That would be, Mr. Speaker, the clearest way not only to label Castro as what he is, a criminal who engages in crimes against humanity, but there are few things that could give more hope to the Cuban people and hasten the return of democracy than to label the Cuban tyrant as the war criminal that he is. It is necessary, Mr. Speaker, that Castro be told in no uncertain terms that further blackmail against the United States will not be permitted and that a blockade will ensue forthwith once he begins his campaign of blackmail.

These four young men who were murdered on Saturday, my personal friends and constituents, will never be forgotten, and their debts cannot be in vain. We cannot permit the Cuban tyrant to now appropriate the Florida Straits for himself and not only continue with a campaign of terror against the Cuban people, but act as though he is also the ruler and the owner of international waters as well.

President Clinton yesterday announced some steps, which we obviously thank him for, but they were woefully, tragically insufficient. He must sanction truly, truly sanction the Cuban dictatorship, by supporting our Helms-Burton bill, which we are going to pass, we are going to pass in Congress in the next days, and by stating clearly that any attempts by Castro to blackmail the United States will inevitably be met with a total unilateral American blockade that will hasten the collapse of the dictatorship and the return of democracy to Cuba.

THESE MURDERS WILL NOT STAND

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. SCARBOROUGH] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank those members from the Florida delegation, the gentlewoman from Florida [Mrs. MEEK] and of course the gentleman from Florida [Mr. DIAZ-BALART] and the gentlewoman from Florida [Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN] and all the others that have come to this floor today and decided to speak out for freedom and speak out for those very values that our Founding Fathers fought for over 200 years ago, and now though the war for freedom is being waged right off our shores, less than 90 miles away from the United States of America. All I can say is this:

As Mrs. LINCOLN stated before, we have had Castro send a strong message. It is time for America to send a strong message to Fidel Castro and let him know that this will not be permitted to stand, let him know that we will not allow this senseless slaughter to stand, that we will not allow these murders of Americans to stand, flying in a Cessna airplane, being gunned down by a Soviet MiG.

Now many of Castro's apologists in this country and across the world are claiming that these Cessnas may have strayed into Cuban airspace. Well, first of all the facts show that clearly to be false. Fishermen saw the smoke rise and saw the wreckage fall, and that wreckage fell clearly outside of Cuban airspace. But even if those apologists wanted to apologize for Castro and claim that the wreckage fell within Cuban air space, which it did not, still it goes so far beyond the normal accepted standards of international diplomacy and behavior to have Soviet MiG jets gun down unarmed Cessna airplanes that it clearly shows that Castro is a war criminal and should be treated as such.

I am going to be flying down to the area this weekend, and I certainly invite any other members of the Florida delegation to join in, if they wish. As a member of the Committee on National Security and as a member from Florida of the Committee on National Security, I think it is important that we go there, see exactly what happened and ask the difficult questions, and I am going to be calling for hearings. Hopefully we can get a field hearing in Miami at the site of where these planes took off and have a hearing to see what happened, now it happened, and what we can do not only to make Castro pay for what he has committed, but more importantly, to finally bring down after decades of his tyrannical rule a government that is illegitimate and is the last remaining Communist dictatorship in the Western Hemisphere. The fight is for freedom and the fight is for American lives, and again it is extremely important that we do not let these senseless slaughters stand.

I, like many others, would like to thank the President for stepping forward and taking the first step yesterday by talking about some sanctions, which are not sweeping, which do not go far enough, but I am hopeful that this is merely the President's first step. I think we need to step forward with a blockade and let Castro know that it will not stand. I think we need to sit back and even have our military leaders consider selective military strikes against military targets, to let them know that we will not stand back idly and let Americans be killed by a hand of a Communist tyrant. I mean, what is the Federal Government's responsibility in the end?

We have seen an explosion of proliferation of power coming into Washington, DC, but what do our Founding Fathers in the Constitution say this Federal Government was supposed to do first and foremost? It was to protect our shores and to protect American lives.

We have lost American lives now, and the question is are we going to sit back and do nothing, or are we going to respond in an affirmative manner that will make Castro think twice before he decides to kill, murder, and maim Americans again? I think we have no choice.

The history of Castro, really indeed the history of civilization and mankind, shows that the only way to stop a tyrant from being a tyrant, the only way to stop a bully from being a bully, the only way to stop a murderer from being a murderer is to step forward with strong enough responses to scare them from ever doing it again.

We could go back to the ages of the Roman Empire when Julius Caesar put down a rebellion and he struck back and explained to his generals and said why do we not be lenient and let them back in. Julius Caesar said we cannot do it because the order of our society depends on rewarding those who live by the accepted norms in our society and by punishing those that live outside the accepted norms in our society. Fidel Castro has shown this past weekend with the murder of these four Americans that he does not care to live within accepted means of behavior and to be a member of international civilization, and he needs to be punished.

But we do not have to go back to the times of the Roman Empire, the times of Julius Caesar, to see how this plays out. All we have to do is go back to 1984. Do you remember leading up to 1984 when Muammar Qaddafi went around and took credit for every single act of terrorism across the Mideast and across the world, in fact? And he took credit for it and claimed that he was striking back against Americans. Finally, in 1984 some American Marines were blown up and killed in West Germany, and at that point President Ronald Reagan had enough, and he said that it was our responsibility to protect the lives of Americans wherever they were, either at home or abroad, and he went ahead and issued orders for a selective military strike against one of Qaddafi's military bases. The strike was successful. The military base was destroyed. And an interesting thing happened, did it not? The next time there was a terrorist attack in the Middle East, guess who the first leader was to step out and say he had nothing to do with it? It was Qaddafi, because we taught him a very simple lesson, and that lesson was that we were not going to stand for the slaughter of innocent Americans' lives.

That is the same message that I am pleading with President Clinton that he will send to Fidel Castro.

Of course, earlier this morning the United Nations made a pitiful gesture, hardly even condemning these senseless slaughters. Not having the courage to step forward and call a war criminal a war criminal, they merely provided some words. But let me tell you something, friends. Words are not enough. We can talk tough to thugs on the street, to bullies in the school yard, but unless we step forward with positive action and have swift and decisive retribution against those who feel free to kill Americans in broad daylight, we are merely inviting another attack.

As the gentleman from Florida [Mr. DIAZ-BALART] mentioned, Castro felt

he needed to make an example, extract some blood, end some lives, to help extend his own dictatorship in a country that he has run into the ground.

Communism does not work, it did not work for the Soviet Union, it did not work for Eastern Europe, and it has not worked for Fidel Castro. But unlike the Soviet Union, Castro on his tiny island has been able to continue to beat back the will of free-thinking Cubans. This past weekend he took it upon himself to murder four Americans, and in doing so told America and its leaders just how little he feared us. It is time we put the fear of God in Fidel Castro and let him know that this will not stand, and when we hold field hearings, hopefully in Miami in the coming months on this act, and hopefully when we hold hearings up in Washington, DC, we will come up with a clear set of objectives and a clear plan, a clear prescription to rid the Western Hemisphere of this disease we call Fidel Castro and let him know that even if this administration is not going to take the steps required to bring Castro to his knees to pay for these murders, that we in Congress have come up with a plan that the next administration who comes to Washington can pick up and carry through.

These murders will not stand, and they will not stand because the first responsibility of this Federal Government under the Constitution given to us over 200 years ago was to protect and defend the shores of the United States of America, and we will be promoting freedom and we will be doing what our Founding Fathers wanted us to do with the most noble tradition of Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, and all our other Founding Fathers.

□ 1615

When I was back this weekend I held town hall meetings. Not only were they talking about the need to expand freedoms in Cuba and across the globe, many were talking about the need to expand freedom in our own country, in our own backyard. The fight is over for the United States to conquer the world. We are the lone superpower. Now it is time, though, for us to take care of our own backyard, to take care of Castro, and to turn our attention inward and look at some of the problems we are facing in America.

In fact, at my town hall meetings across northwest Florida, I had so many people come up and tell me to stay the course, to fight for the things you fought for in the 1994 election, to fight for freedom, to fight for personal responsibility, to fight for less government, to fight for less taxes, to fight for less regulation, and to fight for more freedom. That is what we promised to do in 1994 and that is what we have done for the past year.

We lived by a very simple creed. That creed was do what our Founding Fathers told us we were empowered to do in the Constitution. During my campaign and during the campaign of many other conservative Republicans that were elected to this institution in 1994, we talked about Madison and Jefferson and the Constitution. We quoted James Madison, one of the three Framers of the Constitution, and talked about the need to decentralize the Federal Government and to empower communities and empower families and individuals.

James Madison, who was one of the three Framers of the Constitution, said that we have staked the entire future of the American civilization not upon the power of government, but upon the capacity of each of us to govern ourselves, to control ourselves, and to defend ourselves according to the Ten Commandments of God. That was about freedom. That is what they were fighting about at Lexington, the freedom to get away from a highly centralized, tyrannical dictatorship in England under King George III, the same type of centralized government that we now see by Castro in Cuba and across other parts of the world, in China.

We also talked about Jeffersonian ideals. It was Jefferson who said, ''The government that governs least governs best.'' People respond to that. That is what the electoral revolution of 1994 was about. It was about freedom, freedom to go to work and to make wages and work hard to live the American dream and bring those wages home; and possibly, after working for many years in a business, possibly going out and taking the chance of starting your own business without interference from Washington, DC, and without interference from your State capitol. It is about freedom.

Jefferson, he was not saying the government who governs least governs best because he was antigovernment. That is an important distinction to point out after the tragedies that occurred in Oklahoma City. Jefferson believed in the power of government, but he believed in the power of government and he believed that the most noble thing, the most noble pursuit any government could pursue was the protection of God-given freedoms. That is what the Constitution says, that is what the Declaration of Independence says, and that is what they put into practice in the Bill of Rights.

Many of you, I am sure, have heard presidential candidates talking about the 10th amendment. Let me tell you something; of all the amendments we have, the 10th amendment tells us what we should do as a Federal Government more than any other amendment. Again, this is what we campaigned on. The 10th amendment says, ''All powers not specifically given to the Federal Government are reserved to the States and reserved to the citizens.'' Is it not great that in our Constitution, unlike the Soviet Constitution that the Soviets lived by for many, many years, that we believed that the powers came from God to the individual. The Soviets believed powers came from the State to the individual, so when the Founders made the two Constitutions, these God-given rights, according to our Founding Fathers, and I am not being a religious extremist here, I am not being a fanatic—I can mention the word God in this Chamber because I am merely quoting what the Founding Fathers said—these God-given rights came from God above to the individual. The Soviets, because it came from the State to the individual, felt like they could take out those rights at any time.

Our Founding Fathers gave us a government to keep the Federal Government out of our way and gave it the sole responsibility to protect those freedoms and to protect Americans across the globe.

Because of that, when we came to Congress we, as freshmen, felt firmly committed to those things we campaigned on, to get the power out of Washington, DC, to get the money out of Washington, DC, to get the bureaucracy out of Washington, DC, and send the money and the power and the authority back to the States, because the Federal Government grew way beyond what our Founding Fathers ever envisioned it would grow.

What is the first thing we talked about? We talked about the need for tax reform. We talked about the need to get the Federal Government out of our pockets. It was very interesting. If you stay in Washington, DC, inside the Beltway long enough, a funny thing starts happening. Your brain gets clouded. You get a brain cloud. It is hard to recognize what reality is.

I will tell you what; back home at my town hall meetings, I found out what reality was. I found out when a young, single father earning less than $30,000 said,

> Congressman SCARBOROUGH, please continue to fight the administration and the liberal Democrats in Washington that do not want us to get any tax relief. Do not listen to them. Please remember who you are doing it for.

I said, ''You know, it is difficult, because they are painting this as tax cuts for the rich and they are saying that we are trying to help out wealthy people.'' He said,

> You have got to stay the course. I am working over 50 hours a week. I have two children. I cannot afford health insurance. I cannot afford to put any money aside for my children's education fund. I cannot afford to pay my bills. And it is because before I get the first dime from my paycheck, I am sending 25 percent of it to Washington, DC. You have got to do something to help.

So I started doing a little bit of research. I found out something that was actually shocking, and went completely against the grain of what the most liberal Members of Congress and the most liberal members of the administration have been telling the American people for the past year. I found out that these so-called tax cuts for the rich and for the wealthy did not actually go to the rich and the wealthy. CBO scored it this way, that 89 percent of the tax relief that we have put on the table goes to working-

class families making less than $75,000. Let me say that again. It is easy to blur the distinctions when you hear somebody get up and yell, They are giving tax cuts for the rich. Our tax relief plan, which will help start a process where we will free working-class blue-collar families from Federal Government enslavement, our plan allows working class families earning under $75,000 to get tax relief. Eighty-nine percent of the tax relief in our plan goes to working class families. We have to keep fighting for that. We cannot back down. We cannot be cowed by demagoguery. We have to stay the course.

Mr. Speaker, let us talk about the impact on American families. It is important to recognize that even under our plan that people said cut taxes too much, that even under our plan revenue to the Federal Government in the next several years is going to be increasing by 37 percent. Yet we have the administration and Members in this body say we are cutting taxes too much.

We are not cutting taxes too much. The working-class families making less than $75,000 that are getting 90 percent of the benefit from this tax cut plan are going to be paying 37 percent more taxes to the Federal Government over the next 7 years. That ain't a tax cut, folks. That is not radical. That is providing real relief to working class families.

Again, we talked about it when we talked about what Castro was doing in Cuba, squashing freedoms; to a much lesser degree, that is what this Federal Government has been doing. It has been moving towards a centralized Federal Government that is trying to take freedom away. Our tax relief plan helps free working class families from the crushing tax burden.

It is also important to recognize that the average middle-class American is going to work 50 percent of their time to pay off taxes, fees, and regulations imposed on them by the Federal, State and local governments. That means that you work from January 1 to June 30 for the Federal Government. You do not get a cent. When you go to work on Monday, you are working for the Federal Government. Go to work on Tuesday, you are working to pay taxes to the Federal Government. When you go to work on Wednesday, you work until lunch, half of your week, paying taxes, fees, and regulations to the government. Let me tell you something, that is not the vision that our Founding Fathers had when they set up this constitutional Republic over 200 years ago.

I want to go on and talk about regulations and the burden that that puts, and sort of talk about the debt. But before I do, I yield to my friend, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. DIAZ-BALART], to talk a little more on the situation with Cuba. While you were away, I was talking about what Ronald Reagan did in 1984 in Libya where we actually had the courage to strike at the heart of the tryant that killed Americans back then.

Let me ask you this, these were your friends: Do you not feel that the four Americans who were murdered this past weekend are every bit as important as those three Marines that were murdered in West German that caused Ronald Reagan to scramble the jets and go over to Libya and strike at the heart of the tyrant?

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Yes, Mr. Speaker. I thank the gentleman so much for yielding, and I did have the opportunity to listen to his very eloquent remarks, as always, but I thank him for his words of genuine concern about the death of the constituents from my district and the district of the gentlewoman from Florida, [Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN].

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opporunity to put into a little bit of a perspective or context the murders of Saturday. As I stated briefly before, it was back in December when 130, over 130 pro-democracy groups in Cuba came together and formed a sort of parliament. The whole gamut of the ideological range is represented by what is known as the Cuban Council. From Christian Democrats and supporters of limited government to Democratic socilists, the whole gamut of pro-democracy people in Cuba came together, and they announced to the world that they had come together. They have differences, but they came together on the concept of elections, democracy, respect for human rights, release of all political prisoners. They were going to meet publicly for the first time.

They sent a letter to Castro asking for authorization to meet, and they did that in December. They asked the Catholic Church's cardinal in Cuba to be present as an observer. They asked the Martin Luther King Center for Nonviolent Change to also send observers. Castro's answer came—that was in December—beginning on the 15th of February.

They had said they were going to meet on February 24, this last Saturday. February 24 is the date in Cuban history that is remembered as the beginning of the war of independence against Spain in 1895. So these over 130 pro-democracy groups said, ''We want to meet on February 24. We want authorization.''

On February 15, Castro began his crackdown and arrested the leadership, and most of the delegates, some of them were already on their way because the crackdown began on the 15th, but between the 15th and last Saturday the crackdown continued. Over 100 of these pro-democracy activists were thrown in jail.

□ 1630

And as I mentioned before, the leadership, in summary trials, were sentenced to prison terms. Of the two vice presidents, one was already, the vice chairmen, the one was already sentenced to prison, the other one, a lady I mentioned before, she was taken to a hospital for surgery. I mean, that is really Orwellian.

If ever there is an example of something that is from 1984, ''The Brave New World,'' the horrible novels about the total, all-encompassing totalitarian state, imagine this vice chairman of this pro-democracy umbrella group taken to a hospital and given some sort of surgery that we do not even know what it is, and no one has been able to meet with her. The chairman that I mentioned before, he was sentenced already to prison, and his mom, who had an opportunity to see him briefly once, she is convinced that he is receiving electroshock torture.

Now, this has been happening since February 15. Note that the Brothers To The Rescue, it is a humanitarian group of volunteers who fly out of Miami looking for refugees to save lives.They have flown over 1,800 missions. They have saved thousands of refugees. If they see refugees on a raft, they call the Coast Guard and they save the lives of those refugees.

Every Saturday, the Brothers To The Rescue, they fly missions. It is a standard practice for that wonderful humanitarian group. Interestingly enough, on Friday, February 23, a gentleman who had defected from the Cuban Air Force less than 2 years ago, and he had gone into the base at Guantanamo, he said he was a defector, he had volunteered during these months that he was in Miami at the Brothers To The Rescue mission there, and on Friday all of a sudden he disappeared. He had gotten married, by the way, in Miami and had some family there. He disappeared. His family did not know where he was. And he appears all of a sudden in Cuba.

So Castro then says, I have got one of these pilots from Brothers To The Rescue and they are a terrorist group. So this spy have been planted here in the United States to infiltrate Brothers To The Rescue, and notice what premeditation existed with regard to this murder. Castro knew that on Saturdays they fly, that this day, the 24th of February, which was a day he is so scared about because it was the beginning of the pro-democracy conference, that there would be a Brothers To The Rescue flight, and he, with premeditation, decided to knock down planes, shoot down planes and kill the American citizens on those planes on February 24.

As I stated before, the message is clear to the Cuban people. Castro is saying, I can act with impunity, not only against you, but against Americans. If I can act with impunity against Americans, imagine how you, the Cuban people, have got to be scared. So Castro does that very, very purposefully.

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Reclaiming my time just for a moment, I think it is important because you talk about these flights and, again, I have heard apologists for Castro, the same people who so warmly embraced him back in

October, basically claiming he was a hero when in fact he is the Western Hemisphere's own version of a little Stalin, these same people are now apologizing for Castro, suggesting that the murders occurred in Cuban airspace.

I want to just bring up briefly and have you discuss this excellent Miami Herald article where we actually had a fisherman say that the murders occurred well within international air space. Can you talk about that for a second? Because this is what I hear on talk radio. When I call in, people are saying, well, but did they strays into the Cuban Air space? Would you mind addressing that?

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. That is such an important issue because, No. 1, obviously even if they had, international law is clear. You do not shoot down unarmed civilian aircraft if they happen to stray over the territory of a country. We do not even shoot down drug dealers. I mean, international law does not permit you to shoot down a drug dealer unless that drug dealer is shooting at you or threatening by flying over the land that the drug dealer is flying over.

You follow the drug dealer, you tell the authorities where they are flying to. So they are reported, but you do not shoot down even criminals, much less unarmed American citizens on a humanitarian mission, over 1,800 flights flown, missions flown, never have they carried even a handgun.

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. And Castro knows that.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Completely, and he even had a spy. He even had a spy within the organization that the day before the murders he took back to Cuba, and he had him there for the day of the murder saying that he had been a pilot for Brothers To The Rescue and that they are a terrorist group. It was all planned. It was all premeditated.

You bring up a fascinating article that came out today in the Miami Herald. It so happens there was a fishing boat right under the airplane, one of the airplanes that was shot down, and very near the other one that was shot down. It is very interesting about the issue of territorial waters which, by the way, is irrelevant because they could not have shot them down even if they had strayed into the territorial waters of Castro's Cuba.

But this fisherman, he said he had last checked his coordinates 2 hours before the attacks. Back then, he was about 12 miles north of Cuba's coast. Twelve miles is the international line. But it was a clear day, he could see Havana. Since then, his boat had cruised north for about 2 hours at about 8 miles an hour. So that is about, you are already talking at least 20 miles now.

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Right.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. At least 20 miles away. At least 8 or 10 miles out of the international line. The boat was at least, the fisherman says that the boat was at least 20 miles off Cuba when he saw the planes being shot down. He says in your mind, this fisherman, Mr. Reilly, says after he got back to the United States, because he did not realize what he had seen, he thought it was shooting practice, because he says, in your mind, you do not think somebody is going to shoot something down with people in it. And then he says the boat was at least 25 miles off Cuba. ''I know exactly where we were. It was definitely no doubt in international waters. They were heading north again about two miles away from the wreckage, the first wreckage. Then they saw a small, another small white plane circle past the north. It was headed northeast. All of a sudden, here comes a jet right behind them and I watched this missile ignite off his left wing. I started counting, one thousand one, one thousand two, one thousand three, one thousand four. It blew up the second plane. It was about 200 feet above the water. It tumbled twice and it fireballed before it hit the water. You could see flames and smoke when it hit. I would say the possibility of survivors on the second plane as well is absolutely zero.''

So we have actually eyewitnesses, as also people on a cruise ship saw it from a little more distance: Definitely in international waters.

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. If you could yield just for 1 second, you know, I, by hearing this account, and it is a harrowing account, thinking about a Cessna plane flying and a jet firing these missiles at him, at a Cessna. I am reminded of a common strain that runs through the characteristics of most tyrants, people like Hitler and Stalin and Castro. They are complete and utter cowards, putting a jet up against a Cessna unarmed.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Unarmed.

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. An unarmed Cessna, knowing it is unarmed, knowing the people inside are freedom fighters, knowing that they have committed no acts of violence against Cuba, knowing that they can do nothing to strike back and, unfortunately, calculating that America's response is going to be weak and tepid. And I think that is where hopefully we can come in as a Congress and urge the President of the United States to do what his duty is and send a strong, strong message to Castro, letting him know that it will not stand.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Yes, I yield to the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate so very much the gentleman yielding and I appreciate my colleague from Florida and his leadership, as well as the leadership of the gentlewoman from Florida [Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN], and the gentlewoman from Florida [Mrs. MEEK], in this regard. I have just arrived and have not had an opportunity to come to the floor, but I want to make it very clear that I support the action as offered by LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART and ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN and denounce totally the shooting down of unarmed airplanes in either Cuban waters or international waters.

I have heard this argument made about the planes, where they were shot down. I would hate like the dickens to feel that an unarmed airplane coming into the United States with no obvious military mission would be shot down. We have forced planes down from Cuba into Florida air space without having to shoot them down and certainly had the ability to shoot them down. On that score, there is no question but that the act itself was extremely ruthless, and appropriate action and response should be undertaken.

I would immediately say that the actions taken by the State Department and by the President of the United States were appropriate for that time, but they certainly need to stay in consultation with those of us and especially LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART and ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, who have a clear understanding of the dynamics that are involved in trying to eradicate this dictator.

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Reclaiming my time just for 1 minute, I would ask you as a judge, I want to ask you a question. If you had somebody that owned a convenience store and a 6-year-old came in and picked up a pack of gum and started walking out that door, and that convenience store owner had the ability to go over and take the gum out of that child's hand but instead shot him dead with an assault rifle, as a judge, would you say, well, this is a thief? Even, again, I am saying even if they were in Cuban air space, and this shows clearly that they were not, what would you do as a judge?

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. I would certainly not condone the overreaction of the store owner in your analog. But putting this in its proper context, there are international laws that countries that are decent observe. This was an indecent act, and that is putting it mildly.

I really appreciate an opportunity to intervene in this special order, but I just wanted to have it clearly understood I will have more to say in the appropriate stages, but I did want it understood, certainly by my colleagues, where I am coming from.

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. I thank the gentleman and yield back to the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. I was very disappointed that President Clinton yesterday, when he announced his sanctions, and it is a separate issue, the fact that I think they were woefully insufficient. But I think that I was very disappointed that he never mentioned, not once, that the downed airplanes were American airplanes and that the murdered men within them, the passengers, were Americans.

Not once did he say that. Now, the question that I would have for the

President is because these murdered Americans were of Cuban descent, does that not make them American? Are they not, do they not merit to be called American citizens? One of them, my good friend Armando Alejandre, he was a war hero. He went to Vietnam, two tours of duty in Vietnam. Is he not an American? The other two Americans born in the United States, are they not Americans for the President? Why did he not even mention once the fact that these airplanes were American airplanes in international waters with Americans murdered within them? That was really insulting that not once did the President even choose to call them Americans.

Now, Castro acted with premeditation. The fact that he had, he withdrew the spy that he had planted in Brothers to the Rescue, and to showcase him with lies in Cuba the same day of the downing of the airplanes and the murder of the American citizens, that shows the premeditation, the level of premeditation by Castro.

One former military officer who has visited Cuba recently was asked by a high-ranking general in the Cuban Government, what would the Clinton administration do if we shot down one of those Brothers to the Rescue airplanes? And he reported back to Warren Christopher.

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Can you repeat that again? When did that happen?

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Yes, about 4 weeks ago.

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. That is shocking.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. About 4 weeks ago.

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. They asked what would happen?

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. A delegation of former military people who advocate getting along with Castro, you know, it is a very small group of left-wing former military people that are always advocating for better relations with North Korea, with China, and of course they are advocating for better relations with Castro, they went to Cuba to see the nuclear power plant that Castro is building down there and to meet with the Cuban officials and General del Todo, one of the high-ranking thugs around Castro, asked former Admiral Carroll what would the United States do if we shot down a Brothers to the Rescue plane?

□ 1645

And Carroll came back, and he told Warren Christopher that, so notice how Castro has been planning this for weeks, if not months.

Obviously, what he said the other day, the message to the Cuban people, as I stated before, is if I can kill Americans with impunity, imagine what I can do to you, and the message to the Clinton administration is obviously clear, no respect, and you know he is laughing at the lack of response of the Clinton administration.

But, as you said, if the administration will not protect American lives, we, in Congress, will. We will pass our sanctions bill. We will not permit the murder of these U.S. citizens go unpunished, and I truly believe that the President's measures were woefully insufficient.

I recommended to him before he announced his insufficient measures yesterday that he announce that any further blackmail by Castro, like the immigration blackmail by Castro, like the immigration crisis of 1994, will be met inevitably and immediately by an American embargo of Castro, including oil shipments, and mark my words, that blackmail is coming unless President Clinton can change right now his course of action and convey clearly to Castro that he will face a blockade if he threatens the United States once again.

He believes, Castro believes, that he can once again terrorize President Clinton with blackmail. We, we here in Congress, must pass our sanction bill, as we will. We certainly hope that we can get the support of the President. He is moving in our direction but still has not supported the House version, which is the firm version of the Helms-Burton bill, and as I stated before, and this idea came from Cuba, from a prodemocracy group today, that the United States must seek the indictment of Castro for crimes against humanity in the international court of justice in The Hague.

There are clearly crimes committed in the recent past by Castro, even though his crimes began with the show trials and the firing squads in 1959, but clearly the use of electroshock torture on political dissidents like Nujenio Lesosa, who has been here in Congress with my dear friend, the gentlewoman from Florida [Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN], and right now today, Colonel Enrique Labrada, who has held a prodemocracy demonstration in October or November of last year, they are receiving electroshock torture. Mr. Labrada is still in this day receiving electroshock torture.

The murder of unarmed men, women, and children, like in the tugboat that was sunk on July 13, 1994, over 20, over 40 men, women and children, mostly children, upon the direct order of Castro, that is a crime against humanity.

The gentlewoman from Florida [Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN] and I here have received, we have in our offices a 10-year-old boy who came with his parents in a small boat and told us how helicopters, it was at night; they were saved by the fact that it was nighttime, were dropping these large sandbags on the raft to sink the raft. A 10-year-old boy told us how he managed to survive that. Of course, the February 24, 1996, murder of American citizens in international waters, those are crimes against humanity that must be punished.

I know Mr. Clinton may wish he did not have to confront the Cuba problem. He obviously could like not to have to. But he has to protect, he is constitutionally required to protect, the lives of American citizens. It is his constitutional duty.

We have got this court of justice in The Hague as part of the U.N. structure. We pay a lot of U.S. taxpayer dollars to maintain it. I think it is the appropriate forum to discuss these crimes against humanity, even if we do not go in and arrest them, and I think we should. But even if we do not go in and arrest them, there can be few things that would give more hope and hasten more the liberation of Cuba than to label through the indictment in the international court of justice, Castro as the war criminal that he is.

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Reclaiming my time, I want to recognize another Member from the Miami area in a moment. But let me just say, adding to what you said, you talked about this meeting with Christopher that the information that got to Warren Christopher, and they were asked what would happen if we went ahead and blew up some of these planes, obviously the response was tepid, and let us go back through our history not only with Castro but, again, American history. Look what happened in 1994 when North Korea asked what would happen if we invaded South Korea. Harry Truman at the time gave a tepid response, and as a result of it, we had the war that cost tens of thousands of American lives.

We are making the same mistake in China right now. We continue to bow down to Communist oppression in China, and we have done the same thing in Cuba over the past 35 years. So it is no wonder that Castro feels emboldened. I mean, the guy has learned over the years that you can kick America and they are not going to kick back. It goes all the way back to the Bay of Pigs, when America did not fulfill the duty that it was supposed to fulfill, to go in and liberate Cuba then and to bring freedom to the islands, and it has fast-forwarded to a few months ago when they asked what happens if we blow up Cessna airplanes.

I do not want to point fingers, but let us get back to what you said. What would somebody say in the Clinton administration if somebody from, let us say, Bulgaria said, listen, if some people from Kansas are flying across the Atlantic Ocean and we decided to take them out, what is your response going to be? Do you think that they would have a tepid response to that? No. They are buying into the Castro propaganda that this is somehow an arm of some militant revolutionary guard. It is Americans who have fought for the American cause in wars, like you said, in Vietnam. They are Americans in American planes fighting for a very American cause of freedom.

Bill Clinton's administration, I am not pointing directly at Bill Clinton on this one, but the administration has given a tepid response, and because of it four Americans are dead today that we, as a country, should have protected, and now it is our duty to step forward as a Congress and do that.

I yield to the gentlewoman from Florida [Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN].

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I congratulate our colleague from Florida [Mr. SCARBOROUGH] for taking the opportunity to discuss what we believe is an international incident of epic proportions that could very well change the nature of relations between our countries, and we hope that they change in the way that will help bring about democracy, freedom, and justice to the enslaved people of Cuba, who have been under the yoke of communism and godless communism for over 35 years.

We have been talking, and the gentleman from Florida [Mr. DIAZ-BALART], with his many years of experience in this, was talking about the crackdown on incidents, the human rights violations. We know that if you are a person who wants to practice your faith, no matter what faith that is, if you are in Castro's Cuba, you are unable to practice your faith, you are unable to worship your God because the only God that is allowed to be worshiped in Cuba is Fidel Castro, and I think that that positive change is going to come about.

The gentleman from Florida [Mr. DIAZ-BALART] has been talking about the change that could be possible in Cuba without Castro, but certainly with Castro there, those changes are going to be very difficult to bring about. And that is why we saw this as a very sad opportunity, but an opportunity nonetheless, to bring further sanctions, and on this we have a very strong bipartisan support, especially in our Florida delegation, whether it is the gentleman from Florida [Mr. HASTINGS], who has always been in favor of freedom and democracy for the enslaved people of Cuba, whether it is our colleague, the gentlewoman from Florida [Mrs. MEEK], who is always there with us, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. DEUTSCH], who has been in a leadership position for us, the gentlewoman from Florida [Ms. BROWN], in fact, if I say all of the names, we will be here for a long time because we have many wonderful colleagues on both sides of the aisle who know and understand the suffering of the Cuban people.

But I wanted to have the gentleman from Florida [Mr. DIAZ-BALART] take this opportunity, if I could, to explain to the American public what has been going on with the nuclear powerplant in Cuba and also to talk a little bit about the lords intelligence facility, which has not been discussed at length, which is also a very important element of our United States-Cuba relations and the Soviet Union, the new Soviet Republics are very much tied in.

The gentleman from Florida [Mr. DIAZ-BALART], what would you say, what is your opinion on those who say that we should have a North Korea type of solution to the unsafe, dangerous unsafe nuclear powerplant in Cienfuegos, Cuba, those who say we should go in there and help Castro build the best darn nuclear powerplant that we can get?

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. God save us, God saves us, Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN, from a North Korea solution for Castro. The reality of the matter is the administration decided when they heard North Korea was building some nuclear powerplants, maybe they could use some of that nuclear power for transformation into nuclear weapons. They went in and offered $5 billion to the North Koreans to build for the North Koreans the nuclear powerplants with the promise that in 5 years we can go and inspect. Now, God save us from that solution for Castro, because if Castro has been able to, as he has, blackmail the United States with refugees, because that is what he does, he has already begun, we will see in the next hours, Mr. Speaker, we will see in the next hours, I am very confident in the next hours we will see again some more blackmail using refugees because it works for Castro.

The last time he did it, he got Clinton to sit down with him, and he no longer has the Soviet Union that protects him, because the Soviet Union had worked out the deal at the end of the missile crisis in 1962 where the United States committed not only to not permit an invasion, to permit anybody to do anything against Castro from anywhere in the hemisphere. It has been comfortable for Castro to rant and rave against the United States since 1962 with the United States as bodyguard. There is no Soviet Union now. The Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, and Bill Clinton got elected in 1992. Castro no longer has the shield of the agreement with the Soviet Union, because there is no Soviet Union, but he managed to get Bill Clinton to sit down at the table and work out a so-called immigration agreement with him, which is a sword, in effect, over the head of President Clinton because it can be withdrawn at any time, the agreement, and now with sanctions that have to come because the President has a constitutional obligation to protect American citizens, with Castro I have no doubt he will start trying to wield that sword up again, shake that sword again, I will send you refugees. Tyrants cannot be appeased.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Another thing, if I could, a naval blockade which would enable no supplies to get to Castro, if you could explain how that would work.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. With regard to your earlier point, which is so important, though, imagine Castro with refugees has been able to blackmail the United States, it is laughable, but it happened with refugees, he has been able to blackmail the United States, and imagine with a nuclear powerplant. That is an accident in the making, or an incident in the making, because Castro can say, you know, just like he says, what are Castro's codewords for every time he threatens Clinton with an immigration crisis, ''I cannot control my borders.'' Well, imagine, ''I cannot control my safety of my nuclear powerplant,'' imagine that. And that is now, that is something that could affect the lives of people in half of this hemisphere if he creates an incident with a nuclear powerplant. So we cannot, because of national security concerns, permit a nuclear powerplant to be built in Cuba during the dictatorship of this madman.

I think what we need to do sooner or later, I am convinced it is going to come anyway, I mean even Neville Chamberlain had to confront the tyrant Hitler. If there is anybody in the history of the 20th century that did not want to have to confront the tyrant Hitler, it was Mr. Neville Chamberlain. I have here ''Peace for a Generation,'' remember that, Neville Chamberlain, when he came back from Munich, Mr. Duvalier, the Prime Minister of France, if there had ever been a pair of tough hawks in this century who did not want to have to challenge Hitler, it was Duvalier and Chamberlain. Even they had to challenge the tyrant Hitler, and the reality of the matter is that President Clinton, whether he likes it or not, since Castro does not respect him, and the other day he already called Warren Christopher a cynical liar. I do not think anybody called Warren Christopher that, he is such a diplomat. Castro called him a cynical liar. He is going to continue calling Warren Christopher and Clinton and everyone else names. We have a report of what he called President Clinton. He said his knees shake, that is what he called President Clinton, his knees shake and he has no backbone. That is his description in public of President Clinton. Sooner or later, since he does not respect President Clinton, he is going to continue to blackmail and continue to blackmail and continue to blackmail, and sooner or later the American Government is going to have to help the Cuban people free themselves of that tyrant, then the Cuban Republic will be among the best friends, as traditionally they were, of the American people and American Government, the Cuban Republic, however, independent, free, sovereign, and democratic.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I am optimistic that day is around the corner, and with the help of all the countries joining together, we will make that dream of freedom a reality for the enslaved people of Cuba.

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. I thank both of you.

Again, we are going to be going down there this Friday, and I am looking forward to input from all the Florida delegation and also those who have suffered under Castro as we try to move the Committee on National Security, of which I am a member, to hold hearings, hopefully, field hearings down in Miami, down where the incident occurred, to see what happened and to come up with a strategy to make sure

that such a disaster never happens again. We have no other choice. We must stand up to Castro. We must protect American lives, and we will do that.

Freedom will come to Cuba, and we will win that fight because we have no other choice. We are Americans.

□ 1700

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DUNCAN). Pursuant to clause 5 of rule I, the Chair will now put the question on each motion to suspend the rules on which further proceedings were postponed earlier today in the order in which the motion was entertained.

Votes will be taken in the following order: H.R. 2196, de novo; and S. 1494, de novo.

The Chair will reduce to 5 minutes the time for any electronic vote after the first such vote in this series.

NATIONAL TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER AND ADVANCEMENT ACT OF 1995

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The pending business is on the question de novo of suspending the rules and concurring in the Senate amendments to the bill, H.R. 2196.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Maryland [Mrs. MORELLA] that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendments to the bill, H.R. 2196.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the Senate amendments were concurred in.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HOUSING OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM EXTENSION ACT OF 1996

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The pending business is the question de novo of suspending the rules and passing the Senate bill, S. 1494, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York [Mr. LAZIO] that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 1494, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the Senate bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members are recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California [Ms. WATERS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Ms. WATERS addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION STILL VERY MUCH ON THE MINDS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE], is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I am not sure that I will use the entire time, but I did want to seek recognition today to talk about environmental concerns, and particularly to point out some of the results of a hearing that our Democratic Environmental Task Force held yesterday on February 26. We had a full, I guess, 2 or 3 hours of hearings. We heard from not only the Secretary of the Interior, Mr. Babbitt; the EPA Administrator, Ms. Browner; and also Assistant Attorney General Schiffer, but also from a distinguished panel of citizens from around the country who are concerned about environmental protection.

The reason for the task force existence and the reason for the hearing yesterday was because of our concern, Democrats' concern, that the Republican leadership in the House of Representatives has essentially used 1995, our previous year, in order to try to turn back the clock on 25 years of environmental protection in the United States.

For more than a quarter of a century, there has been a consensus, a bipartisan consensus in Congress, as well as with the President, largely with Democratic Congresses and mostly with Republican Presidents, or sometimes Democratic Presidents, but in any case on a bipartisan basis for 25 years this Congress has tried to protect the environment, improve the laws, improve enforcement, improve inspections, so that polluters, whether they be polluters of the air, the water, or our natural resources, would have to stop their efforts to continue the degradation of the environment, and if they did not, they would be penalized severely, hopefully, for their activities that were detrimental to the environment.

In fact, in many ways we can hark back to the days in the 1970's, in the early 1970's, when the Environmental Protection Agency was created under then President Richard Nixon. It was a Democratic Congress, but a Republican President in 1970 who created the Environmental Protection Agency. In fact, when the first Earth Day was organized back in 1970, President Nixon and the Republicans in Congress were very supportive of the efforts to move forward on environmental protection.

But this 25-year consensus, this 25 years, if you will, prior to 1995, when every year stronger environmental protection laws were passed and money was made available for enforcement and inspections for our environmental laws, all of a sudden in 1995 this consensus was broken and we saw the effort on the part of Speaker GINGRICH and the House Republican leadership to roll back environmental protection. And whether it was through authorizing bills or cutbacks in the budgets for these various environmental agencies, all of a sudden there was an effort by the Republican leadership to change this 25-year consensus.

The reason for that I believe very strongly is because of special interests. In other words, corporate interests, the polluters, if you will, were very much behind the Republican leadership in saying look, the time has come to turn back the clock and we expect you to come down to Washington and help us to make it easier, if you will, or less stringent, with regard to pollution, and less stringent regulations and less stringent statutes and less money available for these agencies to do their work was essentially the order of the day.

I feel that it is an obligation, not only of the Democrats but also of moderate Republicans who support the environmental protection agenda, to point out what is happening and how extremist this Republican leadership agenda is that seeks to essentially turn back the clock on environmental protection, because we know that the American people consistently support strong environmental laws and strong enforcement of those environmental laws. In fact, a survey was recently done, which I would like to point to, by American Viewpoint. It pointed out that by greater than a 2.1 margin, voters have more confidence in the Democrats than Republicans as the party they trust most to protect the environment. In fact, it even pointed out that 55 percent of all Republicans surveyed do not trust their party when it comes to protecting the environment, while 72 percent of the Democrats do trust their party to protect the environment.

So the bottom line is that environmental protection is very much still in the forefront of the minds of the American people. They did not elect a Congress in 1994, whether it be under the Republican majority or Democrats in the minority, they did not elect a Congress with the idea that the leadership of the Congress was going to come down here and try to turn back the clock on environmental protection.

What I think has been happening though is that in 1995, while this effort was going on on the part of Speaker GINGRICH and the Republican leadership, more and more they began to become aware of the fact that, particularly toward the end of the year, that this was not a popular agenda, that destroying environmental laws and turning back the clock was not something