

MAVERICK MCCAIN IN 2000: “BRAVELY” TELLS CUBANS OF SUPPORT FOR NORMALIZING RELATIONS WITH CUBA EVEN IF CASTRO IS STILL IN POWER

McCain “Bravely” Told Patrons in Little Havana Restaurant “That He Would Support Normalizing Relations With Cuba Even Under Fidel Castro.” Campaigning in Little Havana, reported the Houston Chronicle, McCain, “has come hat in hand for votes, bravely telling patrons that he would support normalizing relations with Cuba even under Fidel Castro as long as freedoms were guaranteed.” [Houston Chronicle, 2/27/00]

McCain: I’d Be Willing to Do the Same Thing on Normalizing Relations With Cuba as We did With Vietnam. Asked on a 2000 appearance on Hardball if he would support opening relations with Cuba as the U.S. did with Vietnam, McCain replied: “I’d be willing to do the same thing we did with Vietnam. We offered the Vietnamese a road map that if they did certain things, we’d do certain things. If they got out of Cambodia, we would lift certain restrictions.” Rather than elections, the first demand on Cuba in order to move toward normalization, McCain said “would be to empty their political prisons.” [“Hardball,” MSNBC/CNBC, 5/1/00]

- **McCain: If Castro Frees Political Prisons, Then We Can Talk.** “They do that, then we can talk?” Chris Matthews asked McCain about normalizing relations with Cuba. “Yeah. I think so,” McCain answered. “I think we could at least set up a road map for negotiations. But I’m not sure Castro wants to do that. The Vietnamese were desperate for economic betterment. Castro doesn’t seem to be that interested.” [“Hardball,” MSNBC/CNBC, 5/1/00]

McCain Said He Would Be “More Than Willing to Offer Fidel Castro” Same Kind of Deal as U.S. Extended to Vietnam. Asked if he thought the U.S. could make peace with Cuba in the same way that the U.S. pursued normalization with Vietnam, McCain said, “Well, I think we can.” “The way we made that peace with Vietnam was through a road map begun by the Bush administration that if the Vietnamese did certain things, we would do certain things in return, get out of Cambodia, empty reeducation camps, et cetera,” McCain continued. “I would be more than willing to offer Fidel Castro that same kind of deal. But would he accept that? I don’t know.” [CNN, 4/9/00]

- **Unlike Vietnamese, Acknowledged McCain, “Castro Doesn’t Seem to Be So Concerned” With Economic Development.** Continuing on the possibility of instituting a Vietnam roadmap for Cuba, McCain said: “The Vietnamese were very, very, their highest priority was to have economic development and they knew they couldn’t have that being isolated as they were. Castro doesn’t seem to be so concerned about that, obviously, because he continues to repress any free enterprise system in his country, but I’d be glad to offer Castro the same deal that we offered the Vietnamese, and that would be a step by step reciprocal kind of action.” [CNN, 4/30/00]

McCain: I’m Not in Favor of Sticking My Finger in the Eye of Castro; I Favor Roadmap Toward Normalization of Relations With Cuba. During a 2000 CNN interview in which he discussed the Elian Gonzales issue at length McCain asserted that his support for Gonzales retaining residency in the U.S. was due to his belief in freedom and democracy, and not an extension on anti-Castro sentiment. “First of all, I’m not in favor of sticking my finger in the eye of Fidel Castro,” McCain said, “In fact, I would favor a road map towards normalization of relations such as we presented to the Vietnamese and led to a normalization of relations between our two countries.” [CNN, 4/9/00]

- **McCain Accused Al Gore of Being Contradictory on Cuba.** Asked about Vice President Al Gore’s split with the Clinton administration over the handling of the Elian Gonzalez case, McCain said that while, he “won’t question the Vice President’s motives,” Gore has said “the least, ambivalent and made certain statements which would be viewed as contradictory on this issue.” [CNN, 4/9/00]

McCain “Took a Position Many Politicians Have Avoided When He Said He Supported Normalizing Relations With Cuba Even if Fidel Castro Was in Power.” “McCain took a position many politicians have avoided when he said he supported normalizing relations with Cuba even if Fidel Castro was in power - as long as measures were taken to ensure political freedom in the country. He cited success in normalization of relations with Vietnam.” [Associated Press, 12/10/99]

- **McCain: “I Would Opt For That Same Road Map” on Cuba as We Gave to Vietnam.** “I would opt for that same road map to the Cuban government,” McCain said while campaigning in Miami. “If they would take certain steps then we would take certain reciprocal steps. Whether Mr. Castro would decide to agree to the kinds of measures the Vietnamese government was willing to make is certainly questionable.” [Associated Press, 12/10/99]

McCain: “If They Take Certain Steps, We Would Take Certain Steps.” “I would favor a similar proposal to the one we gave the Vietnamese,” McCain said on Cuba, “If they would take certain steps, we would take certain steps.” Such “certain steps,” according to McCain would include Castro “emptying out his political prisons,” as well as “freedom for business people in Cuba.” Wrote the Miami Herald: “If Castro would go this far, McCain would be willing to wait on a greater goal of supervised free elections while lifting some of the embargo.” [Miami Herald, 11/18/99]

- **“I’d Hope We Can Make Some Progress Before He [Castro] Meets Karl Marx.”** Though acknowledging that such concessions were for the most part “unlikely in Castro’s lifetime,” reported the Miami Herald, McCain added, “I’d hope we can make some progress before he meets Karl Marx.” [Miami Herald, 11/18/99]

McCain: “I’d Be Glad to Offer Mr. Castro a Road Map.” “This is one of the last places of oppression and repression,” McCain said on the Meet the Press in 2000. “I’d be glad to offer Mr. Castro a road map that if he did certain things, we would do certain things on the other side.” [“Meet the Press,” NBC, 1/16/00]

Normalization with Cuba is Possible Said McCain, Even Though “Large Cuban-American Population in Florida Opposes Ties with Cuba.” “Sen. John McCain, R-Arizona, said here Saturday night that normalization of diplomatic relations with Cuba is possible if Fidel Castro agrees to a series of steps similar to ‘the road map Vietnam accepted.’ McCain was the leading Republican supporter of establishing formal diplomatic relations with Vietnam... McCain said Castro could help matters by releasing jailed political opponents. Another problem, McCain acknowledged, is that the large Cuban-American population in Florida opposes ties with Cuba.” [St. Louis Post Dispatch, 7/23/95]

AP: McCain Open to Ending Sanctions Against Cuba & Asserted That “Sanctions Have Only Worked Against South Africa.” The Associated Press summarized McCain’s Cuba policy during the 2000 campaign, saying McCain was, “open to ending sanctions against Cuba, even if Fidel Castro remains in power, if measures are taken to ensure political freedom.” The AP noted how McCain had

“cited the process of normalizing relations with Vietnam as a model for doing the same with Cuba,” and has asserted that since World War II, “sanctions have only worked against South Africa.” McCain also “says U.S. should support forces trying to overthrow regimes in Iraq, North Korea and other ‘rogue’ states,” added the AP. [Associated Press, 12/17/99]

To Lift Cuba Embargo, Said McCain, Cuban Government “Would Have to Make Demonstrable Steps Toward Democratization.” In another response to the AP on lifting the Cuba embargo, McCain said that in order to ease restrictions, “The Cuban government would have to make demonstrable steps toward democratization and free market reforms, vastly improve its human rights record and cease its policy of seeking to undermine U.S. interests abroad.” [Associated Press, 3/3/00]

IN 2000 RACE, MCCAIN WAS THE ONLY CANDIDATE - REPUBLICAN OR DEMOCRAT - WHO SAID RESTRICTIONS COULD BE EASED WHILE CASTRO WAS IN POWER

“Among the Candidates for President” in 2000, Only John McCain “Broaches the Idea of Bargaining with Castro Over an American Trade Embargo.” “Among candidates for president this year, only Republican Sen. John McCain of Arizona broaches the idea of bargaining with Castro over an American trade embargo against the island nation. McCain says that if Castro could make some concessions - emptying his jails of political prisoners and allowing freer conduct of business - the United States could ease the embargo.” [Miami Herald, 1/10/00]

In 2000, McCain Was The Only Major Party Candidate to Have “Talked of Relaxing Sanctions While Castro Remains in Power.” “Among the major party candidates,” wrote St. Petersburg Times columnist Martin Dyckman, “only McCain has talked of relaxing sanctions while Castro remains in power and then only in exchange for political freedoms not demanded of China and unlikely to be conceded by Castro.” [St. Petersburg Times, 12/28/99]

In 1999, McCain Was “Alone Among the Leading Candidates for Presidents” in Suggesting, “There Could Be Room For Negotiation on the U.S. Trade Embargo Against Cuba.” “But McCain alone among the leading candidates for president suggests there could be room for negotiation on the U.S. trade embargo against Cuba, if Castro were willing to make concessions -- unlikely, McCain allows,” reported the Miami Herald on McCain’s 1999 campaign visit to Florida. [Miami Herald, 11/18/99]

McCain’s Flexibility on Cuba is “Why I Support George W. Bush and Not John McCain,” Said Cuban-American Lawmaker (and Current McCain Backer) in 2000: On a 1999 CNN appearance, Bill Press asked Cuban-American Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen – a current McCain supporter and Cuba advisor to his campaign -- if her hard-line position to maintain the embargo on Cuba was inconsistent with the free-trading views of the GOP, and especially John McCain who had declared, “If I were president, I would negotiate a free-trade agreement with almost any country willing to negotiate fairly with us.” Ros-Lehtinen replied: “Well, that’s why I support George W. Bush and not John McCain. But I have had a consistent position on trade with dictatorships, with tyrannies, with governments that abuse their people.” [CNN, 11/29/99]

NO LONGER A MAVERICK, NOW MCCAIN MAINTAINS HARD LINE ON CUBA

On Cuba, McCain's Position is Closest to Bush's. “Among the presidential candidates, Republican Sen. John McCain's views are the closest to those of Bush. Easing the embargo should be linked to evidence of a transition to a free and open democracy, McCain says.” [Associated Press, 3/3/08]

McCain Against Easing Cuba Embargo Unless Cuba Releases Prisoners and Holds Free & Fair Elections. McCain said that despite the transfer of power from Fidel to Raul Castro, “he doesn't support any immediate change in the U.S. embargo of Cuba unless the nation releases political prisoners, holds free elections and allows human rights organizations to operate in Cuba.” “It's obvious that Raul is relaxing in some respects,” McCain said, “but it seems to me there's a certain amount of tokenism associated with that.” [Associated Press, 4/3/08]

Despite Earlier Statements, McCain Camp Now Arguing Cuba is Very Different Than Vietnam. “Randy Scheunemann, the McCain campaign's director of foreign policy, said the best way to force Iran's hand is through toughening economic sanctions with European allies. Talking to the Cuban government, he said, would undermine the U.S. goal of nudging the island toward democracy. Vietnam was a special case, Scheunemann said, and it was no longer a threat to the region.” [Miami Herald, 5/4/08]

No Reason to Lift Embargo Until Cuba Transitions to Free and Open Society, Said McCain. “Washington's trade sanctions prohibit American tourists from visiting the island and ban most U.S.-Cuba trade. McCain, who is considered to have locked up the Republican nomination, has said he sees no reason to lift the embargo unless Cuba embraces Western-style democracy, frees political prisoners and begins ‘the transition to a free and open society.’” [Associated Press, 2/28/08]

Maintain Embargo Until Cuba Holds Free Elections, Said McCain. Asked at his Los Angeles World Affairs Council about “what kind of a relationship” the U.S. Should have with Cuba, and “either with Fidel or with Raul Castro,” McCain said that: “In the case of Cuba, I believe that we have not very good options, but the best option is to maintain the embargo until such time as we have a free election, political prisoners are -- are out of the -- the gulag in Cuba, and human rights organizations are functioning effectively. At that time, I think we should then tell the Cuban government or people or whoever it is that we are ready to -- to lend whatever aid is necessary in helping them in this transition to democracy.” [Los Angeles World Affairs Council Speech and Q&A, 3/27/08]

- **McCain Strongly Backs Continued Embargo on Cuba.** Though “some businesses would like to see the embargo [on Cuba] eased,” wrote the Economist, “If John McCain, the Republicans' presumptive nominee, wins November's presidential election, such an effort is unlikely. He strongly backs the embargo.” [Economist, 2/23/08]

McCain Would Only Ease Restrictions on Cuba Until He is “Confident That the Transition to a Free and Open Democracy is Being Made.” McCain's position on easing restrictions on Cuba, reported the Associated Press, is to only relax such restrictions once the United States, “confident that the transition to a free and open democracy is being made.” Additionally, reported the Miami Herald, McCain called for the continuation of sanctions “until political prisoners are released and other democratic rights restored.” [Associated Press, 2/22/08; Miami Herald, 3/22/07]

Despite Castro Transfer of Power, Said McCain, Benchmarks Must Be Met Before Cuba Policy Changes. McCain and his fellow Republicans reported the Associated Press, “insisted that significant benchmarks be met before there is any response from the U.S.” While McCain called Castro's transfer of power “a great opportunity for Cuba to make a transition to a democracy... and

begin the transition to a free and open society,” he also said that, “Lifting the U.S. embargo on travel and trade before those conditions are met would only prop up a new regime.” [Associated Press, 2/19/08]

- **McCain Stance is “Tough Sanctions, no Carrots for Cuba.”** “John McCain's stance [on Cuba]?” reported CNN, “Tough sanctions, no carrots for Cuba until the regime takes clear steps toward democracy. A position consistent with the GOP's traditional hard line, but also informed, an aide says, by John McCain's experience as a POW. [CNN, 2/19/08]

McCain Vowed to Keep U.S. Embargo on Cuba. “Vowing to keep the U.S. embargo against Cuba, McCain said as president he would push harder to oust the Castro regime and bring democracy to the island nation.” [Palm Beach Post, 6/21/07]

MCCAIN OPPOSED TO EVEN AIDING OR ASSISTING CUBAN PEOPLE UNTIL HIS CONDITIONS ARE MET; EVEN CAVALIERLY JOKED ABOUT POVERTY OF CUBAN PEOPLE

McCain Opposed to Loosening Restrictions on Family Travel or Remittances. McCain rejected the idea of changing U.S. travel and remittance restrictions on Cuban-Americans with relatives in Cuba. “The one thing we don't want to do is to provide aid and assistance that would prop up the Raul Castro regime and sometimes American assistance has that effect,” he said. [Associated Press, 4/3/08]

- **In 1994 McCain Opposed to Cutting Off Remittances Because in Punished People “Whose Misfortune It is to Live in Tyranny.”** In 1994, McCain said “he supported Clinton’s tough stance [on Cuba] except for the decision to cut off remittances from Cuban-Americans to their families.” McCain said that cutting off remittances because it furthered punished the people of Cuba “whose misfortune it is to live in tyranny.” [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 8/27/94]

McCain Supports Bush Policy Which Caps Remittances at \$100 and Limits Family Travel to One Every Three Years. “McCain supports President Bush's policy, which limits Cuban-Americans to visiting their relatives on the island once every three years and caps remittances at \$100 per month.” [Miami Herald, 2/20/08]

McCain: We Will Not Provide Aid or Assistance to Cuba Until the Prisons Are Emptied of Political Prisoners. “Apparently, he's trying to groom his brother Raul,” McCain said on Fidel Castro. “My friends, Raul is worse in many respects than Fidel was. The people of Cuba deserve to have the prisons emptied. They will deserve human rights organizations working there and they deserve free and fair elections. That's our goal for Cuba. Not perpetuation of the Fidel Castro regime. And we ought to make it very, very clear, that we will not provide aid or assistance until the prisons are emptied of the political prisoners.” [CNN, 2/24/08; McCain Town Hall in Indianapolis, IN, 2/22/08]

- **Extending Assistance Now Could Keep Castro in Power.** “I'm very worried about people who want to extend aid and assistance now, while this regime is in power and that would help them remain in power,” McCain said at his Indianapolis event. “And, by the way, unless those things happen,” McCain added, “I see no reason, whatsoever -- whatsoever -- to sit down and have unconditional talks with Raul Castro.” [McCain Town Hall in Indianapolis, IN, 2/22/08]

McCain: No Aid or Assistance for Cubans Until Free Elections, Release of Prisoners, and Human Rights Organizations Function in Cuba. Asked at a town hall about the role the U.S. should play in hastening democratic transition in Cuba, McCain said: “Well, I think that we should

make it very clear that once free elections are held, that the political prisoners are released and human rights organizations are functioning in Cuba, that we would be willing to provide whatever aid and assistance that's necessary." [CNN, 2/19/08]

- **Assistance Could Prop Up Raul Regime, Said McCain.** McCain reiterated: "Any assistance that came in earlier than that might serve to prop up a new regime or Raul or whoever it is that wants to take Castro's place. So we have to be absolutely confident that the transition to a free and open democracy is being made before we provide that additional aid and assistance." [CNN, 2/19/08]

After Castro Dies, Said McCain, Then "That is the Time We Offer Package of Trade, of Assistance, of Economic Development" to Cuba. Asked by Pittsburgh's Tribune Review what he'd like to envision for Cuba after Fidel Castro's death, McCain replied: "I think that that is the time that we offer a package of trade, of assistance, of economic development, of assistance in democratization and tell them we will give them all of those things, and in return we are asking them to embark on the path to democracy -- including setting a date for free and fair elections. They will have a choice." [Pittsburgh Tribune Review, 1/23/07]

McCain Joked: Isn't It Remarkable Castro Has Allowed Cubans to Have Cell Phones? At a press conference in Miami, FL, McCain commented on the situation in Cuba and Raul Castro's decision to allow residents to buy cell phones. "I think it's a good thing for the people of Cuba to be able to have cell-phones," he sardonically said. "Isn't it remarkable that for all these years they haven't been able to? Isn't that remarkable?" "So I, again," he continued, "maintain my position if Raul Castro wants our help and our assistance, that's after we've had a free election." [WTVJ (Miami, FL) NBC, 6 PM, 4/27/08]

- **McCain: It Was "Generous" of Castro to Let Cubans Have Cell Phones.** According to the Associated Press, McCain – commenting on Raul Castro's relaxation of his brother's rule -- sarcastically said: "it was a 'generous' act to let Cuban citizens have cell phones and to stay in hotels previously reserved for tourists." "Some of the things he's relaxing on are an indicator of how repressive the regime is," he added. [Associated Press, 4/3/08]

McCain: "I Don't Know What We'd Trade [With Cuba] Besides 1950s Vintage Cars." After announcing his policy to "keep the trade embargo in place," in a speech to the Florida Association of Broadcasters, an audience member asked McCain "why not open trade with Cuba to help its people." McCain replied jokingly: "I don't know what we'd trade besides 1950s vintage cars." [Associated Press, 6/21/07]

DESPITE EARLIER SUPPORT FOR "ROADMAP" WITH CASTRO, MCCAIN CRITICIZED OBAMA FOR SAME POSITION, AND IS NOW VEHEMENTLY OPPOSED TO SITTING DOWN WITH CUBAN GOVERNMENT.

McCain: Obama is Inexperienced for Suggesting Openness to Talking With Cuban Leadership. "I don't know if he is naive or not," McCain said on Obama's approach to dealing with Cuba. "I know he's inexperienced, but that approach is something that I think would only serve to legitimize a person who has many, many year record -- decades of record of cruelty and oppression to the people of Cuba." [Fox News, 3/6/08]

“If We Sit Down With These People, That Enhances Their Prestige,” Said McCain. “If we sit down with these people, that enhances their prestige, whether it's the president of Iran who denies the Holocaust and wants to wipe Israel off the map, or Raul Castro, one of the world's longest-running oppressors,” McCain told the Miami Herald. “If they want to talk, they have to make fundamental changes.” [Miami Herald, 5/4/08]

McCain: “Let’s Have a Dialogue with Raul Castro the Day After...Cuba is Free.” In an appearance in Miami, McCain “wooed the crowd with remarks about Cuba,” declaring: “Today, I read in the front page of The Miami Herald that Raúl Castro would like to have a dialogue...My friends, let's have a dialogue with Raúl Castro the day after we have a fair election and Cuba is free.” [Miami Herald, 8/20/06]

McCain: Meeting With Castro Before Cuba Holds Free and Fair Elections “Would Legitimize Raul Castro” Furthering “An Oppressive, Repressive, Regime.” “Again, I would strongly disagree with that kind of conduct of American national security policy,” McCain said on meeting with Raul Castro, “particularly since it would legitimize Raul Castro in the position that he's trying to solidify, which is a furtherance of an oppressive, repressive regime, which has caused the people of Cuba to suffer in every imaginable way, including economically for many, many years.” [CNN, 2/22/08]

McCain: The Time to Aid Cuba and Sit Down With Leadership Will Be Only After They’ve Held Free Elections. McCain took a hard line on Cuba after Fidel Castro transferred power to his brother Raul, saying: “The time to aid Cuba, to sit down with the Cuban leadership will only be after they've emptied their prisons, when a human rights organizations are functioning and they have held free elections...Raul, in many ways, has a worst record than Fidel.” [CNN, 2/24/08; McCain Town Hall in Indianapolis, IN, 2/22/08]

McCain on Speaking With Cuban Leadership: “One of the Most Overrated Aspects of Diplomacy is Talks.” At an Ohio town hall, McCain again criticized Obama’s openness to meeting with Cuban leaders, saying that, “one of the most overrated aspects of diplomacy is talks.” “For example, I don't know why in the world you would want to sit down with Raul Castro under no conditions for it,” he added, “I have no idea what that would do except perhaps enhance the prestige of a guy who was really the enforcer for Fidel Castro for long periods of time.” [Miami Herald, 2/26/08]

- **McCain: Openness to Meeting with Castro is “Dangerously Naïve.”** In a release criticizing Obama, McCain said: “So Raul Castro gets an audience with an American president, and all the prestige such a meeting confers, without having to release political prisoners, allow free media, political parties, and labor unions, or schedule internationally monitored free elections... Meet, talk, and hope may be a sound approach in a state legislature, but it is dangerously naive in international diplomacy where the oppressed look to America for hope and adversaries wish us ill.” [McCain Release, 2/22/08]

McCain Criticized Obama to Appeal to “Cuban-American and Jewish Voters By Invoking Their Enemies.” “In his visit to South Florida last week, John McCain questioned Barack Obama's foreign-policy credentials, appealing to Cuban-American and Jewish voters by invoking their enemies... Where the Democratic front-runner sees opportunities to inspire democracy and defuse military threats, the Republican nominee-in-waiting warns of gambles that would compromise the security of the United States and its allies... The contrast among the candidates hits hard in Florida, where politically influential communities are poised to scrutinize them for telltale signs they may be ‘soft’ on Cuba or Israel.” [Miami Herald, 5/4/08]

- **McCain Attempting to Exploit Obama’s “Perceived Vulnerabilities With Hard-Line and Cuban and Jewish Voters.”** “McCain already is trying to exploit Obama's perceived vulnerabilities with hard-line Cuban and Jewish voters, railing against the Castro regime at a Coral Gables fundraiser and rallying donors at a ‘pro-Israel’ reception in Palm Beach County last week...For decades, candidates have used full-throated calls for a democratic Cuba and a secure Israel to try to lock down these groups.” [Miami Herald, 5/4/08]

Despite Opposition to Diplomacy, McCain Campaign Voiced Support for Cultural Exchange With Cuba, Saying They’d Be Supportive If It Would Help Open Cuban Society.

The Miami Herald asked the presidential campaigns if Raúl Castro’s replacing of his brother Fidel as Cuban president would “be a good occasion to send a major U.S. orchestra to Cuba, in hopes of helping accelerate the island's opening to the outside world” or if would “would it only help give a propaganda boost to Cuba's new old team of military dictators.” Randy Scheunemann, McCain’s chief foreign policy adviser said that, “if sending the New York Philharmonic or other exchange program would help open up Cuban society, we would be supportive.” [Miami Herald, 2/28/08]

- **McCain Campaign Though Doubts “How Sending One Musical Team to Cuba Would Help the Cuban People Achieve Their Freedoms.”** However, Scheunemann added, “unless and until the Cuban government takes steps like releasing political prisoners, allowing independent media, or scheduling free elections, it is very unclear to me how sending one musical team to Cuba would help the Cuban people achieve their freedoms.” [Miami Herald, 2/28/08]

MCCAIN EMPLOYS SCARE TACTICS ON CUBA

Cuba a “National Security Threat,” McCain Said. In a speech to the Florida Association of Broadcasters, McCain called Cuba “a national security threat” under Fidel Castro’s rule, but said that “he would pursue diplomatic efforts toward democracy there, but not the use of military force. “I don't think we can move militarily against a country just because they have a government we don't like,” he explained. “As president,” he continued, “I will not passively await the long overdue demise of the Castro dictatorship ... The Cuban people have waited long enough.” McCain also said he’d “increase funding for the U.S. government's anti-Castro radio and TV stations and press for the release of all political prisoners and internationally monitored elections.” [Associated Press, 6/21/07]

McCain Warned of Creeping Spread of Socialism Throughout Latin America. At a stop in Little Havana, McCain warned “against the spread of socialism in Latin America and pledged to give the region renewed U.S. attention if elected.” McCain spoke to veterans of the Bay of Pigs Invasion, promising that if elected, his first presidential trip would be to Latin America “to reaffirm my commitment to our hemisphere and the importance of relations within our hemisphere.” McCain said the U.S. must also emphasize “the advantages of capitalism and democracy to win ‘a war of ideas’ in the region.” “As president,” reported the Associated Press, “McCain said he would work on political, diplomatic and economic fronts to counter the rise of socialism, including efforts to spread free trade.” [Associated Press, 3/21/07]

Everyone Should Understand Connections Between Chavez, Morales, and Castro. McCain told the audience that “everyone should understand the connections” between Venezuela’s Hugo Chavez, Bolivia’s Evo Morales and Fidel Castro. “They inspire each other. They assist each other. They get ideas from each other,” McCain said, adding, “It's very disturbing.” [Associated Press, 3/21/07]

Chavez Has Breathed “New Oxygen” Into Castro’s Rule, Said McCain. “McCain said Venezuela President Hugo Chavez has breathed ‘new oxygen’ into Castro's regime, and that the U.S. government must do more to quell dictatorships throughout Latin America. Chavez's government has helped spur economic growth in Cuba by selling the island oil at favorable prices. The Arizona senator said anti-Americanism is on the rise in Latin America as the U.S. focuses on other places around the world, allowing ‘dangerous forces’ to work unfettered in the region.” [Associated Press, 6/21/07]

- **Though McCain Acknowledged That War in Iraq Has Diverted Attention From Western Hemisphere, Allowing Left-Wingers to Flourish.** McCain acknowledged that the war in Iraq, “has diverted attention from our hemisphere.” “We have paid a penalty for that” in the form of the growing popularity of left-wing leaders in Latin America, such as Hugo Chavez and Evo Morales, McCain said. [Associated Press, 3/21/07]

Cuba a State Sponsor of Terrorism, Attempting to “Spread That Poison Not Only in Our Hemisphere But in Africa.” “The Cubans have been sponsors of state of terrorism. They are state sponsors of terrorism. They have tried to spread that poison not only in our hemisphere but in Africa in times past. They have a gulag that would make Stalin blush. They have executed people on a regular basis. Their prisons are full of political prisoners. That’s not the United States of America. Now somebody’s gonna say ‘Well you trade with China.’ China’s not exporting terror. China isn’t working with Hugo Chavez to try and harm America, in many respects.” [CNN Live Feed (Round Hill, TX), 2/29/08]

- **Cuban Terrorism “Contained” By Embargo, Asserted McCain.** “And I think the embargo against Cuba has contained them,” McCain asserted, “has contained them from spreading their particular brand of terrorism in the region.” [CNN Live Feed (Round Hill, TX), 2/29/08]

McCain: Raul a “State Sponsor of Terrorism...Throughout the World.” “Raul, in many ways, has a worse record than Fidel,” McCain said, calling it naïve to support unconditional talks, “with a person who is part of a government that has been a state sponsor of terrorism, not only in the hemisphere, but throughout the world.” [McCain Town Hall in Indianapolis, IN, 2/22/08]

With Raul We Will See Continued Oppression, Said McCain. “I worry a great deal that with Raul, who is a much tougher and worse guy in some respects than his brother,” McCain continued, “that you will see a continued oppression and repression, as well as economic stagnation, in Cuba.” [Los Angeles World Affairs Council Speech and Q&A, 3/27/08]

MCCAIN’S “PLAN” ON CUBA IS FULL OF EMPTY PLATITUDES AND DECLARATIONS, AND LITTLE POLICY

In 2006, McCain Said Change is More Eminent Than Ever; Exclaimed, “Next Year in Havana!” During his Florida appearance, McCain “said he believes change is more imminent than ever before in Cuba,” exclaiming, “Next year -- in Havana!” [Miami Herald, 8/20/06]

Martinez: McCain is Going to Be “Castro’s Worst Nightmare.” Introducing McCain at a Florida campaign event, Senator Mel Martinez called McCain “Castro’s worst nightmare,” saying in Spanish: “I would not endorse someone that I didn’t have total confidence is going to be Castro's worst nightmare.” [Miami Herald, 1/26/08]

Democracy in Cuba is “Inevitable,” Said McCain, But “Not Yet at Hand.” “Republican front-runner Sen. John McCain of Arizona said Cuban democracy is ‘inevitable,’ but that U.S. pressure for change should continue. ‘Freedom for the Cuban people is not yet at hand, and the Castro brothers clearly intend to maintain their grip on power,’ Mr. McCain said.” [Washington times, 2/20/08]
McCain: I Am Committed to the Freedom of Cuba. “My friends, many years ago, I was committed to the freedom of Cuba,” McCain said campaigning in Florida. “I am just as committed today.” [Miami Herald, 1/26/08]

“Dissent in Cuba is Alive and Well,” Declared McCain. Sen. John McCain said Thursday the struggle for freedom in Cuba remains strong despite brutal repression by the Castro regime. ‘Dissent in Cuba is alive and well,’ said McCain, R-Ariz. ‘The pro-democracy movement has survived the repression organized by Castro to crush it. It has weathered the storm.’” [Associated Press, 6/3/04]

McCain: Cubans Will Be Able to Experience “Their God-Given Rights Sooner Rather Than Later.” “Cuba's ruling elite must understand that the world won't accept its routine violation of human rights,” McCain said, as he “praised members of Cuba’s pro-democracy movement” while urging “other countries to support” democracy in Cuba. “I believe that the Cuban people will be able to experience their God-given rights sooner rather than later,” McCain said, “thanks to the great people who continue to struggle for freedom.” [Associated Press, 6/3/04]

McCain Vowed to “Spend Anything That’s Necessary” for Freedom in Cuba; Reiterated Support for Funding for Radio and TV Marti. “I'll spend anything that’s necessary for the cause of freedom,” vowed McCain at Little Havana’s Versailles Restaurant, “reiterating his support for funding for Radio and TV Martí.” He continued: “We know what won the cold war: Radio Free Europe... and other means of communication that inspired hope in those who were living under communist oppression the same way that Radio Martí inspires hope in people who are living in one of the most brutal and oppressive governments in history.” [Miami Herald, 1/22/08]

- **Latin American Experts: Plenty of Fiery Rhetoric Condemning Castro, But “Few Substantive Proposals on Issues” On Cuba.** “Peel away the presidential hopefuls' lofty words, observers say, and there have been few substantive proposals on issues that matter the most to many Latin American governments: treatment of migrants and access to the U.S. market. Instead, there is plenty of fiery rhetoric condemning anti-U.S. leaders like Hugo Chávez and Fidel Castro -- but few proposals that deviate substantially from what the Bush administration has done.” [Miami Herald, 9/22/07]

McCain in 2008: “I Understand Cuba.” “I understand Cuba,” McCain said. “I am proud to have sat on a flight deck of a United States Navy aircraft carrier during the Cuban missile crisis,” he added. [Chicago Tribune, 1/22/08]

- **McCain in 2007: “I Am Not an Expert on Cuba.”** While admitting, “I am not an expert on Cuba,” McCain said: “A lot of people believe that Raul Castro (Fidel's brother) will not be able to govern Cuba. I hope that that is true.... My friends that are experts on Cuba say that it is going to be a very, very tense time. And published reports out of Cuba are that he is close to death.” [Pittsburgh Tribune Review, 1/23/07]

McCain: “I Don’t Know” What I’d Do If Death of Castro Prompts “Great Instability” in Cuba. If Castro’s death were to be met with “great instability” leading to the potential takeover of Cuba by “even worse Marxists,” McCain confessed not knowing what role the U.S. should play, telling the Tribune Review: “I don’t know. I cannot say invade. I cannot say Bay of Pigs. I cannot say military action of any kind. But I can say that to condemn the Cuban people to another three or four decades of oppression and brutality is something that a lot of us would not like to see. I would exhaust every effort, with this package that I am talking about, giving them all of the incentives towards democratization.” [Pittsburgh Tribune Review, 1/23/07]

McCain: American Should Help Hasten the Sparking of Freedom in Cuba. In a statement, reacting to Fidel Castro’s resignation, McCain said “With the resignation of Fidel Castro, the Cuban people have an opportunity to move forward and continue pushing for the moment that they will truly be free. America can and should help hasten the sparking of freedom in Cuba. The Cuban people have waited long enough.” [johnmccain.com, 2/19/08]

- **McCain, Noted McClatchy, “Did Not Give Specifics” on How the U.S. Should “Hasten the Sparking of Freedom” in Cuba.** “For the Republicans, Arizona Sen. John McCain called Castro’s resignation an event ‘nearly a half century overdue’ and an opportunity for freedom in Cuba,” reported McClatchy. While repeating McCain’s call to America to “hasten the sparking of freedom,” continued McClatchy noted that McCain “did not give specifics.” [McClatchy, 2/20/08]

WET FOOT/DRY FOOT

McCain: Wet Foot/Dry Foot is Not Good Policy, But There’s None Better. “In emphasizing his anti-Castro credentials,” reported Florida’s Sun Sentinel on a McCain campaign stop in Florida, “the Arizona Republican and former prisoner of war in Vietnam described himself as a firm opponent of the Cuban regime who had no notions of lifting the economic embargo.” However, when reporters questioned McCain on “the so-called wet-foot, dry-foot immigration policy, which allows Cubans to stay here if they reach U.S. shores,” McCain did not give a direct answer, saying instead that “he relied on the three Cuban-American lawmakers,” Reps. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Lincoln Diaz-Balart and Mario Diaz-Balart “for direction.” “Their advice is that the [wet foot/dry foot] policy is not a good one,” McCain said, “but there’s none better.” [Sun Sentinel, 1/22/08]

- **McCain: I Understand Difficulties on Policy, But Don’t Know of a Better One.** In Florida, McCain said “he understands Florida’s difficult situation with the wet foot/dry foot policies, which allows Cuban immigrants amnesty if they reach Florida’s shores but turns back those found on the water.” “That policy is not a good one but nobody knows a better one yet,” he added. [Naples Daily News, 6/19/07]

McCain: People More Knowledgeable Than I Say Wet-Foot, Dry-Foot “Needs to Be Reviewed.” On a stop in Florida, McCain “joined the growing debate over the government’s wet-foot, dry-foot policy for Cuban immigrants, saying it’s time to re-examine it.” “I’ve been talking to many in the Cuban-American community and others, including Gov. Bush, who are more knowledgeable than I,” McCain told reporters, saying, “I think it needs to be reviewed.” [St. Petersburg Times, 2/22/06; Associated Press, 2/22/06]

- **McCain “Did Not Say How” Wet-Foot, Dry-Foot Policy Should Be Reviewed; Unsure If Giving All Cubans Asylum Would Prompt Castro to Unleash “Flood of Refugees.”** “He [McCain] said the wet-foot, dry-foot policy needs to be ‘reviewed,’ but did not say

how. Under the policy, Cubans intercepted at sea are generally returned home while Cubans who reach the United States generally get to stay. McCain said some people have told him that wet foot, dry foot is a 'terrible' policy and that Cubans must get asylum 'wherever they're picked up.' But he said others have warned that if the policy is scrapped and Cubans are again brought ashore, then Fidel Castro will unleash a new 'flood of refugees.'" [Miami Herald, 2/22/06]

McCain Cited Contentiousness of Policy Since 15 Cubans in Key West Were Forced to Return to Cuba. "McCain said that policy has become increasingly contentious since 15 Cubans were sent back to the Communist island in January after the U.S. Coast Guard decided that a former bridge they landed on in the Florida Keys was not part of U.S. soil because it no longer connected to land." [St. Petersburg Times, 2/22/06; Associated Press, 2/22/06]

- **Florida Keys Incident Has "Fueled the Fire and Resentment Against This Policy."** Commenting on the repatriation of the Cubans found on Seven Mile Bridge in the Keys, McCain said the incident, "fueled the fire and resentment against this policy. . . . It should be reviewed." [Miami Herald, 2/25/06]

WHO HAS CRAFTED MCCAIN INCONGRUOUS CUBA POLICY?

McCain "Has Skipped Assembling a Full-Scale Latin American Group" to Advise Him. According to the Miami Herald, "Sen. John McCain has skipped assembling a full-scale Latin American group for now;" however, among his advisors, according to his website, are "the three Miami Republicans in Congress -- Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and brothers Lincoln and Mario Diaz Balart." [Miami Herald, 2/26/08]

- **Rather, McCain "Willing to Parrot" Whatever Diaz-Balart Brothers "Tell Him."** Miami Herald editorial contributor Michael Putney wrote: "On Cuba, McCain thus far has been willing to parrot whatever the Diaz-Balart brothers and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen tell him." [Miami Herald, 2/27/08]

McCain's Support of DoJ Inquiry into Illegal Shoot-down of Brothers to the Rescue Planes is "An Indication of the Advice" He's Receiving From "Cuban-American Leaders." "The frustration of Miami exiles over the Cuban government's downing of two Brothers to the Rescue planes more than a decade ago has now filtered into the presidential race, with top GOP candidates calling for the indictment of Fidel and Raúl Castro. . . . The candidates' interest in the shoot-down may be an indication of the advice they're receiving from key Cuban-American leaders. Among Sen. John McCain's supporters are U.S. Reps. Mario and Lincoln Díaz-Balart and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, all of Miami. In the past, she has brought up the possibility of indictments with President Bush. 'I talked to McCain about this specific recommendation, and he said yes, that as president he would . . . ask the Justice Department to begin a legal inquiry into the illegal shoot-down,' Ros-Lehtinen said." [Miami Herald, 12/11/07]

- **McCain: I'd Order Investigation of Shoot-Down.** "And if I were president . . . I would order an investigation of the shoot-down of those brave Cubans who were killed under the orders of Raúl and Fidel Castro and, if necessary, indict them," McCain said at the GOP Univision debate. [Miami Herald, 12/11/07]

Other McCain Cuba Advisor Sat on Task Force That “Prompted More People-to-People contacts With Cuba.” McCain also lists Bernard Aronson as an advisor, “a Democrat and a former assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs in the Bush father's administration,” who currently serves as “a managing partner of the private equity investment company ACON Investments.” “In 1998 Aronson co-chaired a task force that looked at Cuba policy,” reported the Miami Herald, “Its conclusions prompted more people-to-people contacts with Cuba, which would be later overturned by George W. Bush.” [Miami Herald, 2/26/08]