

Castro's lovers bash Bush

By HUMBERTO FONTOVA
(Excerpts)

"Bush is a tyrant," declared Harry Belafonte at an Atlanta march commemorating the Voting Rights Act of 1965. A few years ago Belafonte was asked about his friend Fidel Castro. "If you believe in freedom!" Belafonte quickly replied. "If you believe in justice, if you believe in democracy-- you have no choice but to support Fidel Castro!" It's hard to know where to begin responding to a mentality like Belafonte's. So let's proceed to other luminaries at the Atlanta march. Jesse Jackson made the scene and declared that, "the Voting Rights Act extension is critical because the same old enemies of civil rights and voting rights will always keep up their activities. We must protect the right to vote against discrimination."

In 1984 Jesse Jackson was in Havana, arm in arm with a man who abolished voting rights for blacks, whites--for any hue on any Cuban Rainbow Coalition-- and under penalty of the firing squad. . "Fidel Castro is the most honest and courageous politician I've ever met!" beamed Jesse Jackson .Rep. Charlie Rangel was not to be outdone at the Atlanta march. Referring to President Bush, Rangel said, "his record against human rights, civil rights, economic rights, is absolutely terrible." Charles Rangel is always banging the loudest drums in these campaigns. He always walks point on these missions. The Cuban "President's" famous visit to Harlem in 1995 comes to mind here. "God Bless you, Fidel!" boomed Pastor Calvin Butts of Harlem's Abyssinian Baptist Church while introducing the man who jailed the longest suffering black political prisoner of the 20th Century, and who pleaded, begged and even tried to cajole Nikita Khrushchev into nuking New York in 1962.

Eusebio Penalver might quibble with

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PNDC proposes democracy in action

By ARIEL REMOS
Diario Las Américas (Excerpts)

Democracy in action in a liberated Cuba was the focus of the seminar "Challenges and Opportunities of a Democratic Cuba" offered recently by the Democratic Nationalist Party of Cuba (PNDC), headed by Alfredo M. Cepero, Secretary General. Destroyed physically and morally by a 47-year tyranny, the task of restoring Cuba to a free and sovereign democracy will be an enormous one in matters such as education, laws, health, housing, economy, and urban restoration.

As Reverend Martin Añorga well professed in his explanation, Cuba must be re-educated. In other words, before any other type of educative process is undertaken, it must undertake one of

reeducating itself; which implies to first dismantle the Marxists concepts and indoctrination to take steps toward values of freedom and democracy. Dr. Luis A. Gomez-Dominguez commented on the need for a new and free society within a sworn code. "There will not be a solution in Cuba until we have a democracy," he stated. "Cuba needs a provisional multilateral intervention that guarantees security and will give the Cuban people time to organize themselves as a democracy." The Constitution of 1940 plays an important role in this.

The freedom of expression before 47 years of obstruction and persecution of a free press was also a topic of interest presented by jour-

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True Cuban opposition presents a united front

*"Coming together:
Word of order"*

Inspired by this phrase of Jose Marti, outstanding leaders of the opposition inside Cuba have brought forth the following uniform declaration:

"We propose the following points as the theme of discussion of the opposition of the Cuban nation, be it within the country or in the exile community.

All are subject to discussion. Their enrichment will better our conditions to present our demands together to the totalitarian government and to show the world what we, as peaceful activists, aspire for democracy in Cuba.

1. Demand the immediate and uncondition-



Dr. Oscar Elias Biscet

Fidel, capo of the Havana cartel

By ERNESTO BETANCOURT
(Excerpts)

The book, *The Big Hoax*, by Jose Antonio Friedl, itemizes in great detail the drug-trafficking activities of Fidel Castro throughout his career. Friedl bases his writings on numerous books and articles as well as statements brought before judicial and congressional hearings. Huber Matos and Carlos Franqui, among others, have described Fidel's cynical reaction with which begins this narrative: the accepted support of Crescencio Perez, little chief of the farming and distribution of marijuana in the Sierra Maestra. Once in power, Fidel promoted drug trafficking with two objectives: his own personal gain and moral corruption, especially among the youth in the U.S.

Next, Friedl discusses the role of Major Manuel Pineiro and his Departamento America. Here we see how Salvador Allende got involved in these activities and their expansion with his rise to the presidency of Chile.

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THE NEW NATION

Published quarterly in english and spanish by the Nationalist Democratic Party of Cuba which is registered as a non-profit corporation under the law of the State of Florida

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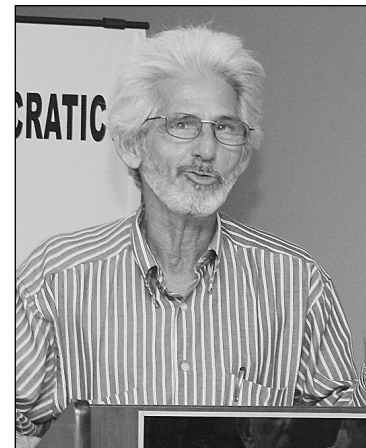
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nalist and former prisoner Manuel Vazquez Portal and the Reverend Marcos Antonio Ramos. In turn, Dr. Antonio Jorge highlighted the immense help a post-Castro Cuba will need from the international financial entities. He also stated that the new republic cannot and should not assume responsibility for a debt created by the illegitimate regime of Castro. The main concern of environmentalist Eudel Eduardo Cepero is preserving the purity of the environment once the speedy reconstruction process takes place upon the fall of the dictatorship. The steps for urban restoration, where almost everything is in ruins and down to its foundation, were among the challenges that a post-Castro era will face, undertaken by architect Nicolas Quintana.

Everything that was brought forth in the seminar, which took place at the Holiday Inn across from the University of Miami, constitute elements for a democracy in action, as was expressed by Alfredo M. Cepero, "where improvisation leads the way towards planning, the haste to perseverance, the diatribe to the agreement and the indifference to commitment... We have to move



Alfredo M. Cepero



Manuel Vazquez-Portal

beyond our differences and emphasize our solidarity." Cepero concluded by saying, "Here we have come as Cubans to exchange ideas to find a better way to serve our country, be it as average citizens or as members of a political party. But all of us as guardians of our rights and soldiers of our duties in the rebuilding of a



Vista panorámica de los participantes en el seminario.

free and democratic Cuba that we all yearn for but will only deserve when we have learned how to found it and defend it."

IS VENEZUELA GOING NUCLEAR?

By DOUGLAS MACKINNON
Houston Chronicle (Excerpts)

The most prominent development in U.S.-Venezuelan relations these days involves the case of Luis Posada Carriles and whether he should be extradited from the United States to Venezuela. Meanwhile, a story with the potential to be much more important is being ignored: The growing power and global ambitions of Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez.

To the minute number of people who understand the threat Chavez poses to the United States, his recent hosting in Caracas of Iranian President Mohammad Khatami was disturbing enough. But high oil prices have made Chavez an antagonist to be reckoned with, and we ignore such a menace at our peril.

Standing side by side with Khatami in Caracas, Chavez said, "Iran has every right to develop atomic energy and to continue research in that area. ... Faced with the threat of the U.S. government against our brother people in Iran, count on us for all our support". After receiving the report that Chavez might be trying to acquire nuclear technology or weapons from Iran, I met with a

high-ranking U.S. official to voice my concerns and ask what he thought about such speculation. He answered me point blank: "It would not surprise me. Chavez is dangerous, underestimated and capable of almost anything".

Toward that end, Chavez recently went on al-Jazeera television to call for Arab and developing nations to unite against the United States and President Bush. Terrorists use this network as a tool against U.S. and coalition forces in Iraq, and Chavez told its viewers, "We have already invaded the United States, but with our oil."

Coupled with the disturbing news that Chavez might be trying to acquire nuclear weapons is the fact that Chavez, a dictator in all but formal title, just concluded a deal with the People's Republic of China to launch a telecommunications satellite for him. So great is Chavez' interest in rockets, space and missiles that the government of Venezuela has created a special commission to advise him on such issues. Chavez with a nuclear weapon is bad enough. Chavez with a medium-range ballistic missile just minutes from the southern United States is a disaster waiting to happen.

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al release of all political prisoners without terms or exclusions. These liberations must be made through an irrevocable legal provision so that those released from the group of 75 will not be subject to any reprisal once outside prison.

2. Consider that the subject of political prisoners should continue to be first on the agenda of any activity of the groups that agree to a meeting. Until the last one of them is released, monitoring the situation, acts demanding their freedom, and protests for abuses suffered should not cease. Condemn new imprisonments of citizens for merely expressing peacefully the discrepancies of the ruling system, just as has been occurring in recent years, so that the release of the present political prisoners does not become a simple recycling act.

3. Demand of the present

Cuban government the immediate abolition of the death penalty and demand of the authorities to commute all outstanding death sentences of many compatriots for years.

4. Demand the immediate return of our country to democracy. Reject any discrimination towards citizens for their political ideas, as well as any legal provision that grants any political party authority over society as a whole and put into effect considerable economic reforms that award economic freedom to its citizens. The Cuban economy continues to experience a grave and growing crisis, a direct result of a dismal economic system put in place and maintained by the current regime, which is irreversible as long as the necessary changes are not implemented. For the Cuban government politics is more impor-

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Fidel sent the agent Demid Fernandez de Ona as head of Cuban intelligence in Chile, and let him marry Allende's favorite daughter, Tati, despite the fact that he was already married. Upon discovering her husband already had a family, Tati committed suicide during her exile in Cuba.

This book also relates the distribution of arms to the M-19 of Colombia in exchange for the beginning of cocaine shipments to the U.S. in 1975. This scandal involved the Cuban ambassador to Colombia, Fernando Ravelo, an agent of Pineiro, and Jaime Guillot Lara, Colombian trafficker. In the chapter about the "Panama connection," Fidel acts as the liason between the Medellin Cartel and Manuel Antonio Noriega, according to testimony before a U.S. Senate commission. Shortly thereafter, Carlos Lehder, Colombian trafficker, enters the ring, as well as Robert Vesco, the notorious international swindler and smuggler that negotiated with the Sandinistas drug trafficking through Nicaragua.

The drug trafficking participation of the Castros creates a crisis with the case of father and son Ruiz, whose activities have been infiltrated by the DEA. When they are to be tried in 1989, Fidel attends the trial of General Ochoa and kills two birds with one stone. He frees himself from being accused of any involvement in drug trafficking and eliminates a potential rival within the armed forces.

In 1996, a strange case unfolds on Jorge Gordito Cabrera, arrested while smuggling 6000 pounds of cocaine into the U.S. Photos were found of him with Fidel and later with Al Gore and Hillary Clinton having made a \$20,000 campaign contribution to Clinton's reelection. In the last chapter, Friedl describes the position of American authorities to these acts under the title, "The Strange Silence of Washington, a Scandalous and Systematic Conspiracy." For me, this silence is simply a way to avoid taking any action. When they do act, they can count on our support.

Firmas:

Elsa Morejon Hernández

Lawton Foundation for Human Rights. Signs representing Dr. Oscar Elias Biscet

Vladimiro Roca Antunez

Movimiento Todos Unidos

Félix Antonio Bonne Carcases

Assembly to Promote Civil Society

Rene Gómez Manzano (PRISONER)

Assembly to Promote Civil Society

Martha Beatriz Roque Cabello

Assembly to Promote Civil Society



tant than the economy.

5. Support the Universal Declaration of Human Rights document of which the Republic of Cuba was a participant and a signer; and demand that the Cuban government respects the 30 articles of said international document.

6. Consolidate even further the indissoluble alliance between the Cuban democrats from within the island and the exile community and make the firm disposition to continue, without yielding, the peaceful struggle towards the democratization of our country and national reconciliation.

7. Avoid public disagreements among opposition projects, civic or in defense of human rights, between groups and organizations of the dissident movement or

among members of the same; these situations only lead to the weakening and the loss of focus of the struggle for the peaceful reforms toward a free and democratic society within a lawful democratic state. Work to avoid the demonstrations of sectarianism, intolerance and marginalization on the part of any person, organization or group that forms part of the movement for Cuban democracy. Promote fraternal, respectful, and cordial relations among the dissidents so that they

also reflect the essential unity of our peaceful struggle above the differences in points of view, focus or ideological positions.

8. Divulge among the population every opposing project that promotes democracy and respect for human rights, whether presented by any opposing organization or group, regardless of the particular criteria that we might have on the same."

Without any special status within the opposition, the names below sign with only the desire to democratize our country. We call on the rest of the Cuban democrats to express their opinions so that we can make this an instrument on which to base the reforms in our country.

CASTRO, from page 1

Harry, Jesse and Charlie. He's the longest-serving black political prisoner of the 20th century. A black Cuban, he was holed up and tortured in Castro's jails longer than Nelson Mandela languished in South Africa's. Through 30 years of hell in Castro's dungeons, Eusebio Penalver stood tall, proud and defiant .Ever heard of him? He lives in Miami. Ever see a CNN interview with him? Ever see him on "60 Minutes"? Ever read about him in the New York Times? Ever hear the NAACP or Congressional Black Caucus mention him?. Today Castro's police bar black Cubans from

tourist areas and 80 percent of Castro's prison population is black. Cuba's most prominent political prisoner, Elias Biscet, is black (I won't bother asking if you've heard of him.) And exactly .08 per cent of Cuba's Communist rulers are black.

In other places they called this "apartheid," and Harry, Jesse and Charlie ranted and railed against it, as they rant against President Bush today. But regarding a tropical Stalinist and major league racist, they do a quick thumbs up and shout themselves hoarse with "Viva Fidel!" What happened to "We Shall Overcome?"

Escape from Cuba "Our only luggage was hope."

BY SERGIO PERODIN JR.
Survivor of the massacre of the Tugboat 13 of March.

I was only 7 years old and living in communist Cuba. My parents yearned for freedom and dreamt of coming to America. They secretly planned to escape, along with 72 others who shared their dream. We embarked on a wooden tugboat. Our only luggage was hope, but in that attempt, 41 lives were lost. Among them, my mother and brother.



Their impact was so powerful that children were swept to sea from their parents' protective embrace.

Those on the tugboats shouted insults over loud-speakers. In a frenzy, they crashed into the ship, damaging the hull, which caused the tugboat to take in water rapidly. Within minutes, the ship sank. People were screaming and begging to be

rescued, but those on the tugboats showed no pity. After what seemed an eternity of brutal abuse, the tugboats finally stopped and began picking up survivors. My mother and brother were not among them.

A month later, my dad was released from prison, and we were more determined than ever to attempt our search for liberty once more. It took about two weeks to build a raft. One night we embarked on the raft along with seven others and began navigating the seas with wooden paddles. Finally, we were rescued by the U.S. Coast Guard and eventually taken to the

Guantánamo Naval Base in Cuba.

On Jan. 21, 1995, we finally arrived in the United States. At that moment we felt happier than ever, but there was sadness and anger and disappointment that in our search for a new life, my father and I had lost our most valued treasures -- my mother and brother. Yet the first thing my father and relatives did was fly to Washington and testify before the U.S. Congress on what has come to be known as the Massacre of the Tugboat 13th of March, perpetrated by the Castro regime. Very soon, I will go to college. I will do it in the land where everything is possible -- in the land where I found something so valuable that people are willing to risk their lives to obtain it. It is called freedom.

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