

ADVISORY

FROM THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRADE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: (202) 225-1721

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Crane Announces Hearing on U.S. Economic and Trade Policy Toward Cuba

Congressman Philip M. Crane (R-IL), Chairman, Subcommittee on Trade of the Committee on Ways and Means, today announced that the Subcommittee will hold a hearing on U.S. economic and trade policy toward Cuba. **The hearing will take place on Thursday, May 7, 1998, in the main Committee hearing room, 1100 Longworth House Office Building, beginning at 1:00 p.m.**

Oral testimony at this hearing will be from both invited and public witnesses. In addition, any individual or organization not scheduled for an oral appearance may submit a written statement for consideration by the Committee or for inclusion in the printed record of the hearing.

BACKGROUND:

Since the early 1960's, U.S. policy toward Cuba has consisted largely of attempting to isolate the island nation through a comprehensive economic and trade embargo. The authority for these sanctions against Cuba was included in section 620(a) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (P.L. 87-195). In 1992, the sanctions were strengthened with the enactment into law of the Cuban Democracy Act (P.L. 102-484). In particular, the Act extended the prohibitions on transactions with Cuba to subsidiaries of U.S. firms in third countries. At the same time, the Cuban Democracy Act directs the President to take steps to end the trade embargo and to assist a freely and democratically elected Cuban government, should one come to power. Another component of U.S. policy under the Act consists of support measures for the Cuban people, including U.S. private humanitarian donations, U.S. Government support for democracy-building efforts, and U.S.-sponsored radio and television broadcasting to Cuba (Radio and TV Marti).

In 1996, the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act (P.L. 104-114), often referred to as the "Helms-Burton" legislation, was enacted to further strengthen U.S. sanctions against Cuba. Among other things, Helms-Burton codified all Cuban embargo executive orders and regulations in force on March 12, 1996. In addition, the Act allows U.S. nationals to sue for monetary damages in U.S. Federal court those persons who traffic property confiscated from such U.S. nationals. Finally, it denies admission into the United States to certain aliens involved in the confiscation or trafficking of U.S. property in Cuba.

Following the enactment of Helms-Burton, many U.S. trading partners, including Canada, Japan, Mexico, and the European Union (EU), strongly criticized the legislation, arguing that it constitutes an extraterritorial application of U.S. law contrary to international principles. On November 20, 1996, the World Trade Organization (WTO) agreed to a request from the EU

calling for the formation of a dispute resolution panel on Helms-Burton. On April 21, 1997, the EU notified the WTO that it was suspending the dispute panel, pursuant to an understanding reached with the United States to develop joint disciplines on dealings in property confiscated by Cuba and other governments in contravention of international law. After meetings between the United States and the EU in December 1997 and March 1998, EU officials stated that they would resume the WTO challenge to Helms-Burton if no permanent solution to the dispute was found. The EU has also raised concerns about Helms-Burton and the use of extraterritorial sanctions in the context of the Multilateral Agreement on Investment, which is being negotiated under the auspices of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

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The visit of Pope John Paul II to Cuba on January 21-25, 1998, focused public attention on U.S. economic and trade sanctions against Cuba. U.S. sanctions do not allow commercial food exports to Cuba, and while commercial medical exports are allowed, there are several restrictions on such exports as set forth in the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992.

On March 20, 1998, President Clinton announced four changes in U.S. policy toward Cuba. Specifically, the President announced: (1) the resumption of licensing for direct humanitarian charter flights to Cuba (which had been curtailed after the February 1996 shutdown of two U.S. civilian planes), (2) the resumption of cash remittances up to \$300 per quarter for the support of close relatives in Cuba (which had been curtailed in August 1994 in response to the migration crisis with Cuba), (3) the development of licensing procedures to streamline and expedite licenses for the commercial sale of medicines and medical supplies and equipment to Cuba, and (4) a decision to work on a bipartisan basis with Congress on the transfer of food to the Cuban people.

In announcing the hearing, Chairman Crane stated: "In the wake of the Pope's visit in January, I believe that it is an appropriate time for the Subcommittee to review U.S. economic and trade policy toward Cuba. I look forward to reviewing the status of our economic and trade policy towards Cuba, particularly with respect to the humanitarian assistance provided by U.S. citizens to the Cuban people."

FOCUS OF THE HEARING:

The focus of the hearing is to examine: (1) U.S. economic and trade policy toward Cuba and the impact of the U.S. embargo on the Cuban people, (2) the prospects for future economic relations in light of the Pope's recent visit, (3) the status of humanitarian assistance extended to the Cuban people, and (4) how U.S.-Cuba policy, particularly the Helms-Burton legislation, has affected relations with U.S. trading partners.

DETAILS FOR SUBMISSIONS OF REQUESTS TO BE HEARD:

Requests to be heard at the hearing must be made by telephone to Traci Altman or Bradley Schreiber at (202) 225-1721 no later than the close of business, Thursday, April 30, 1998. The telephone request should be followed by a formal written request to A.L. Singleton, Chief of Staff, Committee on Ways and Means, U.S. House of Representatives, 1102 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. The staff of the Subcommittee on Trade will notify by telephone those scheduled to appear as soon as possible after the filing deadline. Any questions concerning a scheduled appearance should be directed to the Subcommittee on Trade staff at (202) 225-6649.

In view of the limited time available to hear witnesses, the Subcommittee may not be able to accommodate all requests to be heard. Those persons and organizations not scheduled for an oral appearance are encouraged to submit written statements for the record of the hearing. All persons requesting to be heard, whether they are scheduled for oral testimony or not, will be notified as soon as possible after the filing deadline.

Witnesses scheduled to present oral testimony are required to summarize briefly their written statements in no more than five minutes. **THE FIVE-MINUTE RULE WILL BE STRICTLY ENFORCED.** The full written statement of each witness will be included in the printed record, in accordance with House Rules.

In order to assure the most productive use of the limited amount of time available to question witnesses, all witnesses scheduled to appear before the Subcommittee are required to submit 200 copies of their prepared statement and an *IBM compatible 3.5-inch diskette in ASCII DOS Text or WordPerfect 5.1 format*, for review by Members prior to the hearing. **Testimony should arrive at the Subcommittee on Trade office, room 1104 Longworth House Office Building, no later than Tuesday, May 5, 1998.** Failure to do so may result in the witness being denied the opportunity to testify in person.

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WRITTEN STATEMENTS IN LIEU OF PERSONAL APPEARANCE:

Any person or organization wishing to submit a written statement for the printed record of the hearing should *submit at least six (6) single-space legal-size copies of their statement, along with an IBM compatible 3.5-inch diskette in ASCII DOS Text or WordPerfect 5.1 format only, with their name, address, and hearing date noted on a label*, by the close of business, Thursday, May 21, 1998, to A.L. Singleton, Chief of Staff, Committee on Ways and Means, U.S. House of Representatives, 1102 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. If those filing written statements wish to have their statements distributed to the press and interested public at the hearing, they may deliver 200 additional copies for this purpose to the Subcommittee on Trade office, room 1104 Longworth House Office Building, at least one hour before the hearing begins.

FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS:

Each statement presented for printing to the Committee by a witness, any written statement or exhibit submitted for the printed record or any written comments in response to a request for written comments must conform to the guidelines listed below. Any statement or exhibit not in compliance with these guidelines will not be printed, but will be maintained in the Committee files for review and use by the Committee.

1. All statements and any accompanying exhibits for printing must be typed in single space on legal-size paper and may not exceed a total of 10 pages including attachments. At the same time written statements are submitted to the Committee, witnesses are now requested to submit their statements on an IBM compatible 3.5-inch diskette in ASCII DOS Text or WordPerfect 5.1 format. Witnesses are advised that the Committee will rely on electronic submissions for printing the official hearing record.
2. Copies of whole documents submitted as exhibit material will not be accepted for printing. Instead, exhibit material should be referenced and quoted or paraphrased. All exhibit material not meeting these specifications will be maintained in the Committee files for review and use by the Committee.
3. A witness appearing at a public hearing, or submitting a statement for the record of a public hearing, or submitting written comments in response to a published request for comments by the Committee, must include on his statement or submission a list of all clients, persons, or organizations on whose behalf the witness appears.
4. A supplemental sheet must accompany each statement listing the name, full address, a telephone number where the witness or the designated representative may be reached and a topical outline or summary of the comments and recommendations in the full statement. This supplemental sheet will not be included in the printed record.

The above restrictions and limitations apply only to material being submitted for printing. Statements and exhibits or supplementary material submitted solely for distribution to the Members, the press and the public during the course of a public hearing may be submitted in other forms.

Note: All Committee advisories and news releases are available on the World Wide Web at "http://www.house.gov/ways_means/".



The Committee seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202-225-1721 or 202-226-3411 TTD/TTY in advance of the event (four business days notice is requested). Questions with regard to special accommodation needs in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats) may be directed to the Committee as noted above.

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