

*Jan. 3 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1997*

before in the 38-year history of Castro's oppressive regime.

Today, in order to consolidate and build on the momentum we have generated for democratic change in Cuba, I have decided to extend for another 6 months the suspension of the right to file suit under title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act.

A number of developments show the strengthened international consensus for change in Cuba. The European Union, acting consistent with its traditional democratic values, in December adopted an historic "Common Position" binding all 15 member nations to promote democracy and reform in Cuba. The EU's action explicitly makes any improvement in political or economic relations with Cuba contingent on concrete advances in human rights and political freedoms on the island. At the Ibero-American Summit in Santiago in November, heads of state from Latin America, Spain, and Portugal called for democracy and full respect for human rights, thus emphasizing Cuba's isolation as the hemisphere's only nondemocratic nation.

Governments and nongovernmental organizations are increasing their backing for dissidents on the island and keeping international attention focused on repression in Cuba. A new European Platform for Human Rights and Democracy in Cuba is being created to help coordinate NGO activity to strengthen independent groups in Cuba. European business leaders and organizations are supporting a set of best business practices so, if they invest in Cuba, it will benefit Cuban workers and not the government. Eu-

rope's major labor organization, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, has strongly condemned Castro's labor practices and called for free trade unions.

These and other steps have sent a clarion message of hope to the Cuban people. They underscore that it is Castro who is isolated, not those who welcome the democratic tide of history. They demonstrate the international community's resolve to end the dictatorship so the people of Cuba can enjoy the freedom and prosperity they deserve.

The international momentum we have built to promote democracy in Cuba must be preserved and strengthened. During the coming 6 months and thereafter, we will continue working with our allies to develop the most comprehensive, effective measures to promote democracy in Cuba that we can. We also will continue to enforce title IV of the LIBERTAD Act.

The law requires that I review title III every 6 months. I would expect to continue suspending the right to file suit so long as America's friends and allies continue their stepped-up efforts to promote a transition to democracy in Cuba. I hope, furthermore, that the momentum created by the EU's actions will lead to similar Cuba democracy efforts by others, including governments in our own hemisphere.

The Cuban people have lived under tyranny for too long. We must sustain our efforts to hasten the arrival of democracy in Cuba. As a result of increasing international pressure, we have never been closer to that day. We will not be satisfied until that day arrives.

## Letter to Congressional Leaders on Review of Title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996

*January 3, 1997*

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

Pursuant to subsection 306(c)(2) of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-114), (the "Act"), I hereby determine and report to the Congress that suspension for 6 months beyond February 1, 1997, of the right to bring an action under Title III of the Act is necessary to the national interests of the United States and will expedite a transition to democracy in Cuba.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Jesse Helms, chairman, and Claiborne Pell, ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Mark O. Hatfield, chairman, and Robert C. Byrd, ranking member, Senate Committee on Appropriations;