



September 27, 2010

The Honorable Howard L. Berman (CA-28)  
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs  
United States House of Representatives  
2170 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (FL-18)  
Ranking Member, Committee on Foreign Affairs  
United States House of Representatives  
B360 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Berman and Ranking Member Ros-Lehtinen:

We have spent our professional lives defending the national security interests of the United States and believe that action should be taken by Congress now to intensify our country's engagement with Cuba, starting with repeal of all remaining restrictions on the right of Americans to travel to Cuba.

We call for this change because our current policy limits Americans' freedom of movement while also undermining our national security, and prevents our nation's best ambassadors – the American people – from engaging directly with the Cuban people at a time when such contact would serve our nation's interests and goals.

By increasing people-to-people contacts with Cubans, the United States will not be doing the Castro regime any favors; we would actually be doing the opposite. What the Castro regime fears most is a thawing of its relations with the United States, and in particular, allowing its citizens to have direct contact with the American people.

We have already seen how the loosened travel restrictions for families visiting relatives in Cuba have begun to build good will and change-from-within in Cuba. Lifting the overall travel ban would extend this cultural and economic engagement and build on this momentum by helping to undermine the roots of anti-Americanism in that country, thereby enhancing our security by removing unnecessary sources of discontent in a country so close to the United States.

Finally, it is clear that Cuba does not pose a threat to the security of the United States. It is also clear that the country is in the midst of multiple internal changes. Therefore, now is the time for the United States to engage more directly, through its citizens, with the Cuban people by allowing our citizens to travel there. Direct contact with the Cuban people will put our values on display and help move along changes that can have significant benefits for American citizens, the Cuban people, and our national security.

We strongly support you in your efforts to end the travel ban and look forward to your committee moving expeditiously to rescind the travel ban to Cuba.

Sincerely,

/s Lieutenant General John Castellaw, United States Marine Corps (Retired)

/s Major General Paul Eaton, United States Army (Retired)

/s Lieutenant General Robert G. Gard, United States Army (Retired)

/s Rear Admiral John Hutson, United States Navy (Retired)

/s Brigadier General David Irvine, United States Army (Retired)

/s Brigadier General John Johns, United States Army (Retired)

/s Lieutenant General Charles P. Otstott, United States Army (Retired)

/s Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson, United States Army (Retired)

/s Brigadier General Stephen N. Xenakis, United States Army (Retired)