the 1996 Cuban Liberty and Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act for an individual country is necessary to the national interest and will expedite a transition to democracy in Cuba, consider in particular whether it is engaged in a process of support for regime succession;
- Vigorously enforce Title IV of the Libertad Act; particularly focusing enforcement action on traffickers involved in strategic industries such as oil, tourism, nickel, tobacco, and rum which finance Cuba's repressive apparatus; and
- Encourage Cuban workers in tourism, mining, and other sectors who work for foreign companies to keep complete wage records.

A Diplomatic Campaign: Underscore Regime Illegitimacy and Build Support for Transition

While differences of opinion about U.S. embargo policy persist, an increasing number of countries share the view that there must be change in Cuba and that the Cuban people should have the right to decide their future. Since the March 2003 crackdown on pro-democracy forces, the ongoing rollback of freedoms, and growing use of *Actos de Repudio* to intimidate Cuban society, many now publicly condemn the regime's abuses. Political and civic leaders and organizations across Europe and Latin America that once struggled for freedom in their own countries are expanding outreach to the Cuban people and directly assisting pro-democratic forces in their quest for freedom and respect for basic human rights.

If the Cuban people are to succeed in their struggle to regain their freedom and sovereignty, the international community must increase their engagement with and support to Cuban civil society. There should be full agreement that the only acceptable result of Fidel Castro's incapacitation, death, or ouster is for a genuine democratic transition to take place in Cuba. This is an historic and stark choice between the continuation of dictatorship or the restoration of freedom and sovereignty to eleven million men, women, and children.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Selected recommendations include the following:

Recognizing the need to solidify international consensus around the right of the Cuban people to determine their democratic future, and promote greater direct involvement by third-countries in Cuba, we recommend the implementation of a diplomatic campaign to include:

- Encourage convergence of goals and efforts by other democratic nations to support a democratic transition in Cuba with our own efforts, including transition planning exercises, and encouraging bilateral engagement between European nations and Western Hemisphere democracies on a Cuban transition;
- Build a coalition of countries to support a democratic transition in Cuba now and at a moment of change on the island;
- Work diplomatically with the OAS and its member states to ensure that adherence to the Inter-American Democratic Charter is the standard for Cuba's reintegration in the inter-American system, in keeping with the Declaration of Florida adopted at the XXXV OAS General Assembly;
- Expand support for third-country efforts to promote the development of Cuban civil society and pro-democracy groups on the island;
- Encourage democratic governments, especially Community of Democracies participants from the Western Hemisphere and Europe, to invite leaders of the democratic opposition to their countries for meetings with government officials and civic society leaders;
- Draw a distinction between countries that support succession (such as Venezuela and Iran) and countries that support the right of the Cuban people to debate and define a democratic future for Cuba;

- Invigorate examination of Cuban abuses at international organizations:
 - Encourage presentation of cases to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights on behalf of victims of government sponsored mob attacks known as *Actos de Repudio*; and
 - Encourage other nations to address Cuban labor violations at the ILO.

IDENTIFY AND TARGET HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATORS

As part of U.S. policy aimed at undermining the regime's succession strategy, we must accelerate the process of stripping away layers of support within the regime by creating additional uncertainty regarding the political and legal future of those in leadership positions.

We explicitly reject the notion of “witch hunts” in a democratic Cuba against those in government positions. However, Cubans at all levels of the government must understand that those currently in leadership positions who have engaged in or misused their positions to perpetrate human rights abuses will be duly noted and appropriately sanctioned by the U.S. Government as authorized by U.S. law, where applicable.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Selected recommendations include the following:

- *Lista de Esbirros*: Place the names of those credibly believed to be involved in orchestrating human rights abuses in Cuba into the Abuse Case Evaluation System (ACES) database that is currently maintained and managed by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor at the State Department;
- Place the names of individuals involved in the 2003 and subsequent trials of opposition activists, as well as those involved in orchestrating *Actos de Repudio*, on the visa lookout database;

- Amend Presidential Proclamation 5377 to permit the denial of immigrant, as well as non-immigrant visas, to officers and employees of the Government of Cuba or the Communist Party of Cuba;
- Authorize denial of the right to adjust status to legal permanent alien to any regime official when such an act would be detrimental to the interests of the United States; and,
- Submit the names of officials indicted for the murder of the “Brothers-to-the-Rescue” pilots to Interpol.

MAKING MIGRATION SAFE, ORDERLY, AND A FORCE FOR CHANGE IN CUBA

The Cuban government has failed to honor its commitments under the September 9, 1994, Joint Communiqué and the May 2, 1995, Joint Statement, otherwise known as the “Migration Accords.” While the 1994 Joint Communiqué obligates Cuba to take measures to ensure that migration is safe, legal, and orderly, the Cuban government continues to deny U.S. officials permission to monitor returned migrants outside of Havana; facilitates the departure of thousands of Cubans annually over the land borders into the U.S. via Mexico; deny exit permits to otherwise qualified Cuban citizens, making some people wait for years to emigrate; and flatly prohibit others from emigrating, including doctors and family members of government officials.

The regime has also enacted a series of other bureaucratic measures that impede the U.S. Interests Section’s efforts to meet the U.S. commitments under the Agreement. As detailed in CAFC I, with these and other mechanisms, the Castro regime continues to manipulate migration flows to the United States. The regime does so to further its policies of generating additional hard currency and as a means to control its population — releasing pressure when necessary by permitting more exits. The regime further seeks to dampen the efforts of Cuban activists working for change by withholding exit permission to attend international conferences or receive awards.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Selected recommendations include:

In response to Cuba's repeated and consistent efforts to impede safe, legal, and orderly migration, we recommend a series of diplomatic efforts to notify the Castro regime of its failure to meet its obligations under the Migration Accords and protesting its efforts to interfere with and disrupt U.S. migration policy.

VI. DENYING REVENUE TO THE CASTRO REGIME

The policies of the Castro regime continue to debilitate the Cuban economy, impoverish the Cuban people, and isolate Cuba from economic advances enjoyed by the rest of the Western Hemisphere. The regime ignores its obligations to its people and diverts its resources to maintain its grip on power, manage a succession of the regime, and destabilize democracies elsewhere in the Hemisphere. The more financially stressed the system is, the more difficult it will be for any leader who follows Fidel Castro to preside over a succession within the dictatorship

The first report of the Commission recommended, and the President directed be implemented, a comprehensive set of measures to deny the Castro regime the revenues it needs to maintain its repressive security apparatus. By the regime's own admission, these measures — and continued enforcement actions — have sharply cut licensed and unlicensed travel to the island each year since the implementation of the measures of the first report.

Limitations on travel, parcel deliveries and remittances have sharply curtailed the regime's manipulation of and profiteering from U.S. humanitarian policies. These measures have been successful and should continue to be implemented.

In order to undermine the regime's succession strategy, it is critical that the U.S. Government maintain economic pressure on the regime to limit its ability to sustain itself and repress the Cuban people. Moreover, as we rapidly approach the transitional moment, the more economic pressure there

is on the regime, the greater the likelihood there will be dramatic and successful change for the Cuban people.

Improved Enforcement

The Castro regime continues to seek new and additional ways to raise desperately needed hard currency by encouraging and facilitating unlicensed cash flows and travel from the United States to Cuba. The profits from these transactions continue to be critical for the maintenance of the regime's repressive security apparatus. The regime has facilitated the establishment of third-country travel and remittance companies whose primary purpose is to facilitate unlicensed transactions from the United States and to help individuals evade U.S. restrictions on such transactions. Similarly, in the last several years we have witnessed a surge in attempts to abuse existing license categories to engage in non-permissible activities, such as tourism or other non-licensable visits.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Selected recommendations include:

- Establish an inter-agency Law Enforcement Task Force for better enforcement of U.S. economic sanctions on the Castro regime; and
- Issue a directive to law enforcement agencies to pursue criminal investigations, including prosecution, where possible and appropriate, of Cuban Assets Control Regulation and other violations, especially for those found to have been involved in organizing or facilitating unlicensed travel transactions with Cuba.

Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) Regulations:

- Prohibit individuals who wish to send remittances from going directly to third-country institutions to send such remittances to Cuba and require instead that all remittances be sent through licensed U.S. remittance forwarders. Eliminate the use of cash-card services for licensed travel to Cuba;

- Expand the list of regime officials and agencies which are not permitted to receive licensed remittances, and ensure that those included in the “Lista de Esbirros” do not benefit from U.S. humanitarian policies by including them on the list of Specially Designated Nationals (SDNs) and by barring SDNs from receiving remittances;
- Implement new licensing criteria and reporting requirements for travel service providers (TSPs) and Carrier Service Providers (CSPs), including a requirement that TSPs and CSPs have an independent financial audit conducted annually; and
- Expand the use of Specially Designated Nationals (SDNs) to designate companies, including front companies, engaged in efforts to promote the sale of Cuban goods or unlicensed travel, remittances, and other transactions from the United States to Cuba.

U.S. Department of Commerce Regulations:

- Revise temporary sojourn license (TSL) regulations and implementing guidelines to ensure that licenses are not issued to maritime vessels, unless the vessel is solely registered to transport goods and is engaged in the regular transport of bulk commodities, or unless otherwise consistent with the foreign policy interests of the United States;
- Revise regulations and implementing guidelines to deny export licenses, consistent with U.S. law, for discretionary, cosmetic, or other medical equipment sales that would be destined to be used in large-scale medical programs that cater to tourists and foreign patients and not exclusively for the benefit and care of the Cuban people;
- Develop effective monitoring and certification requirements for medical equipment exports that ensure that these exports are used only for the use and benefit of the Cuban people and not diverted to tourist or foreign care institutions;
- Ensure monitoring for medical equipment is undertaken for the life of the product to ensure items exported are at intended end-use institutions. In the event that the Cuban government does not permit

on-site monitoring at certain institutions, future exports will not be authorized to such locations;

- Reaffirm the U.S. Government's export license policy of a strict general policy of denial of Commerce export licenses, unless otherwise required by existing law; and
- Tighten regulations for the export of humanitarian items, other than agricultural or medical commodities, to ensure that exports are consigned to entities that support independent civil society and are not regime administered or controlled organizations, such as the Cuban Council of Churches.

Target Regime Foreign Income and Assets Abroad

Following the reductions in regime revenue as a result of the first Commission report, nearly half of the regimes' current foreign income is now derived from nickel exports. The revenue from these sales does not go to benefit the Cuban people, but is diverted to maintain the regime's repressive security apparatus and fund Castro's interventionist and destabilizing policies in other countries in the Hemisphere. Moreover, some of this revenue is derived from assets illegally expropriated from U.S. citizens after Castro came to power. In addition, there are growing indications of senior elements of the regime, engaging in efforts to hide personal financial assets abroad to guard against a severe disruption in their stations in the event of a democratic transition in Cuba. These assets, including property and bank accounts, rightfully belong to the Cuban people and should be tracked down and returned to Cuba for the benefit of a Free Cuba.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

To hasten the end of the Castro regime by disrupting the regime's sources of foreign income and identifying regime assets abroad, we recommend the U.S. Government:

- Establish an inter-agency Cuban Nickel Targeting Task Force to reinvigorate the existing nickel import certification and control regime

and analogous cobalt import control regime, consistent with our domestic and international obligations.

- Invigorate identification and targeting of regime offshore finances and assets and initiate a diplomatic effort to engage international partners and organizations to assist in developing information on and targeting regime assets abroad.
- Reconvene Cuban Assets Targeting Group with the task of identifying additional ways to target and disrupt regime foreign income, including identification of the assets of regime officials abroad, development of information on official corruption and associated assets abroad.

CHAPTER 2: HELPING CUBANS RESPOND TO CRITICAL HUMANITARIAN AND SOCIAL NEEDS

Introduction

The Castro regime trumpets “the achievements of the Revolution” in meeting the basic needs of the Cuban people. In truth, the entire system has been constructed for the sustenance of the regime, not to serve the Cuban people or to allow for development and economic growth. With the sudden withdrawal of massive Soviet subsidies in the early 1990’s, the regime found it almost impossible to maintain the mythology of the revolution’s achievements. Today, Cubans live with the consequences of the regime’s deliberate decision to sustain itself at the expense of its people: declining food stocks, increasing water shortages, crumbling medical infrastructure, the disappearance of basic medicines, and devastated housing stock. Although the regime continues to manipulate health and other statistics and restricts access to its medical facilities for people who might tell the real story of the revolution’s failure to meet the needs of the Cuban people, it is clear from independent sources that chronic malnutrition, polluted drinking water, and untreated chronic diseases affect a significant percentage of the Cuban population.

A Cuban Transition Government¹ will need to do what the current regime has never done: to put the needs of the people before the need to maintain absolute control. The Cuban Transition Government will face daunting challenges as it begins to address the basic human needs of the Cuban people. The Cuban people will expect rapid and effective action. In order to ensure the support of the public, the Cuban Transition Government should quickly identify priority actions and mobilize internal and external resources to sustain them. The Cuban Transition Government will want to

¹ This Report uses the term “Cuban Transition Government” to refer to a Cuban Government that is eligible to receive U.S. assistance under applicable U.S. law, particularly the 1996 Cuban Liberty and Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act. All recommendations for potential future assistance in this paper are premised on the assumption that the proposed action satisfies the requirements of applicable U.S. law. There are numerous restrictions under U.S. law that affect assistance for, and transactions with, Cuba. In the event of a Cuban Transition Government, some such restrictions could be removed through executive branch action, but others may require legislative change. Despite these various restrictions, certain assistance for Cuba may be provided in certain circumstances on the basis of laws that authorize assistance “notwithstanding any other provision of law” or on the basis of certain extraordinary general waiver authorities in the Foreign Assistance Act.

avoid the onset of a complex human disaster that could be used as an excuse for those who might wish to restore the repressive regime in Cuba.

Another matter that the Cuban Transition Government will want to address is the likelihood, under any scenario, that internal migration could become a problem. Large numbers of impoverished rural residents could flood the cities where there is hope of increased income, relief supplies, and Government services. Such a massive influx could result in large numbers of “internally-displaced” people, squatting on public land and erecting temporary shelters without adequate food, sanitation, health care or potable water.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and faith-based groups already play an integral role in providing vital humanitarian assistance in Cuba. Their support to the Cuban people at the time of transition, where they have established relationships and information about the needs in these localities, will be essential to the success of the Cuban Transition Government’s efforts to complete a rapid and successful transition and hold free and fair multiparty elections.

The U.S. Government stands ready to help the Cuban Transition Government to avert humanitarian emergency in Cuba by assisting the Government in addressing the immediate water, sanitation, health, food, shelter, protection, and education needs of the Cuban people and working to bring other international partners into the process of assistance. Assisting a Cuban Transition Government to meet these basic needs is paramount for a stable transition period, new Government credibility, and timely elections.

Humanitarian assistance could include support in the following sectors: (1) water and sanitation; (2) health systems and nutrition; (3) food security; (4) shelter and settlements; (5) protection; and (6) education services. This collective humanitarian support will help facilitate a Cuban-led democratic transition.

Sovereign governments are responsible for the welfare of their own citizens and for others in their care (e.g., refugees, asylum seekers, migrants, etc.). U.S. Government assistance and that of the international community should be provided to support, not substitute for, the new Cuban Transition Government’s responsibility for its people. The Transition Government

should actively encourage and contribute available resources (human and financial) for humanitarian relief activities to reduce human suffering and prevent collapse.

Critical to a successful humanitarian response is the ability of all parties to quickly, and preferably locally, access required resources such as fuel, logistics and communications systems. Equally important in the initial stages is U.S. Government and international support for local Cuban media efforts. The public should have access to information regarding the Cuban Transition Government's humanitarian response efforts to ensure the public is aware, understands, and remains supportive of these activities.

Any U.S. Government assistance provided in response to requests by the Cuban Transition Government would follow four principles: (1) coordination with the Transition Government, international organizations, bilateral donors, and international and existing Cuban assistance organizations; (2) addressing the most critical humanitarian needs; (3) identifying and prioritizing critical needs of vulnerable populations first (e.g., women, children, elderly, disabled, displaced, chronically-ill and chronically-underserved populations); and (4) seeking to do no harm to individuals, households, the culture, the economy, security, and the environment.

By providing assistance according to these principles, the U.S. Government can help the Cuban Transition Government guarantee political freedom, economic opportunity and hold free and fair multiparty elections.

Water and Sanitation

Cuba today faces daunting water-supply and sanitation issues, including inoperative sewage treatment plants. In the entire country, there are only five municipal wastewater plants, and only four percent of the sewage effluent has some degree of treatment. Water and sewer pipeline networks are in shambles. Havana's population of over two million people uses a sewer system designed for a population of 600,000. Havana's wastewater flow receives primary treatment only, and excess flow is discharged with minimal, if any, treatment.

Insufficient levels of wastewater treatment and the lack of sewer pipelines have caused a degradation of water quality. Runoff from heavily treated fields with fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides, as well as the discharge of untreated effluents from cities and industries such as sugar mills, sugar-by-products, food processing plants, and mining operations, also severely pollute surface and groundwater in Cuba. As a result, only 62 percent of Cubans have reasonable access to disinfected water. Trash pickup is intermittently undertaken, which perpetuates the proliferation of mini-dumpsites in populated areas and near the perimeters of boarding schools and students/workers' camps. There are also alarming difficulties in the hygienic conditions of dumpsites and deficient handling and disposal of hazardous waste from hospitals, which creates a serious health risk.

In light of these conditions, the Cuban Transition Government may request U.S. Government and other donor support to prevent and control the possible outbreak of sanitation-related infectious diseases in rural and urban areas.

If requested, the U.S. Government could support efforts to ensure critical water and sanitation services for the Cuban people. The U.S. Government can work with the Cuban Transition Government, international agencies, and other donors to: (1) ensure access to adequate quantity and quality of potable water; (2) develop accessible human-waste and wastewater disposal facilities; (3) ensure access to garbage/solid-waste collection and disposal facilities; (4) assist local communities in the planning and implementation of environmental-health interventions; (5) help prevent sanitation-related disease; and (6) offer assistance to local operations and management to improve the existing operation of sanitation facilities.

Should the Cuban Transition Government request U.S. assistance to address critical water and sanitation needs, the U.S. Government could do the following:

- Help address the needs for potable water and sanitation in major urban and rural populations;
- Provide chlorine or other water-treatment materials;
- Assist with water trucks to deliver water to needy communities;
- Provide technical assistance and other materials for the construction of new wells in needy and vulnerable communities;

- Assist with garbage trucks to collect and dispose of garbage in major urban (or rural) areas, and in vulnerable population centers;
- Provide soap, disinfectant, and cleaning materials to vulnerable groups;
- Support infectious disease surveillance, especially in areas identified to have an increased risk of disease outbreaks; and
- Support hygiene-education programs in any sanitation-related interventions, and provide technical assistance for mass-media public-information campaigns health and sanitation.

Should the Cuban Transition Government request U.S. assistance once critical needs have been addressed, the U.S. Government could provide the following assistance during the recovery phase:

- Help ensure sanitation facilities are operational, adequately staffed and functioning;
- Work with the Cuban Transition Government to ensure local communities are actively involved in identifying and addressing their ongoing critical needs, and in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of existing sanitation interventions; involve local and city governments to develop and implement environmental-health education programs using internationally recognized models such as Community Participation Problem-Solving: The Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation (PHAST) Approach or the Assessing Community Excellence in Environmental Health (PACE-EH) approach promoted by the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO); and
- Work with the Transition Government to ensure national policies and infrastructure increase the long-term capacity of local communities to manage effectively the operation and maintenance of water and sanitation facilities through training and technical support.

Health-Care and Nutrition

Despite one of the highest per capita rates of doctors in the world and the ability to purchase medicines and medical devices from U.S. companies and the rest of the international community for use in Cuban hospitals, the Cuban health-care system lacks basic supplies and equipment to treat the

Cuban people on a daily basis. The regime has chosen its priority: health spending on services and medicines for foreigners, rather than its own citizens. Today, the regime is increasingly sending its doctors abroad and diverting even more of its medical resources to the treatment of foreigners in Cuba. In a form of medical *apartheid*, hospitals that treat regime officials and foreigners who pay hard currency have modern equipment, clean halls, and adequate staffing, whereas hospitals that treat the average Cuban lack basic medical supplies, such as bandages and over-the-counter painkillers, have filthy hallways, insufficient lighting, and are understaffed. Should a health or nutrition emergency arise when a Cuban transition occurs, quick assistance could help the Cuban Transition Government respond.

Potential U.S. Government responses to the array of possible needs during a transition may be divided between actions necessary for critical life-saving response and those available during a recovery phase.

If requested, the U.S. Government working with United Nations (UN) organizations, the international community, other donors, the U.S. private sector, and other partners could provide critical health and nutrition assistance in three major areas:

1) Preventing and Addressing Acute Malnutrition

- School systems could provide nutritional supplements to children to maintain an adequate diet until the new Government can stabilize its own public-health and medical system;
- The U.S. Government can support the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), other partners, and health facilities to implement supplementary feeding programs and community therapeutic-care programs for the treatment of global acute malnutrition and severe acute malnutrition;
- The U.S. Government, in coordination with the UN (The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and UNICEF) and others can assist local health and local/decentralized Government facilities to provide primary health care focus on preventing and treating killer diseases, such as diarrhea, acute respiratory illness, and preventing the recurrence of measles;
- The U.S. Government could assist the Transition Government, UNICEF, local health facilities, and other partners to conduct

immunization campaigns and vitamin A deficiency, assess quality control, and continue of routine immunizations of all children and those under five not already immunized; and

- Assist local health and local/decentralized Government facilities to rehabilitate key local health infrastructure for effective delivery of care.

2) Ensure Supply of Drugs and Emergency Medical Commodities

- Help ensure adequate supplies of health and surgical kits are available;
- Provide HIV/AIDS testing kits to verify access to a safe blood supply; and
- Utilize nutritional and health-assessment information to inform where to direct acute and non-acute food, medical and surgical supplies and kits.

3) Detect and Respond to Immediate Health and Nutrition Needs

- Conduct hands-on needs assessment to provide objective data and observations on the state of health care, nutrition, and basic social services; and
- Conduct infectious-disease surveillance, and recommend actions for assistance where water, sanitation, and health conditions are poor or potentially harmful.

It will be crucial for the Cuban Transition Government to quickly ascertain the health status or health care at the individual or community level. Therefore, supporting a functioning health system, preventing disease outbreaks, and other important health-care needs is essential for a healthy population to aid the Cuba Transition Government in guaranteeing political freedom, economic opportunity, and hold free and fair elections.

If health and nutrition needs are limited or are under control, the U.S. Government could assist a Cuban Transition Government and other partners in recovery phase efforts in the following three priority areas, if requested:

1) Support Surveillance Systems to Detect and Control Infectious Diseases

Health and nutrition-surveillance systems monitor and help prevent potential disease outbreaks. Assessments can reveal the capacity of Cuban hospitals, clinics and physicians to identify and respond to outbreaks of infectious diseases during a transition, and help create surveillance systems appropriate for Cuban health and nutrition needs. If Cuban health systems reveal weaknesses, the U.S. Government and others could support local health and local/decentralized Government facilities with the following actions, if necessary:

- Conduct routine, sentinel, or survey surveillance of key infectious diseases;
- Respond to evidence of declining immunization coverage by delivering immunizations throughout the country through campaigns or routine clinic visits depending on, the state of health-facility and cold-chain infrastructure; and
- Revise and update existing national health emergency preparedness plans to respond to the, potential spread of new infectious diseases, such as pandemic influenza.

2) Meet the Ongoing Health Needs of Vulnerable Populations

If necessary, the U.S. Government could aid the Cuban Transition Government in identifying possible gaps in health-care by providing assistance to accomplish the following:

- Improve the quality of epidemiological data-collection to determine where needs exist for short-term actions, and help with the preparation of long-term health-sector plans;
- Assistance to help maintain the care of Cubans with chronic conditions; and
- Provide assistance to help re-staff health clinics that are understaffed or are otherwise not functional.

3) Support Continued Functioning of the Cuban Health System

Ensuring that the Cuban health system is operational and opened up to serve all Cubans is critical for the welfare of the Cuban people.

Assessments and surveillance systems can reveal obstacles, gaps, or deterioration in health care. If issues are identified and the Cuban Transition Government requests support, the U.S. Government could support the Cubans and others to conduct the following:

- Evaluate the quality and safety of basic health care, including hospitals, health-care providers, elderly and nursing home care, maternal, child health, referral networks, logistics, essential drug-supply systems, and emergency transportation; and
- Help Cuban health-care providers in assisting the Transition Government to review health-related laws, regulations and policies to determine changes necessary for sustaining and/or improving quality of health care to maintain social protection, and, the proper monitoring and control of infectious diseases.

Food Security

Mismanaged domestic agricultural production and a long-standing drought have led Cuba to increasingly import food to meet basic nutritional needs. Despite exports to Cuba from the United States of more than \$1.2 billion in agricultural products between 2001 and 2006 and regular trade with other countries, the Cuban government has failed to meet the basic food needs of the Cuban people. The regime's food-rationing system provides Cubans with less than half of their monthly food needs. To meet the shortfall, ordinary Cubans buy food on the black market or at inflated prices in Government-run dollar stores, if they can secure the funds. Government-run hotels that serve foreign tourists do not experience similar shortages.

The Cuban population's basic food needs must be addressed for the Cuban Transition Government to create the conditions to fully guarantee political freedom, economic opportunity, and hold free and fair elections. Because acute food insecurity could have a negative impact on the transition process, the U.S. Government should be prepared, if requested, to work with other partners to help the Cuban Transition Government address the needs of affected populations.

The regime's own statistics from 2005 indicate that at least 15 percent of Cuba's population already is at severe nutritional risk. Any negative shift

in the capacity of the Cuban Transition Government to meet basic food needs could result in instability and increased levels of malnutrition. Under these circumstances, vulnerable populations are at particular risk, and could require special consideration.

If requested, the U.S. Government can offer help in coordinating food-security aid activities with the Cuban Transition Government, local agencies, and civil society groups, to meet acute and recovery needs. The U.S. Government could help the new Government alleviate food insecurity by doing the following:

- Improving the availability, access, and utilization of food; and
- Protecting the income and property of Cuban families by maintaining and strengthening traditional strategies for coping with food shortages, such as diversifying food sources and finding alternative income opportunities.

If assessments reveal that malnutrition and food insecurity exist, the critical emergency response must be rapid and effective. Upon request, the U.S. Government could work with the Cuban Transition Government to identify all available existing Cuban food-distribution systems and decide which method would be the most effective to ensure the quick delivery of food.

If requested in a recovery phase, the U.S. Government can support the Transition Government, Cuban farmers, and Cuban agricultural industry efforts to evaluate which systems are most effective for the medium and long-term distribution of food or non-food related humanitarian aid, or general commercial supplies, in the country.

If necessary and requested, the U.S. Government and other partners could implement the following activities:

- Assist local and general food distribution by the UN-World Food Program (WFP) in accordance with internationally accepted standards to meet daily caloric needs in response to critical malnutrition needs in identified populations;
- If necessary, establish Community Therapeutic Feeding Centers or traditional Therapeutic Feeding Centers with local officials and

- implementing partners to distribute supplemental foods to vulnerable groups identified in nutritional assessments;
- Identify short-term Food-for-Work activities for able-bodied Cubans in local economic, environmental, or other immediate labor property to assist a new Government in creating a secure and stable community; and
 - Identify and assess traditional coping mechanisms, including urban and rural small home gardens to supplement emergency food needs.

The Cuban Transition Government may request support for Cuba's agricultural and livestock systems. If requested, the U.S. Government could assist the Cuban Transition Government in implementing the following activities to reduce the loss of productive assets, and maintain and strengthen traditional crisis-coping mechanisms vital for household food security:

- Identify and coordinate with appropriate Transition Ministries, local staff, communities, and organizations such as the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to implement critical agricultural and livestock activities;
- Support monitoring the affordability of food prices and suggest options if prices rise above the capacity of most households to purchase food;
- Encourage the continuation of agricultural production, and determine its potential to meet emergency food needs for general and/or supplemental food distribution or food markets;
- Provide veterinary drugs and equipment, as needed, particularly vaccinations for livestock to ensure the maintenance of any existing protein sources for the population's nutritional health;
- Support efforts to secure fuel, spare parts, and technical assistance to repair or to reestablish the use of necessary agricultural machinery and equipment;
- Identify and support local market channels for agricultural inputs and livestock needs. If not locally available, explore moving supplies from similar agricultural areas to places in need; and
- Maintain food and economic access to contribute to the livelihoods of vulnerable households via local seed fairs or other fairs that support the diversification of livelihood options.

Once critical food insecurity and nutritional needs are stable, the U.S. Government's efforts can focus on assisting the Cuban Transition Government and others to improve food security. If requested, the U.S. Government could help the Cuban Transition Government work with local authorities to evaluate and determine the best options to improve food production and distribution systems. If requested, the U.S. Government could assist Cubans to build local capability to assess and address the following:

- Food-distribution patterns -- markets, general distribution;
- The availability of household income to meet additional food needs;
- Status of vulnerable populations; and
- Cuban-led efforts to strengthen local capacity to quickly identify and manage urgent food needs.

If it is necessary to support agricultural and livestock systems in the recovery phase, the U.S. Government and other partners could continue to support the Cuban Transition Government's efforts to assess household coping mechanisms. Activities in the emergency phase could continue as required by secondary assessments and regular monitoring. If requested by the Cuban Transition Government, U.S. Government support could include the following:

- Support efforts to help agricultural production areas secure access to agricultural system inputs such as identifying and providing locally adapted and accepted seed varieties (from existing research and educational institutions), organic fertilizer, tools (mechanization and irrigation), and veterinary supplies;
- Assist Cuban efforts to assess agricultural production methods that are sustainable and contribute to meeting national and local food needs. This can include assessing agricultural cooperatives, land access and the removal of private market restrictions;
- Support local veterinary and agriculture extension agents through the provision of supplies or (if appropriate), through training and capacity-building; and
- Support local agricultural universities in the production and multiplication of local preferred seed varieties (including preservation

of genetic resources), as well as improved local varieties of essential food commodities.

Shelter

The Cuban government has allowed the island's housing situation to fall into severe crisis. U.S.-based housing experts have estimated Cuba is lacking adequate housing by at least 1.6 million units. It is commonplace for multiple families to inhabit inadequate two-room structures or to "squat" in unsafe buildings. In light of additional damage and structural collapses as a result of hurricanes, it is unlikely that a complete resolution of Cuba's severe housing crisis will occur during a transition period.

Yet, should the Cuban Transition Government request U.S. Government assistance in this area, U.S. Government actions can focus on supporting a comprehensive assessment of Cuba's housing needs and helping the Cuban Transition Government provide temporary shelter to vulnerable populations. Individuals without shelter are at increased risk of exposure to unhealthy and unsafe conditions, such as infectious diseases and risky behavior (including contributing to political instability). Furthermore, if unable to find food and clean water, persons without shelter can quickly become additional burdens on critical humanitarian aid, which could jeopardize the ability of the Cuban Transition Government to guarantee political freedom, economic opportunity, and hold free and fair elections.

If requested, the U.S. Government can assist the Cuban Transition Government and other partners to conduct comprehensive assessments of shelter and settlement to ensure shelter assistance: (1) is in accordance with the priorities of local communities; (2) is supportive of the objectives of the Cuba Transition Government; and (3) complies with recognized international humanitarian shelter guidelines, such as those from the Sphere Project.

Rapid, critical assessments will reveal differences between social (e.g., overcrowding) and structural (e.g., repair and upgrading) issues. The U.S. Government can then base its support upon the provision of safe, adequate, habitable, and hazard-resistant shelter to identified vulnerable persons. U.S. Government aid can also promote "safer settlements" to reduce the adverse impacts of natural hazards, unhealthy, and unsafe

conditions. The aforementioned includes providing basic, shelter-related services (e.g., water, sanitation, drainage), and providing garbage and/or solid-waste collection and disposal services to identified vulnerable populations.

If requested, the U.S. Government, in coordination with other partners and local communities, can help the Cuban Transition Government to address critical shelter assistance needs as follows:

- Provide safe, adequate, habitable, and hazard-resistant shelter; basic, shelter-related services (e.g., water, sanitation, drainage); and garbage and/or solid-waste collection and disposal services;
- Work with communities in designing and implementing locally-developed interventions providing for shelter;
- Ensure all shelter and settlement interventions reflect hazard-mitigation measures; and
- Evaluate logistics-supply systems to ensure sufficient building supplies are available for the timely construction of shelters, and are equitably disbursed throughout the country.

Once critical shelter and settlement needs are addressed or are stable, if requested, the U.S. Government can support the Cuban Transition Government's efforts regarding non-critical shelter and settlement issues. If required, possible actions during the recovery phase could include the following:

- Continuing to work with local communities to ensure their participation and voice in conducting on-site, on-going needs assessments to provide an objective basis for determining the effectiveness of shelter interventions;
- Reviewing of national policy frameworks to identify any changes required to ensure long-term local community involvement in the planning and implementation of shelter and settlement interventions, and ensuring programs receive sufficient financial and human resource support from the Cuban Transition Government; and
- Reviewing community-based hazard-mitigation and preparedness plans, and supporting revisions if necessary to promote "safer settlements." These plans could include structural (e.g., hurricane straps) and non-structural interventions (e.g., coastal zone

management, floodplain management, hillside development ordinances, and local land-use planning).

Protection of the Most Vulnerable Populations

“Protection” is a term applied to efforts to reduce physical, emotional, and social risks to a population, particularly vulnerable individuals and groups. A Cuban Transition Government will face immediate pressures to provide equal access to basic services, and to promote the rights and dignity of individuals, families, groups, and communities. If requested to provide assistance, the U.S. Government should ensure incorporation of internationally recognized protection principles into all assistance initiatives for the Cuban people. These principles could guarantee meeting the needs of the most vulnerable, while providing a potent example of respect for the dignity of all people.

The U.S. Government could do this in several ways:

- Incorporating protection into the design and implementation of humanitarian assistance programs to identify and support vulnerable populations to reduce or manage risks from violence, abuse, harassment, and exploitation;
- Assessing the needs of specific vulnerable populations, and considering how to provide assistance to ensure their needs are met, including by reinforcing positive coping mechanisms among individuals and communities; and
- Establishing information systems in the earliest stages of humanitarian activities to share timely and accurate information with the population, and between assistance providers.

If requested, the U.S. Government could support, along with other partners, a Cuban Transition Government’s adherence to protection principles, now and during critical and non-critical periods during the transition as follows:

- Ensuring protection principles are understood and adhered to by all assistance sectors and organizations;
- Assessing affected populations, with special attention paid to identifying vulnerable individuals and groups and developing

- strategies to reinforce positive coping mechanisms and ensure basic services meet their needs;
- Developing a monitoring and reporting system to ensure assistance reaches vulnerable populations and to identify and resolve protection problems;
 - Establishing a tracing system for separated families and supporting reunification as soon as possible. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) could also provide useful assistance in this area;
 - Ensuring the safety of public records and other official documents, including land-registry documents; and
 - Establishing a public-information system via radio, TV, and other means to reach the broadest number of people.

Once critical protection needs are addressed, if requested, the U.S. Government could support, with other partners, a Cuban Transition Government's efforts during the recovery phase to do the following:

- Developing more robust assessments, monitoring, and service-delivery to vulnerable populations;
- Resolving family reunification cases; and
- Providing individual identifications for those without, if necessary.

Educational Systems

Cuba's educational system is based on the Soviet model of combining education, physical labor, and political ideology to indoctrinate youth. While Cuba reports one of Latin America's best literacy rates, children's textbooks are ideologically skewed. Independent thought is neither encouraged nor allowed. As part of their indoctrination, adolescent students are sent away to poorly run work camps in the countryside. Because of an exodus of seasoned educators to jobs in the tourism industry, the Cuban educational system relies on teachers-in-training, including 18-year-old high-school graduates. Parents are increasingly expressing concern that these new teachers do not have adequate training. As a result, the regime now prohibits trained teachers from working in higher-paying, dollar-based jobs.

If requested, the U.S. Government could help the Cuban Transition Government keep schools open, and help students, including vulnerable individuals, remain in school during a transition.

The first step to meet this objective could be to conduct a field-based needs assessment of the Cuban education system's infrastructure, staffing, funding, and materials, plus Cuban libraries, in cooperation with Cuban Transition authorities. A preliminary assessment within the first three months could form the basis for longer-term assistance planning. This assessment should include facilities currently used for instructional purposes at all levels, as well as facilities shut down or converted by the regime that might be returned to educational uses.

If needed and requested by the Cuban Transition Government, U.S. Government educational support, in coordination with other partners, could include the following:

- Assisting the Cuban Transition Government in finding options for vulnerable populations if the transition creates problems of continuity with basic services or economic hardship deprives individuals from participating in education activities;
- Organizing groups of volunteer teachers, from abroad and overseas Cuban teacher associations, such as National Association of Cuban American Educators to help support Cuban teachers; and
- Engaging donors, including Organization of American States (OAS) countries, and appropriate publishers to work with Cuban teachers to supply temporary instructional materials to replace politicized materials withdrawn by the Cuban Transition Government.

During a recovery period, if requested and necessary, the U.S. Government could support the Cuban Transition Government's efforts to coordinate with international donors and assistance agencies, such as religious bodies, private donors, civic groups, and the Cuban Transition Government to do the following:

- Ensure educational facilities and services are available to as many of the Cuban people as possible; and
- Assist the Cuban transition educational system to remove legal, social, and health impediments to vulnerable populations who need special

consideration in either traditional educational systems or in non-traditional education systems, such as those for current or released prisoners, mentally ill individuals, the growing elderly population, homeless youth, or drug abusers.

CHAPTER 3: HELPING CUBANS GET TO FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS

Introduction

A Cuban Transition Government will face the daunting challenge of ending the brutal, one-party totalitarian state that has exercised complete control over all aspects of life on the island and of organizing a democratic process so that the Cuban people can reclaim their right to determine their own future. The current regime manipulates migration and uses violence and its absolute control of the Cuban economy to try to forestall the emergence of a viable alternative to one-man rule. Despite cruel repression, Cuba's independent civil society and opposition remain dedicated to securing liberty, meaningful change, and reconciliation for Cuba's 11 million citizens.

Cuba's legitimate future can only be decided by Cubans, for Cubans. They alone have the right to determine their own fate. Cubans have the right to see their sovereign will expressed through free and fair, multiparty elections. U.S. law provides that we can assist a transition government only if it is committed to early elections. We cannot support a Cuban government that does not allow its citizens to freely elect their leaders. U.S. support will not be made available to a government that adopts economic or other policies that suggest change but which do not actually achieve the goal of dismantling the repressive regime and making a full transition to democracy.

To meet international standards for free and fair elections, Cubans from across the political spectrum would have to be able to enjoy internationally recognized rights, including their right to organize politically, to carry on an open and transparent debate through a free press, to have a secret ballot, and to engage in voter education and poll observation. They would also have to be free from intimidation in the legitimate exercise of these rights.

The transition to such an open environment, sufficiently in advance of elections to meet international standards, implies that a Cuban Transition Government will need certain types of assistance from the international community. U.S. preparations should be structured to provide assistance

bilaterally but should also focus on building international consensus and assistance focused around supporting the process of building democracy in Cuba.

The principal purpose of any U.S. Government assistance should be to help Cubans create an environment where free and fair elections can take place. Experience demonstrates that the first six months of any assistance program are critical. This 180-day period will surely also be critical to helping Cubans secure a successful transition to democracy. Activities should be properly sequenced to have better impact. This means that the U.S. Government should be prepared well before a transition begins to be able to respond in a timely manner. We cannot wait until a transition begins to design assistance programs. We should do those things now and be ready to implement our aid as soon as we are asked to do so.

A Cuban Transition Government cannot be expected to rectify, in a few months, the consequences of decades of dictatorships. Accordingly, the U.S. should encourage the Cuban Transition Government to focus on those steps that will allow the election of a truly democratic, representative government that can take on that historic challenge.

A Transition Government should not be overburdened with tasks that are important to the medium and long term growth of Cuban society, but not essential to elections for a democratic government. This will only delay a real transition. Keeping these priorities straight will require real discipline on the part of U.S. agencies and private institutions eager to help the Cuban people.

U.S. assistance can be provided to help Cubans overcome obstacles to democratic elections and move rapidly to create an environment conducive to free and fair multiparty elections.

Release Of Political Prisoners

The release of political prisoners is a *sine qua non* for U.S. assistance and an essential precondition for creating an environment in which democratic elections may be held. It is not possible to create the

infrastructure of democracy if key political actors remain in prison and unable to participate because of their political views.

Many Cuban prisoners of conscience are well known to the international community. There are hundreds of others who are less well known.

U.S. policy makers will need the most accurate data possible to share with a Cuban Transition Government concerning those who should be released immediately to meet our criteria and international standards.

In addition, in compliance with international human rights standards, the Cuban Transition Government should establish a process for Cuban authorities to review claims of political incarceration, including cases of persons with apparent criminal convictions that were politically-motivated. The U.S. Government will be ready to provide technical assistance to help establish and support such a process.

Priority areas for U.S. Government-offered assistance

In order to help a Cuban Transition Government adhere to international human rights standards:

- Maintain a database of political prisoners – By collecting and collating data now from credible sources the U.S. Government should prepare itself to provide a Transition Government a list of those prisoners the U.S. and other international actors consider to be political prisoners who should be released forthwith;
- Provide assistance to help former political prisoners re-integrate into society;
- Provide healthcare to prisoners; and
- Assemble and maintain a current list of criminal justice system personnel implicated in abuse or corruption that will be available to all U.S. Government personnel discussing conditions for potential U.S. assistance with a Cuban Transition Government.

Eliminating Legal Obstacles To Freedom Of Speech, Freedom Of The Press, And Freedom Of Political Association

Current Cuban law and practice prevents the right to assemble without the permission of the regime, criminalizes dissemination of information contrary to the official line, and provides the state with a monopoly over the press. It also institutionalizes the Communist Party of Cuba as the only legitimate political party, and gives it Constitutional superiority over the government and society. Obviously, such obstacles must be suspended or eliminated at the outset of a transition period if Cubans are to be able to debate their future and organize themselves for free elections. Elimination of such obstacles will be a *sine qua non* for U.S. assistance to a Cuban Transition Government.

Priority areas for U.S. Government offered assistance:

- Designate a U.S. agency to maintain an authoritative compilation of the various laws, regulations, and policies that are clear obstacles to the exercise by Cubans of their basic freedoms so that U.S. officials can offer a clear and consistent view to a Cuban Transition Government of what steps it would need to take in this regard; and
- Development by qualified legal experts of an inventory of the obstacles in Cuban law to creating an environment for democratic elections as well as recommendations of the legal alternatives for repealing, amending, or suspending such provisions.

Preparing For Competitive Multi-Party Elections And Democratic Process

After almost 50 years of having a one party state imposed upon them, Cubans who desire a democratic future will need to build the infrastructure of democracy, in particular a competitive political process, an independent media, and credible election machinery.

The United States Government and other bilateral and multilateral donors should, working with qualified non-governmental organizations, immediately be ready to help Cubans prepare effectively to participate in their own democratic process. A critical challenge for the Cuban Transition

Government will be to replace the one-party system with a level playing field for a competitive political process.

The advent of democracy in other former Soviet-bloc totalitarian states in particular provides a wealth of valuable experiences for Cubans to draw upon. While no one country's experience exactly mirrors that of Cuba, a Cuban Transition Government will find there are many experts with experience in assisting similar transitions.

Continuing to strengthening independent and legitimate organizations on the island, including the country's courageous civic opposition and Cuba's religious institutions, will be essential to establishing a true democracy. The United States is committed to helping Cuba's independent civil society develop both before and after a transition is underway.

Priority areas for U.S. Government offered assistance:

- U.S. and other international party building NGOs should continue their work with Cuban democrats in advance of a transition and be prepared to substantially ramp up these efforts once a transition is underway (i.e., help Cuban democrats do appropriate assessments, develop plans, identify training for personnel, and take other preparatory steps now so that they are able to act promptly once a transition is underway);
- Offer support and training to strengthen a range of independent organizations such as youth, women, labor, and faith-based groups to engage effectively in democratic processes and to begin to lay the foundation for national justice and reconciliation; and
- Cuban political organizations committed to working in a democratic system must be prepared to provide the Cuban people a full range of political choices when free and fair elections are held; preparatory steps should include, but not be limited to, political party training that would help nascent parties develop platforms, field candidates, and reach out to voters.

Support a Free and Independent Media

Restoring freedom of the press will be essential to securing free and fair multiparty elections for the people of Cuba. U.S. assistance programs

have reflected the importance of a free media, providing rhetorical and concrete assistance to independent and dissident journalists on the island. A Cuban Transition Government will need to lift the state's monopoly on the media. It will do no good to have political parties and an honest election system if voters cannot learn of the political choices available to them or of their rights as voters.

A free media will help inform voters of significant political options and provide them with objective information concerning their rights and voting procedures. Uncensored news and information can also help counter rumors spread by those seeking to undermine a democratic transition by reducing tensions and uncertainty.

Priority areas for U.S. Government-offered assistance:

- Offer training on principles and functioning of a free press, as well as short-term material assistance for providing election coverage, such as newspaper inserts on coverage of election issues and televised debates;
- Training on use of media to foster public debate on issues of concern;
- Offer technical assistance from private sector media experts and journalists to support the development of private media;
- Provide short-term material assistance to new independent newspapers and media outlets;
- Offer training to journalists and help the media disseminate accurate information, in order to dispel rumors; and
- Help Cubans join the modern world by supporting uncensored access to the Internet.

Support For Free And Fair Election Administration

Cuba is a one-party state where virtually any form of independent political or civic activity is banned. While elected state institutions legally exist, they operate under the complete control of Cuba's Communist authorities. The U.S. Government needs to be prepared to help the Cuban Transition Government modify Cuba's electoral system to accommodate pluralism and, ultimately, produce credible, legitimate results. To assure both Cubans and the international community that the elections are free and fair, the Cuban Transition Government will likely wish to consider asking

the United Nations and the Organization of American States or other international organizations to support the electoral process with aid and observation missions.

A Cuban Transition Government committed to free and fair elections will need to reform the state's election machinery. While many technical components of the existing system may be feasible for use in a free and fair election, there is a difference between an election administration system designed to produce a foreordained result in a single-party police state, and a system capable of credibly administering a genuinely democratic election process that respects the rule of law and human rights.

A Cuban Transition Government will need international assistance to prepare for free and fair elections. The United States and other potential sources of assistance must be ready to respond immediately. Assessments of shortcomings in Cuba's existing electoral process and arrangements for recruiting expert personnel to help address these shortcomings should be in place before the transition if we are to be ready to respond at the outset of a transition.

The credibility of elections both domestically and internationally depends in great measure on a transparent and non-partisan election administration that is supported by public electoral observation, especially where the population lacks trust in the existing system. Democratic countries, including the United States and the other countries of the region, allow domestic and international election monitoring of the entire electoral process (from pre-election phases such as voter registration, party campaigning and media access to post-election activities) as an important contribution to their efforts to instill confidence among voters in the transparency of the process. Monitoring by party representatives and neutral bodies, in addition to international observation and appropriate media reporting, enhances the credibility of the process. Similarly, voter education, primarily through non-governmental organizations, is fundamentally important.

Priority areas for U.S. Government-offered assistance:

- Support an assessment of what needs to be done immediately to rectify any shortcomings in Cuba's election administration process:

- enough is known about the current system to allow an assessment to be made now so that potential donors will have a clear idea of what will be needed in terms of appropriate revisions to electoral legislation, technical expertise, and material resources;
- Ensure that experienced international elections experts are available immediately to assist Cuban Transition authorities in establishing an elections system that respects the rule of law and the democratic process;
 - Ascertain the potential benefits of a role for the UN and OAS in election capacity building and observation;
 - Support for a robust voter education campaign which focuses on voter rights, including the right to a secret ballot and the full range of technical election matters such as processes for updating the electoral registry, voter registration, voter eligibility, counting votes, fraud prevention, lodging complaints, location of polling places, and how results will be issued on Election Day, among others;
 - Support for the establishment of a credible domestic monitoring effort working with existing democratic forces to train and develop a network of credible, non-partisan domestic observers, using models developed in other transition countries; and
 - Support for international observers.

Offer appropriate technical support to a credible interim election authority:

- Assistance to ensure that the voter registration system is reliable and accurate;
- Appropriate technical support to create a coherent organization and logistical plan, communication strategy, and timeline for administering elections;
- Appropriate technical support to develop and implement a communications strategy that ensures transparency and confidence in the electoral process; and
- Appropriate technical support to develop and implement an election dispute resolution system.

Support For Professional, Institutional Military

During a transition, Cubans will want to promote and guarantee the professionalism, dignity, and political neutrality of their armed forces.

A Cuban Transition Government will likely rely on this institution to perform many tasks during the transition period. The challenge for the Transition Government will be to harness the military's energies and direct it in ways that contribute to a successful transition period.

Priority areas for U.S. Government-offered assistance:

- Offer assistance in preparing the Cuban military forces to adjust to an appropriate role in a democracy.

CHAPTER 4: HELPING CUBANS CREATE MARKET-BASED ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

Introduction

Establishing the foundation of economic growth will be vital to ensuring that the Cuban Transition Government guarantees political freedom, economic opportunity and holds free and fair elections.

For almost 50 years, the Cuban people have lived under a closed economic system designed to maintain control. It has stifled economic activity and discouraged entrepreneurship, keeping the Cuban people occupied with surviving and keeping food on the table for their families. The economic changes sure to take place in Cuba as it moves toward free and fair multiparty elections are thus likely to both create new opportunities for many Cubans and also cause some anxiety.

The Cuban people are well aware that the old system has not worked. Many will embrace entrepreneurship; others will be unsure of their ability to prosper under a free-market system. A Cuban Transition Government will face significant pressure to take quick action to increase economic opportunities and give the Cuban people hope for an economic stake in the new system. Quick and visible economic progress will give important legitimacy to the Cuban Transition Government as it moves to hold democratic elections.

Cubans have a demonstrated capacity to respond to economic stimuli. During the “Special Period” of the early- to mid- 1990s when Castro briefly lessened some regime-imposed economic restraints, the Cuban people demonstrated their ability to react quickly to economic incentives that benefited both themselves and society at large. Cubans have also revealed great entrepreneurship through their participation in the thriving informal markets.

Providing new economic opportunities will generate employment and economic growth. The task will be hard, but the rewards will be many. A Cuban Transition Government will likely confront the need to legalize many of the essential economic tasks now performed by the informal market. It

will also face a number of critical issues ranging from stabilizing the Cuban macroeconomic condition to creating a microeconomic framework that will allow private enterprise to grow. It will confront a long history of poor labor relations and demands to respect the rights of workers to form unions and bargain collectively. It will need to ensure that its critical infrastructure is not only adequately functioning, but on the road to recovery.

Because of their sensitive nature, many issues of economic stability and change will require the decisions of the Cuban Transition Government. However, other actors, including Cubans abroad, the international community, and the U.S. Government will have an important role to play in responding to requests from the Cuban Transition Government for support and advice. Assuming the Cuban Transition Government is receptive, Cubans outside Cuba can provide both much needed resources in the form of investments, increased remittances and loans, and needed advice on all aspects of working within a free-market system.

Macroeconomic Stability

Once an economic transition is underway, the Cuban Transition Government will be challenged to stabilize its macroeconomic situation. Historical evidence indicates that establishing and maintaining essential government services, avoiding high inflation, encouraging employment, and developing clear property rights will be essential to the successful transition from a communist system to a market-based economic system.

The Cuban Transition Government will face difficult budgetary problems. Currently, it can only meet its budget needs with the considerable support of foreign donors, primarily Venezuela. A Cuban Transition Government may not have access to that support, given the ideological basis of the Chavez Government's largess, but may be able to turn to new sources of assistance from multilateral donors. The Cuban Transition Government will face the challenge of strengthening its ability to collect taxes, as well as beginning the process of reorienting the tax code to a market-based economy.

A decline in revenues would force the difficult choice between cutting spending and running bigger budget deficits. The ability of the central

government to borrow from its own banking system without increasing the money supply will likely be very limited. Some spending cuts would be difficult as the Cuban Transition Government will most likely wish to maintain social services and the civil service payroll during the transition. As previous transitions have shown, the Cuban Transition Government may face a decision to cut spending on subsidies to state-run companies. While this would spur the restructuring of the state enterprise sector, it may also result in significant employee layoffs.

In order to support macroeconomic stability, a Cuban Transition Government is likely to want to avoid inflationary financing from the Central Bank. Instead, it could seek funding in the form of loans and grants from the international donor community.

Cuba's balance of payments will likely undergo significant adjustment during the transition if the exchange rate becomes convertible and restrictions on trade and cross-border financial transactions are lifted. A decision by the Venezuelan Government to suddenly cut its energy subsidies to Cuba (estimated at more than \$1 billion per year) could lead to severe short-term fuel shortages with commensurately negative consequences for the Cuban economy; though its potential impact is difficult to fully measure as much of the energy subsidies currently are diverted to support the regime's repressive security apparatus. However, increased flows of foreign investment and tourism receipts could help offset this impact. Sufficient resources will be required to meet government needs and provide adequate foreign exchange, to avoid having the Cuban economy fall into even greater disarray. New capital flows from outside the country will be necessary to ensure successful elections and an orderly transition to a democratic society.

In order to sustain economic growth in the post-election period, the Cuban Transition Government will need to consider steps to reorient Cuba's state controlled financial system to a market-based system. Both new and existing firms will need access to capital. As the transition proceeds and new financial service firms enter the market, the Cuban Transition Government will face issues of supervision and regulation of the financial system to ensure adherence to international norms as well as to build confidence in the financial system.

Should a Cuban Transition Government request United States assistance in its economic transition, the U.S. Government, as permitted under U.S. law, could:

- Provide technical assistance in the areas of tax policy and administration, budget policy and management, banking and financial sector reform, government debt issuance and management, and financial enforcement (anti-money laundering, anti-corruption, and to counter financing of terrorism);
- Offer short-term technical assistance to Cuba's Central Bank and help link Cuba's payments system to the U.S. payments system (via the Federal Reserve System);
- Assuming a Presidential determination as required by the Libertad Act, take steps to support the processing of Cuba's application for membership to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, and Inter-American Development Bank, provided that membership takes effect after a democratically-elected government in Cuba is in power;
- Assuming a Presidential determination as required by the Libertad Act, support technical assistance and support assistance financed by grants to Cuba from International Financial Institutions (IFIs); and
- Loosen or lift controls on financial flows to Cuba to allow needed entry of capital.

Integration with the International Trade and Financial System

In order to sustain a growing economy, provide for a rapid increase in its citizens' standard of living, and generate employment, a Cuban Transition Government will have to consider substantially opening its economy to international trade and finance. Cuba began this process during the "Special Period," but subsequently retrenched. In the short term, the present scarcity of goods of all types in Cuba suggests that allowing greater importation would have little effect on employment in the few import-competing industries that presently exist. The importation of capital and intermediate goods, however, should allow for the development of new industries. The Cuban Transition Government could replace quantitative restrictions on trade with a tariff system that would be less economically distorting and would provide a new source of revenue for the new

government. If the Cuban Transition Government pursues expanding trade, Cuban and foreign companies will need increased access to trade finance.

As it proceeds to normalize relations with external creditors, the Cuba Transition Government will also be confronted with the problem of the island's substantial debt. However, beginning to address Cuba's debt will allow Cuba to re-enter world capital markets. During the transition period, the Cuban Transition Government could begin to fully catalogue these claims and take preparatory steps for Cuba's re-entry into the IMF. Should Cuba need debt relief from its Paris Club creditors, Cuba will likely first need an IMF program. A standard rescheduling of Cuba's debt in the Paris Club could be achieved at no budget cost to the U.S. Government under certain conditions. Any Paris Club debt treatment beyond a standard rescheduling would likely require both legislative authorization and an appropriation from the U.S. Congress.

Should the Cuban Transition Government request United States assistance in its economic transition, the U.S. Government can:

- Support increased access for Cuba's exports to new markets by encouraging allies to include a free Cuba in regional free trade arrangements;
- Explore potential for a U.S.-Cuba Free Trade Agreement with a democratically-elected Cuban Government;
- Explore setting up a trade finance facility that would work with private banks operating in Cuba to provide working capital;
- Support trade ties with the Transition Government by setting up commercial and agricultural sections in the U.S. Interests Section that would provide information to and establish contacts for U.S. companies interested in exporting to or investing in Cuba; and
- Once a democratically-elected Free Cuba Government has become a member of the IMF and has obtained the necessary upper credit tranche IMF program, support rescheduling of Cuba's international debt under a Paris Club agreement, if it is determined that Cuba needs debt relief.

Encourage Small Business Development

The historical record demonstrates that small business development is critical to generating employment during transitions from closed to open economic systems. Small businesses are the engine of economic growth in many economies, including the United States. During the very limited liberalization of the 1990s, small businesses were an important source of new employment in Cuba. At times, some small businesses have been permitted to operate within the Cuban system, but only under strict limitations. More recently, the regime has cracked down heavily on all independent economic activity. Many more businesses operate informally in the black market. In the early stages of the transition, the Cuban Transition Government will face pressures to lift restrictions on small businesses and to legalize many activities now forced into the informal sector.

As new businesses form, they will require financing. The flow of remittances and other private funding to Cuba during a transition will be crucial to providing the Cuban people with the resources they need not only to meet their daily needs, but also to prosper through the creation of small/micro and medium enterprises.

Should the Cuban Transition Government request United States assistance to encourage small business development, the U.S. Government could:

- Establish micro-credit facilities, in cooperation with IFIs and NGOs;
- Encourage microfinance organizations that are already active in providing microfinance in Latin America to offer their services in Cuba during the transition;
- Provide technical assistance and expertise in the commercial law arena to support economic development;
- Help establish Business Information Centers (BICs) based on the U.S. Small Business Administration model used in other developing nations; and
- Encourage other organizations to provide much needed technical advice and entrepreneurial training to small businesses.

Ensuring Labor Rights are Respected

Cuba is a party to seven of the eight fundamental conventions of the International Labor Organization (ILO). However, the ILO and several other organizations remain critical of the labor rights situation in Cuba.

Cuban law does not allow workers in Cuba to form and join unions of their choice, and does not provide for the right to strike. Although collective bargaining is legal, it does not exist in practice. The ILO Committee of Experts has recommended changes to Cuba's labor law concerning freedom of association, protection of the right to organize, and collective bargaining.

The Cuban state continues to set salaries for workers, and is virtually the only employer in Cuba. In addition, the Castro regime requires foreign investors to contract workers through state-owned employment services. It decides who can and who cannot work for the foreign firm. The regime charges a very high fee to the employer, but usually passes less than five percent of that fee to the employee. A Cuban Transition Government will likely want to begin to free labor markets by allowing individual Cubans the right to seek employment where they choose and to be paid a market-driven wage.

Should the Cuban Transition Government request United States assistance to ensure labor rights are respected, the U.S. Government can:

- Provide technical assistance to assist with labor law reform and improve labor law enforcement to guarantee respect for basic labor rights;
- Review the role of the Labor Ministry to allow for the development of institutions that will enable a free labor market to function;
- Provide technical assistance in establishing and ensuring the adherence to core labor standards compatible with ILO standards;
- Develop public awareness of labor issues and train Cuban partners to conduct seminars on current labor laws, proposed reform efforts, and available services; and
- Provide technical advice and hands-on assistance to help countries modernize job placement and long-term training facilities to help ease

the transition from a government-controlled economy to a free economy labor market.

Property Rights and Confiscated Property

Perhaps no issue will be more fraught with difficulty and complexity for the Cuban Transition Government than the status of property rights and confiscated properties. The Cuban Transition Government will likely and properly wish to reassure the Cuban people that they will be secure in their homes and property, and not subject to arbitrary expulsion, and that a democratically elected government, representing the will of the Cuban people, should make decisions regarding confiscated property. At that time, persons whose property was expropriated without compensation in Cuba may choose to pursue legal remedies or seek compensation. A democratically elected Cuban Government will have a number of models to draw upon in devising a strategy for assuring property rights and addressing claims on confiscated properties.

The Cuban population has almost doubled while there has been no evidence of a corresponding increase in housing. In fact, there has been considerable deterioration in the housing that does currently exist. Over the years, the Cuban people have obtained various degrees of ownership of their homes. Some have full title; others have the right to pass their homes on to their children. Some have title only for their lifetimes. Many Cubans live in what were originally single-family homes but are now divided into numerous small apartments, sometimes with makeshift additions. In preparation for democratic government, the Cuban Transition Government should ensure that a residency database is in place and that officials of the government do not use their power to create a “*piñata*” of homes as happened in Nicaragua following the end of Sandinista rule.

A democratic Cuban Government will also have to address the disposition of confiscated industrial, commercial, and agricultural properties. For the most part, these decisions will be part of the process of privatization as part of a transition to an open, market-based economy. However, the Cuban Transition Government may find that some large infrastructure or industrial projects necessary to jump-start the economy may require early privatization to attract needed capital and technical expertise. In some cases,

previous transitional governments have returned property to former owners on the condition of an early injection of capital. In general, however, Cubans may wish to leave such decisions to a legitimate, democratically elected Cuban Government.

Should the Cuban Transition Government request United States assistance to protect property rights and address confiscated property, the U.S. Government can:

- Reassure the Cuban people that the U.S. Government will not support any arbitrary effort to evict them from their homes; and
- Provide technical assistance on the experiences of former Communist countries in dealing successfully with issues of property rights and privatization.

Agriculture

Approximately one-fourth of Cuba's labor force (1.1 million people in 2002) works in the agricultural sector. This does not include those employed in food or sugar processing. A jumble of farm organization structures characterizes the sector. Some state farms still exist, but cooperatives now occupy most of the agricultural land and employ perhaps half the agricultural labor force. The closure of three quarters of the sugar mills in the last few years has left an estimated 200 thousand farmers and rural laborers without work. Few workers have found new jobs.

All farmers are required to negotiate a contract with their local *acopios*, the state intermediaries who buy the crops at state controlled prices and provide the agricultural inputs. Central planners, through the *acopios*, dictate which crops are to be produced and where they should be planted. There are considerable losses in the transport of agriculture products from farm to market. The system provides the domestic component of the food sold in state markets and allotted to the rationing system. No independent financial institutions or providers of agricultural inputs currently exist. Since the mid 1990s, farmers have been allowed to sell part of their production through farmers markets.

Cuba could be a significant exporter of tropical fruits, citrus, tobacco, and possibly sugar once it begins to recover. It could also significantly increase its domestic food production. However, disentangling the current system to produce a more productive and market responsive agricultural sector will take time, and a Cuban Transition Government is likely to want to leave it to a democratically-elected government.

In the interim, the Cuban Transition Government could begin to lift restrictions on farmers and marketing. Judging from the success of the farmers markets, the removal of restrictions would lead to a significant increase in agricultural production, even with the current land tenure pattern. As farmers move away from the state *acopios*, there will be a need for new institutions to provide agricultural finance and farm inputs.

Should the Cuban Transition Government request United States assistance to stabilize existing Cuban agricultural capability and local markets in its economic transition, the U.S. Government can:

- Provide technical expertise on the development of agricultural financial markets and marketing of farm inputs;
- Provide technical expertise to achieve improved domestic production of food, faster transit to markets or food processing operations, and proper storage facilities;
- Help establish accessible, efficient markets, including farmers markets and retail grocers, that ensure price stability and incentives for growers to bring produce to market;
- Provide technical advice on implementing and enforcing food safety requirements for producers, processors, and retailers;
- Assist in the evaluation of capabilities and needs, as well as provide guidance in manufacturing requirements for exporting products to foreign markets; and
- Assist in the development of a sanitary and phyto-sanitary (SPS) regulatory system, as well as other regulatory frameworks necessary for exporting.

Infrastructure

All sectors of Cuba's physical infrastructure (transportation, energy, water, housing, communications, and the environment) need significant

overhaul. In general, all infrastructure sectors have suffered from cumulative problems that the Castro regime has failed to address. Routine maintenance and upkeep is necessary for all physical infrastructures to assure its proper functioning.

The Cuban Transition Government initially may want to concentrate on stabilizing those infrastructure sectors most critical to advancing humanitarian assistance such as its transportation and distribution networks and its electrical generation, transmission, and distribution systems.

Ports, roads, and bridges suffer from a serious lack of investment, as do many of the supporting components of a healthy transportation and distribution system. For example, warehousing facilities are in short supply, and the rail network is old and suffers from disuse caused by the collapse of the sugar industry. These issues will affect the Cuban Transition Government's ability to provide humanitarian assistance, especially food to areas outside of the major cities.

Cuban airports badly need safety upgrades to both their physical facilities and air traffic control systems. The current air traffic communications arrangement, as well as the communications system between Cuba and the United States, is barely sufficient for current traffic levels and will be completely inadequate for accommodating the projected traffic growth following the emergence of the Cuban Transition Government.

Power generation plants are antiquated and will eventually need complete replacement. In fact, the current operational capacity is less than 40 percent of the estimated total generation capacity. Moreover, under the Castro regime, industrial and commercial users have a higher priority than residential consumers when supplies are insufficient. This might be an area that the Cuban Transition Government may wish to review in order to fully satisfy what may be expected to be growing residential demand.

The electricity generation, transmission, and distribution sectors in particular will need to be stabilized as soon as possible. Electricity on demand, or the lack thereof, will be an early sign to the Cuban people of whether hope is in store for a better life. The current system is plagued by

blackouts caused by a host of factors including improper maintenance, use of inappropriate fuel, aging equipment, and unsuitable spare parts.

Water distribution lines are from pre-revolutionary Cuba, are much deteriorated, and are in need of replacement. Distribution facilities are inadequate, especially in regions away from major metropolitan areas. The same is true for the existing Cuban sewage system. Each will require physically extensive and financially expensive upgrading that should be left for the democratically-elected Cuban Government.

Housing is another critical infrastructure sector that has suffered under the Castro regime. Much of the current housing stock is in a bad state of disrepair, and will need significant upgrading. In addition, most experts note that there is a major housing shortage on the island. Estimates of the housing shortfall go as high as 1.6 million units, leading to significant overcrowding and further stress on the already poorly maintained housing infrastructure.

Paradoxically, two sectors, communications and environment, may actually be in a better position to benefit as a consequence of past neglect. The lack of an extensive communications infrastructure, coupled with the worldwide industry's continuing technological breakthroughs, may offer Cuba some real alternatives to wholesale physical replacement of existing wired telephone infrastructure. Cuban Transition Government should look to the experiences of other developing countries in modernizing its telecommunications infrastructure. This is also a sector that should benefit fairly rapidly from free market solutions, given a supportive legal, institutional, and regulatory environment where private enterprises can thrive.

Extensive environmental degradation has occurred under numerous failed Cuban government central-planning initiatives in manufacturing and agriculture. Cuba faces a number of environmental issues ranging from degraded soil, salt-water intrusion into its fresh water supplies, wildlife habitat destruction, and air pollution.

In terms of land use, deforestation and over-cultivation, soil compaction caused by the use of heavy farm machinery, and strip mining have caused excessive soil salinity and heavy land erosion. Salt-water

intrusion into freshwater streams has occurred as a consequence of agricultural runoff from heavily treated fields. Untreated wastewater from cities, sugar mills and other food-processing plants, and nickel-mining operations have caused extensive damage. In addition, irrigation practices have resulted in low groundwater levels, causing significant salt-water intrusion in fresh water and salinity in coastal soils.

Water quality issues, including increased salinity and sedimentation in freshwater streams, have negatively affected Cuba's wildlife habitat, and an over-reliance on enclave tourism has degraded Cuba's fragile ecosystems, particularly its massive reef system that serves as a spawning ground for a wide variety of aquatic species. Air emissions from industry and transportation are another environmental concern. Oil-fired power generation using high-sulfur domestic fuel is a major source of air pollution. Moreover, although Cuba has relatively few vehicles per capita, the vehicles it does possess tend to be old and in need of pollution controls and maintenance.

Cuba already has the knowledge and technical ability to address its infrastructure failings. What Cuba lacks today is the financial support and legal reform necessary to implement the needed improvements.

Should the Cuban Transition Government request United States assistance with essential infrastructure in its economic transition, the U.S. Government can:

- Conduct assessments by relevant agencies of the critical infrastructure, as outlined above, with an immediate focus on the short-term need to provide humanitarian and technical assistance;
- Assist in forming a Friends of a Free Cuba group of donors at the beginning of the transition period to address immediate infrastructure issues;
- Conduct an immediate assessment of the adequacy of electric power supply to meet critical needs and the adequacy and condition of the electricity transmission and distribution network;
- Provide short-term assistance designed to ensure that the Cuban electrical system remains viable in advance of more extensive, privately financed overhaul and modernization;

- Provide technical assistance to Cuba's air transportation system to increase air safety between the United States and Cuba, to ensure Cuba's ability to adequately handle short-term emergency assistance, to determine Cuba's needs for upgrading its air traffic system to handle an anticipated increase in passenger traffic, and to ensure that Cuban airports comply with international security standards;
- Provide technical assistance to promote the maintenance and upgrade of Cuba's critical maritime, road and railway systems needs, with an initial emphasis focused on distributing critical food and medical assistance to rural areas, in an effort to ensure that the needs of non-urban Cubans are adequately met;
- Assess, with the Cuban Transition Government, the prospects for using intra-island barges to relieve Cuba's inefficient land-based transport system for the movement of humanitarian relief to rural parts of the island;
- Assess the feasibility of creating a regular scheduled ferry service between Florida and Cuba in order to accommodate the anticipated increase in transport activity, thus providing an economical means to move people and supplies for humanitarian purposes;
- Similar attention should be paid to improving distribution of agricultural produce from agricultural/rural areas to markets and/or processors in a timely manner so as to allay spoilage of domestically grown produce;
- Conduct an immediate assessment of fuel needs, refinery capability, and adequacy and condition of crude oil and product pipelines, and natural gas pipelines and distribution network;
- Following an initial assessment of existing oil and gas inventory and facilities in Cuba, helping to ensure that emergency fuel needs are, at a minimum, sufficient to allow for the distribution of humanitarian assistance throughout the island;
- With respect to communications, there will be an immediate increase in the demand for international calls, particularly to the United States. U.S. Government agencies, and the U.S. private sector could provide technical assistance to enhance information flows, including access to computers and the Internet for lower income Cubans;
- Encourage U.S. and foreign firms to invest in infrastructure development and mobilize private sector technical assistance (in the

- energy, housing, urban planning, and transportation sectors) through key trade and professional associations;
- Provide advice on legal, regulatory and financial reform aimed at attracting private investment in infrastructure;
 - In conjunction with the U.S. private sector, provide both emergency restoration and adequate maintenance to ensure that the existing housing stock is at least adequate in the short run and that Cubans without access to sufficient housing have at least temporary shelter until a growing Cuban economy can accommodate new construction; and
 - Offer to provide environmental and urban planning assistance, especially at the local level, both to promote citizen involvement in planning, and also to ensure that the most critical infrastructure needs are identified and met at the earliest possible opportunity.

Issues for a Free Cuba

A number of issues critical to the long-term economic success of a free Cuba may likely need to be addressed once a freely elected, democratic Government is in place. Three in particular are: the disposition of state-owned enterprises (SOEs); the central role of the Cuban military in the Cuban economy; and property rights. The sensitivity of each of these issues requires that an elected government, enjoying widespread legitimacy with the Cuban people, make the ultimate decisions in these instances. In the interim, the Cuban Transition Government could consider undertaking an inventory of SOEs to determine which ones may be viable for later privatization, imposing budget constraints on non-viable SOEs, enacting measures designed to prevent tunneling or asset stripping in state-owned or military-controlled enterprises, and ensuring that private property rights are respected.

It will be the role of a democratically-elected Government to decide in a fair, humane, and transparent manner how to reconcile the needs of the Cuban people at home and abroad with respect to the critical issue of property rights. In that role, a free Cuban government will need to take into account the need for national reconciliation and the desire of Cubans living abroad to return to and/or invest in a new Cuba. It should avoid the example

of some other transition countries, such as Nicaragua, where the contentious issue of confiscated properties has been allowed to fester for years.

Once a democratic Government is in place, the U.S. Government should state clearly that it would respect the will of the Cuban people as they deal with the problem of confiscated property on the basis of fairness, equity, and national reconciliation. It should also offer technical and monetary assistance to expedite the titling process.

With respect to confiscated property that falls under the Foreign Claims Settlement Act, the U.S. Government should offer to settle these claims in government-to-government negotiations. The United States should also offer to allow any claimants who wish to seek private settlements to do so.

CHAPTER 5: THE ROLE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

The international community will be instrumental in assisting a Cuban Transition Government that guarantees political freedom, economic opportunity and holds free and fair elections. Support from the international community will also help accelerate Cuba's reintegration into the world economy, bring useful experiences to bear from other countries that have succeeded in transitions, and ease the humanitarian and financial burden on the Cuban Transition Government as it helps the Cuban people regain their sovereignty after decades of repression, abuse, and misrule.

If the Cuban Transition Government requests help, the U.S. Government will work with international organizations, bilateral donors, and international and existing Cuban assistance organizations to ensure coordinated and complementary assistance.

Engaging the International Community in Helping Cubans Respond to Critical Humanitarian and Social Needs

Water and Sanitation

The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and UNICEF will be key international partners for the water and sanitation sectors, especially in providing clean water and garbage disposal. The U.S. Government has a long record of working effectively with both institutions and provides budgetary support to PAHO to implement programs throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. Similar programs under PAHO could be supported to aid the Cuba Transition Government secure potable water for the Cuban people.

Health and Nutrition

The international community will be instrumental in assisting the Cuban Transition Government identify and respond to critical health and nutrition needs. Support and coordination in these efforts can maintain stability, and support a safe and secure transition process. If critical health and nutrition conditions exist, the U.S. Government could closely coordinate emergency aid with donors and UN organizations such as the UN Office for

the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), UNICEF, the World Food Program (WFP), PAHO, NGOs, existing independent Cuban organizations, and other partners, such as the International Red Cross. When identified critical needs are addressed or stable, U.S. Government health and nutrition recovery response efforts can be closely coordinated with PAHO, a close U.S. partner and key international healthcare assistance organization. PAHO is currently working with other bilateral donors that could be involved in a future Cuban-led transition.

Food Security

Support to the Cuban Transition Government to ensure food security for the Cuban people from the international community should be coordinated to prevent duplication of efforts and to ensure Cuban sovereignty remains respected. UN OCHA, WFP, UNICEF, UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and other donors could provide vital food aid, and agricultural or livestock assistance, such as provision of food, veterinary drugs for animals, and locally procured seeds. In addition, the UN WFP school feeding initiatives are integrated into the existing Cuban food system and should be utilized and expanded if necessary. Additionally, existing government run school feeding programs for children of different ages and backgrounds should be utilized where necessary.

Shelter

Should assistance with shelter be requested by the Cuban Transition Government, the U.S. Government could engage and coordinate efforts with the international community to ensure any shelter or settlement related actions are consistent with the desires of the Cuban Transition Government, Cuban populace and are in accordance with international standards. International and bilateral actors likely to become U.S. Government partners in Cuba transition shelter activities could include the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), UN OCHA, ICRC, UN Habitat, and UNDP. In addition, regional organizations such as PAHO, and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) could provide critical shelter assistance.

Education

The United Nations Development Program, UNESCO, the European Union, the OAS, and bilateral donors could offer assistance to the Cuban Transition Government in assisting in the reform of curricula, the training of teachers, and the introduction of new textbooks and computer-based learning.

Engaging the International Community in Helping Cubans Get to Free and Fair Elections

The international community will have tremendous assets to put at the disposal of the Cuban Transition Government to work toward elections, and then into the future. The international community can bring to bear international legitimacy, tremendous experience in lessons learned from other nations in transition, and resources. Technical advice and support can be solicited from nations that have experienced similar transitions.

Military Reform

Former communist countries have undergone comprehensive transition periods. The militaries and security services of those countries also successfully embarked upon varied types of reform as their governments took their first steps as democracies. Cubans can draw from those experiences by asking former communist countries to provide defense and security experts to help as the Cuban military prepares to serve as a professional force under the authority of a democratically-elected civilian government. These countries could also possibly provide the Cubans during transition with logistical support for their aging Soviet-era equipment. Other democratic countries or international organizations may be able to provide similar expertise and logistical support for the military and security services.

Counter-narcotics and Counter-terrorism

Any law enforcement cooperation approved during the transition period could be expanded to include neighboring countries. Once a democratically elected government is established in Cuba, the U.S. should sponsor Cuba's membership in regional institutions such as the OAS and

work with the UN to have Cuba become a signatory to the UN Convention for Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism.

Engaging the International Community in Helping Cubans Create Market-Based Economic Opportunities

Macroeconomic Stability

The international community can provide support through two channels: (1) the international financial institutions (IFIs) and; (2) direct donor support. Should it be requested by the Cuba Transition Government, (after the requirements of the Libertad Act have been met), the U.S. could support having the IMF and World Bank provide essential expertise or assistance during this period in constructing a macroeconomic framework for Cuba and developing credible financing gap estimates for use in mobilizing bilateral donor support. In particular, the international community should consider providing direct budget support to the Cuban Transition Government to maintain essential social services and prevent recourse to inflationary financing during the transition period. External budget support would also help support Cuba's balance of payments by providing a foreign exchange inflow.

Integration with International Trade/Finance

The international community can support the Cuban transition by removing restrictions on Cuban export products, which would allow Cuban firms to earn foreign exchange and become more competitive. It could also assist Cuba by working constructively with the Cuban Transition Government to reconcile debt claims and standing ready to consider necessary debt relief that would help Cuba achieve a sustainable debt profile.

Small Business Development

When confronting issues involving debt, aid, and trade, to name a few, the Cuban Transition Government could benefit from working with the international community during the transition. Experts from former transitional economies could be approached to provide technical assistance

and best practices with respect to their experiences in moving from a controlled to a market-based economy. Moreover, the World Bank, IDB, and OAS can be called upon to help create a regulatory and tax framework that would encourage the creation of new, formal sector businesses, as well as provide training and education for Cubans.

Property Rights

The international community and, particularly, former transitional countries have developed considerable experience in reestablishing titles to property. The lessons of their experience could be useful to the Cuban Transition Government as it prepares to deal with these issues in anticipation of a democratically-elected government.

Infrastructure

The international community could play a major role in the reformation of Cuba's physical infrastructure, both in terms of providing expertise and badly needed financing. An international donors conference might be useful to generate short-term assistance so that the most critical infrastructure needs are addressed during the transition. For example, the food distribution network - road, rail, and air - outside of the major urban areas will need to be rapidly improved to ensure that much needed food supplies are transported to rural Cubans. In addition, NGOs have tremendous technical and policy expertise on a wide variety of topics.

CHAPTER 6: THE VITAL ROLE OF CUBANS ABROAD

At the time of transition in Cuba, Americans will undoubtedly want to redouble their efforts to help the Cuban people. As part of a broader effort by the international community, Cubans living abroad around the world can play a crucial role in providing assistance in all of the areas covered by this report to secure the success of the transition to a Free Cuba. Cubans living abroad could provide much needed resources in the form of information, research and know-how, as well as material support, remittances, loans and investment capital.

As the 1998 “Agreement for Democracy” notes, there is but one Cuban people. The most tragic legacy of decades of brutal repression is the willful sundering of the Cuban family by the Castro dictatorship. In contrast, during these long decades, Cubans abroad have time and again welcomed and helped their brothers and sisters who fled the Castro regime’s tyranny.

The dictatorship deliberately distorts the truth and sows fear in order to keep Cubans divided. Reconciling and reuniting the Cuban family in freedom will be essential to the successful, rapid return of sovereignty to the Cuban people and the nation’s healing. Some Cubans abroad may want to go back to live out their days in the homeland they love and were forced to leave. Others may wish to rejoin and rebuild Cuba as citizens. Many will simply want to help.

There is a strong and vibrant community of people from Cuba in Europe, the United States, and throughout the Western Hemisphere. These Cubans were forced to seek refuge abroad by the brutal and repressive policies of the Castro regime. They have been successful in all areas of business, science, academia, and culture, yet their roots and connections to home remain strong.

Cubans abroad are already playing a leading role in providing humanitarian support to their brothers and sisters on the island and are at the forefront of efforts to promote the development of a civil society movement capable of presenting an alternative to the failed policies of the Castro regime. There is substantial and growing consensus among Cubans, on and

off the island, on the need for democracy and on the belief that Cubans alone have the right to debate and define their democratic future.

The following chapter sets forth the Commission's recommendations for steps the U.S. Government should take now to prepare to implement this report to respond rapidly to support a Cuban Transition Government. Similarly, the Commission strongly believes that the Cuban community abroad should re-double their efforts to foster reconciliation on and off the island and to undertake steps now to organize and prepare to assist a Transition Government in Cuba.

The Commission similarly recommends that the U.S. Government make available sufficient resources, including diplomatic, administrative, and financial, to assist the Cuban community abroad in such preparation. In addition, the U.S. Government should work with the Cuban community to ensure that their support to the transition, and the planning for it, is coordinated in a way that is consistent with overall reconstruction efforts.

Helping Cubans Respond to Critical Humanitarian and Social Needs

Cubans abroad are already at the forefront of efforts to meet the humanitarian needs of the Cuban people — doing from abroad what the Castro regime will not do for its own people at home. Cubans around the world have sacrificed to provide support to the families of victims of political repression, as well as to aid religious and other independent organizations in distributing critical food and medical assistance across the island.

The Castro regime's neglect of the needs of its people has been so severe for so long, that ameliorating the pent up, unmet needs of the Cuban people will be vital to the success of the Cuban Transition Government in holding elections. Therefore, the Cuban community abroad could play a vital role in providing humanitarian assistance, as well as assisting the U.S. Government and international organizations in similar assistance to the Cuban Transition Government and directly to the Cuban people.

Health and Nutrition

Americans in general and Cuban organizations, in particular, could provide trained doctors and nurses, who are native Spanish speakers and experienced in disaster relief, to provide immediate support to Cuba's increasingly fragile and depleted health-care system at the time of transition. Other Cuban organizations abroad have already established networks throughout Cuba of independent Cuban citizens, including doctors and nurses, who serve the communities in which they live. These established grass-roots networks could be strengthened at the time of transition to help meet the health needs of the Cuban people. Cubans abroad could begin now to train in detection of acute health problems that require medical assistance and to deliver preventive health messages to vulnerable groups.

Food Security, Water, and Sanitation

Currently, assistance from Cubans abroad is critical in order to prevent food insecurity and supplement the meager rations provided by the Castro regime. Under the Cuban Transition Government, such assistance from Cubans abroad will be all the more necessary to secure a successful transition. Cubans abroad have expertise in the food-security sector and their knowledge should be collectively and effectively utilized to assist this transition. Similarly, Cubans abroad with technical knowledge in water and sanitation could be a tremendous asset to assist a Transition Cuban Government if assistance is needed.

Education

Keeping a functioning school system through the transition period will very likely be a high priority for the Cuban Transition Government. As appropriate, transition authorities could invite Cuban teachers and school administrators from abroad to volunteer to work in support of Cuban teachers as the Cuban Transition Government staffs and manages its primary and secondary school systems during the transition.

Helping Cubans Get to Free and Fair Elections

Both the international community and Cubans abroad in particular will have tremendous assets to put at the disposal of the Cuban Transition

Government to work quickly to hold free, multiparty elections. Cubans abroad have organizational structures already in place, language abilities and cultural awareness, and a great and enduring personal interest in seeing improvements in Cuba.

Cubans abroad may be witnesses to or victims themselves of human rights violations. As part of a broader effort to confront past abuses and seek reconciliation, the Cuban Transition Government could draw claims interviewers, including practicing attorneys, from the Cuban community abroad to act in a supporting role. There are several Cuban-American organizations that currently have information regarding current and past human rights violations on the island. In addition, Cubans abroad will likely wish to donate money to support activities in this area.

The 1998 *'Agreement for Democracy'* expresses a vision for a new Cuban military to "propitiate and guarantee the professionalism and political neutrality" of Cuba's Armed Forces. Cubans abroad with military and defense backgrounds could be invited by the Cuban Transition Government to form teams to train, mentor, and advise Cuban defense and military leadership through the transition.

Helping Cubans Create Market-Based Economic Opportunities

The Cuban Transition Government should consider that Cubans abroad have consistently demonstrated remarkable commercial, financial, and academic success and could well prove to be critical in supporting an economic transition in Cuba.

Cubans living abroad may be able to help with contributions from trained economists and finance specialists to support the Cuban Transition Government as it seeks to implement market-based macroeconomic policies. They too will likely be a source of much needed capital. Continued or increased remittances will likely be a crucial source of foreign exchange and social support for many households as well as key to revitalizing a liberalized Cuban economy during the transition.

The Cuban community could also prove an asset for the transition by helping to establish new financial institutions or by assisting U.S.-based

financial institutions to establish new branches or connections in Cuba. Cubans abroad could prove to be an important source of investment during the transition and especially in a Free Cuba.

Cubans abroad are especially well placed to provide support for new Cuban entrepreneurs during the transition. For example, Cuban-American entities could use their in-depth knowledge of the U.S. market to accelerate the establishment of commercial and economic linkages between the U.S. and Cuba and facilitate the island's reintegration into the world economy.

Cubans abroad could help revitalize Cuba's agricultural sector by providing technical know-how, marketing expertise, and financial resources. They could also provide guidance relating to the export/import of agricultural commodities. They will also likely be an eager market for uniquely Cuban products, wherever they reside.

In addition, the expertise of Cubans abroad could play a key role in the area of infrastructure. For example, Cubans are justly proud of their architectural heritage. Both Cubans on the island and abroad could work, in partnership with NGOs and relevant U.S. Government agencies, such as the Department of the Interior, to preserve and restore Cuba's historic heritage, much of which has tragically been neglected under Castro's rule.

Property Rights

The Commission believes it would be detrimental for a Transition Government to place impediments on the return of Cubans living overseas. The return of exiles to Eastern European countries to help their homelands during their transitions to freedom and free market economic growth provides a vision of how Cubans abroad can be an essential element in rebuilding a Free Cuba. In turn, Cubans abroad should understand that action on confiscated property is best postponed until a fully legitimate, broadly representative democratic government is elected by the sovereign people of Cuba.

CHAPTER 7: PREPARING NOW TO SUPPORT THE TRANSITION

The publication of this second report of the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba does not conclude our work to help Cubans regain their freedom and sovereignty. Rather, with this report, the Commission continues an ongoing planning and coordination process to hasten democracy in Cuba. Furthermore, it institutionalizes ongoing planning by the United States Government to support, if requested, a Cuban Transition Government that guarantees political freedom, economic opportunity and holds free and fair elections.

There are core principles, particularly in regard to fundamental freedoms and free and fair multiparty elections, on which the U.S. Government will not compromise. That said, the Commission strongly believes the United States Government must remain flexible and continually update our planning so as to be ready to meet the Cuban people where they will want to lead their nation's transition to freedom. Accordingly, the U.S. Government will need to continue to refine its strategy to adapt to changing conditions in Cuba so that we are prepared to respond rapidly at a moment of change.

The observations and recommendations contained in this report are the result of a deliberative interagency process aimed at identifying the kinds of assistance a genuine Cuban Transition Government would likely request of the United States Government. It is important to stress that the purpose of the Commission's ongoing planning process is to welcome good ideas that help us refine our approach and—above all else—to keep pace with the process of transition already being led by independent Cubans on the island.

The U.S. Government will need to be prepared well in advance to help in the event the Cuban Transition Government requests assistance. The U.S. Government should structure its preparations so as to offer assistance immediately to the Cuban Transition Government bilaterally, as necessary, and then fold it into a broader international effort as that develops. The U.S. should encourage coordination of a broader international effort starting now, in the planning phase.

In establishing a strong foundation on which to build, the first six months of any requested U.S. assistance program is of paramount

importance. This critical 180-day period could mean the difference between a successful transition period and the stumbles and missteps that have slowed other states in their transitions toward democracy.

In addition to the steps recommended by the Commission to help hasten the transition, several steps can be taken to ensure broad-based involvement of the U.S. Government, international partners and organizations, as well as our own civil society and private sector. The Commission believes we need to take the practical steps outlined below toward implementing these objectives now.

Essential Steps to Take Now

To encourage transition planning and preparedness, the Commission recommends that the U.S. Government:

- Direct the Cuba Transition Coordinator to engage with Cubans committed to democratic change to review U.S. transition support plans to ensure these support Cuban needs and priorities;
- Initiate diplomatic outreach to donor nations and International Financial Institutions to lay groundwork for a future multi-billion dollar fund to support the consolidation of a democratic transition in Cuba;
- Establish a Cuba Transition Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC), co-chaired by the Cuba Transition Coordinator and the National Security Council, with support from the Department of State's Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization. Sub-PCCs on the various sectors, including democracy, security and rule of law, humanitarian assistance, and economic growth, should also be formed. The PCC would report to the Commission on the following:
 - Ongoing transition planning, including inter-agency coordination with state and local officials;
 - Recommending updates to transition plans, as circumstances warrant; and,
 - Coordination of inter-agency transition planning efforts, including the oversight of implementation of the recommendations in both the first and second CAFC report.

- Direct the State Department's Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization to prepare and maintain a list of U.S. Government employees with relevant Cuba or other reconstruction experience to aid a transition government;
- Incorporate training on Cuba into the Department of State's Foreign Service Institute training curriculum to ensure the maintenance of this knowledge;
- Direct the Department of Commerce to establish a private-sector advisory committee composed of experts on Cuba from around the country to ensure the best available advice is available to the U.S. Government as it prepares to support a Cuban Transition Government;
- Begin active engagement with international organizations interested in transition preparation such as multilateral lending institutions, particularly the IADB; UNDP; UNICEF; WFP; the EU; OECD; OAS, and PAHO where possible. Early planning by donor nations with the shared goal of helping to build a democratic and prosperous Cuba will ensure the synergy and timeliness of assistance during and after the transition;
- Take full opportunity to work with existing groups and individuals in and out of Cuba committed to a Cuban-led transition, and support efforts to identify skilled Cubans living abroad and other Spanish-speaking persons interested in supporting a Cuban-led transition process. Encourage these individuals and groups to be prepared to help with coordinated assistance efforts; and
- Continue regular senior-level briefings of the U.S. Congress so that members and staff are fully aware of U.S. transition planning and efforts to hasten a transition in Cuba.

Steps to Take Now to Prepare to Help Cubans Respond to Critical Humanitarian and Social Needs

The rapid provision of humanitarian assistance to the Cuban people will be critical to avoiding a humanitarian crisis and to ensuring the success of a rapid transition to democracy on the island. While this assistance must be based on a comprehensive and detailed assessment of the needs on the island at the time, the U.S. Government must take steps now to be in a

position to provide this assistance rapidly and successfully, and in concert with private and international organizations.

To be prepared to provide humanitarian assistance, the Commission recommends that the President:

- Designate a U.S. agency to take the lead to immediately identify critical humanitarian assistance, and a strategy for assessing needs, pre-positioning, and delivering such assistance to encourage and support a genuine transition;
- Designate a U.S. agency to be prepared to deploy humanitarian assistance in underserved areas, including locations of critical deprivation, e.g. prisons, within one week from the date of such determination, should the Cuban Transition Government request such aid;
- Direct the Department of State, with other agencies as appropriate, to begin discussions with those countries and organizations, including UN agencies, the OAS and non-governmental organizations (including religious and faith-based organizations) likely to provide humanitarian support to a Transition Government;
- Direct the Department of State and USAID to organize conferences on humanitarian aid to inform and to encourage a broad array of Cuban organizations abroad and other private entities to prepare to support a Cuban Transition Government;
- Direct USAID to facilitate U.S. NGOs and Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs) to register with USAID to assist transition planning and future aid projects, and to conduct training with these organizations on how to apply for, obtain, and administer USAID grants; and
- Direct the Department of State to coordinate an inter-agency process to plan for assessments that would help the Cuban Transition Government determine its needs during the transition, including the development of common assessment tools and consensus on categories of vulnerability. This process should also begin sector-based assessments to gather pertinent data for preparation efforts. Assessment conclusions and additional recommendations should identify immediate actions for U.S. Government consideration, such as pre-positioning emergency food and non-food items.

Steps to Take Now to Prepare to Help Cubans Get to Free and Fair Elections

The Commission recommends:

- The President charge the Secretary of State with assembling and maintaining a list of Cuban political prisoners to be used by all U.S. agencies as the authoritative basis for discussing the issue of political prisoners with the Cuban Transition government and for determining when the precondition to assistance has been met. Accountable individuals in the State Department, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Defense, and other agencies as appropriate, should be tasked with ensuring that all relevant information available to their agencies is communicated periodically to the Secretary of State's designee for this purpose;
- The President designate an appropriate U.S. agency to put in place preparations that will ensure that the U.S. will be in a position to provide technical assistance in the first two weeks after a determination that a Cuban transition is underway;
- That the Secretary of State commission the development by qualified legal experts of an inventory of the obstacles in Cuban law to creating an environment for democratic elections as well as of the legal alternatives for repealing, amending, or suspending such provisions. Such experts should be charged with keeping such inventory up to date and should be qualified and prepared to provide technical assistance to a Cuban Transition Government immediately upon request;
- The Department of State be made responsible for assembling and maintaining current a list of criminal justice system personnel implicated in corruption or abuse that will serve as the authoritative guidance for all U.S. Government personnel discussing conditions for potential U.S. assistance with a Cuban Transition Government;
- The President designate a single U.S. Government agency as responsible for provision of any requested training assistance to Cuban police. That agency would maintain curriculum for courses designed to provide immediate specialized training on human rights, particularly those associated with political activities such as freedom of organization, freedom of expression, and political campaign activities. It could also design a training system for creating a new investigative police. The agency could enter into relationships with

- implementing partners and contractors such that it would have qualified personnel ready to deploy within two weeks of a determination that a transition was underway and the request of a Cuban Transition Government;
- The President should designate a single U.S. agency to be responsible for any requested interim retraining of judges and prosecutors with a capability to deploy within two weeks of a determination that a transition was underway; and
 - The President should designate a U.S. Government agency to provide interim retraining and other technical assistance to corrections system officers if such a request is made by a Cuban Transition Government.

Entering into “retainer” type arrangements with qualified implementing partners now will ensure that, when the moment comes, the U.S. Government will have in place both plans and personnel ready to deploy to assist a Cuban Transition Government from the outset, if requested. In doing so, the U.S. Government will save valuable time once the transition occurs. Every second wasted in scrambling to assemble teams of experts and appropriate lists in the potentially chaotic moments following a transition could lead to instability and reduce the effectiveness of the Cuban Transition Government. The Commission therefore recommends:

- The Secretary of State encourage the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), and other NGOs receiving funding from the U.S. Government to promote democracy in Cuba, to have in place satisfactory plans for providing immediate assistance to the development of political parties, issue-based NGOs, election monitoring efforts, voter education campaigns, and the like immediately following a determination that a transition is underway. The U.S. Government should make funding available now to support this effort; and
- That the Secretary of State ensure that an organization with proven capability in election administration has in place detailed plans and personnel ready to deploy to assist a transition government in providing credible election administration should it be requested. The arrangements should be such that this organization can be delegated to work with a responsible international organization if appropriate. The U.S. Government should make funding available now to support this initiative.

Steps to Take Now to Prepare to Help Cubans Create Market-Based Economic Opportunities

To be prepared to assist the Cuban Transition Government in taking the necessary steps to open up Cuba's economy and establish the conditions necessary for elections and the pre-conditions for a Free Cuba, the Commission recommends that the U.S. Government:

- Direct the Department of Commerce, Agriculture, the U.S. Trade Representative, and the Department of State to undertake a series of seminars with U.S. companies in order to initiate planning for assistance to a Transition Government and ultimately doing business with a free, democratic Cuba;
- Identify model laws and practices that might be useful to a Cuban Transition Government seeking to enact legislation and regulations designed to enhance economic growth, attract foreign investment, and encourage entrepreneurship.

Additional Recommended Action

The President should direct the Commission to submit additional recommended steps and reports as required on an ongoing basis.