

Right of Reply
United States of America
March 14, 2007

Thank you, Mr. President,

Yesterday the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba, Mr. Felipe Perez Roque, made several references to the United States and attributed certain positions to us. I would like to set the record straight.

Terrorism is real. Every country here has been affected by it. All civilized countries need to pull together to fight terrorism. Within the framework of democracy and rule of law, the United States Government has adopted policies to fulfill its responsibility to protect its citizens and its territory.

The United States thoroughly addressed its policy on the detention of enemy combatants in reports to the Committee Against Torture and Human Rights Committee. I reiterate: torture is prohibited by all U.S. personnel in all locations at all times.

The United States' commitment to the Special Procedures mechanism is well-known; we have welcomed the visits of dozens of mandate holders over the years. My government was particularly struck by Cuba's new-found support in yesterday's statement for a range of civil and political thematic mandates, including those on Freedom of Opinion and Expression, Torture, and the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention. This is great news. My government sincerely hopes this new support from the government of Cuba will soon lead to invitations from Cuba to these mandate-holders to visit Cuba, for the first time in their history.

Thank you, Mr. President.