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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-2109**

June 17, 1997

The Honorable William J. Clinton  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Clinton:

I know that the renewal of Most Favored Nation Status for China is a vitally important initiative for your administration. I commend your efforts to pursue an open, strategic dialogue with China that best serves the interests of this nation. Integration, and not isolation, will give the United States the influence necessary to work for respect of human rights, non-proliferation, the rule of law and religious freedom in China. Revoking this trade status, and effectively cutting off dialogue between our nations, will severely undermine our ability to work for positive change. For these and other reasons, I will support you in the extension of MFN for China.

With the strategy of engagement as a tool to achieve the goals of our national interests in mind, I want to respectfully point out the inconsistencies of U.S. policy towards Cuba. As you recall, this is an issue that I discussed with you last year at the White House during the China MFN debate. For 35 years, the United States has pursued a policy of isolationism with Cuba -- and it hasn't worked. Even after losing the patronage of the former Soviet Union, the Castro-regime has remained. The U.S. embargo on Cuba has not forced Castro out of power, it has not improved Cuba's respect for human rights and it certainly has not improved the lives of Cuban citizens. As you know, a recent study by the American Association for World Health reports that the U.S. embargo has had a drastic effect on the health of women and children in Cuba.

In fact, Fidel Castro has frequently used the U.S. embargo to justify and explain the failures of his system. Every time there is a food shortage, economic decline or crackdown on political dissidents, Castro delivers one of his famous speeches blaming the U.S. embargo for the problems. It is time for a change.

Like in China, change in Cuba will come only through open dialogue and engagement. By exposing the island to an infusion of free enterprise, democratic ideals, and people who believe in political freedom, I strongly believe that change will occur in Cuba. And it will occur much quicker in Cuba than in China. Cuba, only 90 miles off our shore, is a much smaller nation, and can embrace democracy and its ideals faster than the massive nation of China. As in the former Soviet Union and across Eastern Europe, the spirit of capitalism will flourish. With open political channels, the United States will have the opportunity to talk to Cuban officials about important issues like human rights and political openness. Such engagement will in fact allow us to increase the pressure for change in human rights and democracy. Currently, we have no avenue to pursue this goal. Additionally, our business leaders will talk about the importance of free speech and market reforms as precursors to the American investment that Cuba so desperately needs. The Cuban government will be forced to accept the change that is inevitable.

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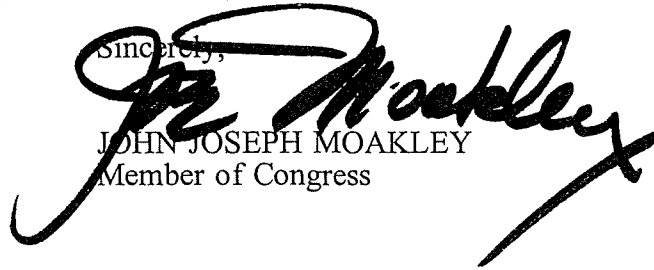
As you stated in your recent letter to me regarding China MFN,

"If we fail to engage China, we will fuel the very forces that trample human rights and flaunt international rules and regimes. Over time, if we engage China -- encouraging the evolution of the rule of law and civil society -- if contacts across borders, among people and between governments grow; if markets expand and information flows; if we make our differences clear; then there is a far greater likelihood that the roots of a more open society will gain strength in China and America's interests will be served."

I would argue that the same logical strategy is true for U.S.-Cuba relations.

Therefore, Mr. President, as we debate the important issue of China's MFN renewal, I hope that you will seriously revisit the U.S. policy toward Cuba. Certainly, if we are pursuing open dialogues with China, North Korea and Vietnam, openness with Cuba makes sense. At a minimum, engagement will force Castro to be more tolerant and will create a climate of reform. And, quite possibly, open engagement might also pave the way for an end to the reign of the Castro dictatorship that has lasted for 38 years. I appreciate your consideration of this important issue, and look forward to discussing the matter with you in the future.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Joseph Moakley". The signature is written over the typed name and title.

JOHN JOSEPH MOAKLEY  
Member of Congress

JJM:sl