

U.S. Intervention

Report of the Personal Representative of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Situation of Human Rights in Cuba

September 26, 2006

Thank you, Mr. President.

Cuba is one of the world's most repressive regimes. The government there constitutes a threat not only to the people of Cuba, but also to regional stability – particularly with respect to the consolidation of democracy and market economies in the Western Hemisphere.

Cuba trumpets its human rights record but tragically, it does not protect or promote the human rights and fundamental freedoms of its own citizens. Cuba has banned the publication of the Universal Declaration of

Human Rights, as well of any non-state sanctioned publication. Cubans are daily denied freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and the freedom to vote and take part in a multiparty democratic political system.

The United States agrees with Madame Chanet's recommendation that Cuba should halt the prosecution of its citizens who are exercising rights reflected in Articles 18, 19, 20, 21, and 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The United States strongly supports her recommendation that Cuba should allow NGOs entry into the country. We also agree that Cuba should promote pluralism in trade unions, associations, political parties, and other entities throughout Cuba.

The United States disagrees with the comments on the embargo in the Report. The Cuban government's neglect of its own people is the reason for Cuba's economic and

political woes. United States policy towards Cuba encourages a transition towards a democratic, market-oriented society. The embargo denies the Cuban government hard currency that it would use to continue to oppress the Cuban people and further prop up the regime.

Despite the combined best efforts of the international community to engage Cuba on its human rights situation, the Cuban government has persisted in maintaining a repressive and totalitarian state that deprives the Cuban people of the right to express dissent without the risk of incurring a decades-long prison sentence.

The United States welcomes the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur that, if implemented, would help address some of the iniquities wrought by the regime on the long-suffering Cuban people.

Thank you, Mr. President.