slowly be moving toward somewhat greater tolerance of dissent on the island.

Why then the recent arrest of dissidents? Is it, as some in the United States quickly posited, that Castro was simply hoping the rest of the world was so distracted by the war in Iraq, that no one would notice or react to the detention of a few dissidents in Cuba?

No, that explanation simply doesn't hold up. First of all, no one in his right mind (and whatever else he is, Castro is that) would have expected the arrest of over 80 dissidents, many of them well-known international figures, to go unremarked. The Cubans expected a firestorm, and they got it.

Second, the timing could hardly be worse from Castro's standpoint. The UN Human Rights Commission has just begun its annual deliberations to decide, among other things, whether to condemn Cuba for violations of human rights. Given the greater tolerance discussed above, there had seemed a good chance that Cuba would not be condemned this year. The crackdown, coming just now, makes that far less likely.

Given all that, why the crackdown and why now? To answer those questions, we must first note that the greater leeway for dissent noted above came in response to the overtures of groups in the American Congress and the American public, not to any easing of the hard line on the part of the Bush Administration. Quite the contrary, its policies and rhetoric remained as hostile and as threatening as ever. It ignored all Cuban offers to begin a dialogue and instead held to an objective of regime change. As Mr. James Cason, the Chief of the U.S. Interests Section has stated publicly, one of his tasks was to promote ''transition to a participatory form of government.''

Now, we would all like to see a more open society in Cuba; that indeed, is what we are all working toward. But it is not up to the United States to orchestrate it. In fact, it is not up to the United States to decide what form of government Cuba should have. Cuba is, after all, a sovereign country. To the Cubans, for the chief U.S. diplomat in Cuba to seem to be telling them what kind of government they should have seemed a return to the days of the Platt Amendment.

The Bush Administration was uncomfortable with signs of greater tolerance on Castro's part, for that simply encouraged those in the United States who wanted to ease travel controls and begin dismantling the embargo. New initiatives along those lines were expected in the Congress this spring. What to do to head them oft?

What the Administration did is clear enough. It ordered the Chief of the U.S. Interests Section in Havana to begin a series of high-profile and provocative meetings with dissidents, even holding seminars in his own residence and passing out equipment of various kinds to them. He even held press conferences after some of the meetings. The Administration knew that such ''bull-in-the-china-shop'' tactics would provoke a Cuban reaction—hopefully an overreaction. And given that the purpose was ''regime change'', the Cubans came to see them as ''subversive'' in nature and as increasingly provocative. Those arrested were not charged with expressing themselves against the state, but with ''plotting with American diplomats.''

The circumstances are different, but to understand Cuban sensitivities in this case, let us imagine the reaction of the U.S. Government if Cuban diplomats here were meeting with members of the Puerto Rican Independence Party to help them promote Puerto Rico's transition from commonwealth to independence. Perhaps the Attorney General would not arrest everyone involved, but I wouldn't take any bets on it.

And the beginning of the war in Iraq did play a role in the crackdown. The Cubans saw it as a signal that the United States was determined to throw its weight around and to blow away anyone it doesn't like through the unilateral use of force. As one Cuban official put it to me recently: ''This new preemptive-strike policy of yours puts us in a new ball game, and in that new game, we must make it clear that we can't be pushed around.''

It was this kind of mind set that led to the crackdown and that turned the latter into a massive overreaction. The Cubans did exactly what the Bush Administration had hoped they would do. Virtually the whole active dissident community has now not only been arrested but put on trial (or notified that they soon will be) and given extremely heavy sentences. Tragic. This is a blot that will not be easily erased and that will impede any significant progress in U.S.-Cuban relations until there is some amelioration of conditions in Cuba. The Bush Administration meanwhile will certainly continue the pressures, and the provocations, so as to prevent any such amelioration.

It has been argued that Castro simply saw this as a propitious moment to halt dissent in Cuba, and there are doubtless some elements of truth to that argument. Castro has never liked to be criticized. Still, over the past few years, he had tolerated criticism of the system. All things being equal, he might have continued to do so. But the situation has changed, not just between the U.S. and Cuba, but internationally, in ways that the U.S. public is just beginning to understand.

In the dark days that lie ahead, people of good will in the United States who want to see a more normal relationship between our two countries, and to see a more open society in Cuba, should hold to the demonstrable truth that the best way to bring about both is through the reduction of tensions, the beginning of a meaningful dialogue and increased contacts. As Elizardo Sanchez, Cuba's leading human rights activist, has often put it, ''the more American citizens in the streets of Cuban cities, the better for the cause of a more open society; so why do you maintain travel controls?'' The policies followed by one administration after another over the past 44 years have accomplished nothing positive. True to form, the policy followed by the Bush Administration, and the clumsy tactics of the U.S. Interests Section, have produced only a crackdown. Exactly what we should not want!

Wayne S. Smith, now a Senior Fellow at the Center for International Policy, was Third Secretary of Embassy at the American Embassy in Havana from 1958 until the U.S. broke relations in January of 1961, and was Chief of the U.S. Interests Section there from 1979 until 1982.

REINTRODUCTION OF THE TERRORIST VICTIM CITIZENSHIP RELIEF ACT

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 11, 2003

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduce legislation that would grant citizenship to the spouses and children of legal immigrants who were killed on September 11, 2001. Additionally, this legislation would grant honorary citizenship to those legal immigrants who were killed in the attacks. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, left approximately 100 surviving spouses and children of legal immigrants in jeopardy of being deported, because their immigration status was linked to a family member who was employed at the World Trade Center. While the USA PATRIOT Act allowed these individuals to stay in the United States until September 10, 2002, that reprieve has expired. These individuals should not be forced to leave the country because of the actions of the terrorists.

GUY LEWIS SHOULD HAVE BEEN ELECTED INTO THE BASKETBALL HALL OF FAME

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 11, 2003

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I was disappointed to learn that this past Monday, Guy V. Lewis was not elected into the Basketball Hall of Fame, despite of his obvious qualifications and contributions to the game.

Coach Lewis has had a tremendous impact on the game of basketball throughout our country and in Texas, having coached the University of Houston Cougars for more than 30 years. This university is my alma mater, and the school pride that he instilled during the tenure still lingers today.

This exemplary coach led the Cougars to 592 wins, 5 final fours, 14 NCAA title games, and 2 NCAA titles.

He also coached his team in the historical 1968 UH vs. UCLA game, which was the first collegiate game ever nationally televised and the largest crowd to watch a collegiate game at that time. I'm proud to say I was there as a University of Houston student.

Star players Hakeem Olajuwon, Clyde Drexler, and Elvin Hayes, all named among the NBA's 50 greatest players of all time, got their start at the University of Houston with Coach Lewis. But despite all of Coach Lewis' accomplishments, he was still over looked for the Hall of Fame.

Coach Lewis is only 81 years old, and although he may not have been elected this time around, I want him to know that sports fans everywhere consider him to be a true pioneer of basketball.

I know that I speak for all Houstonians when I say that we are very proud of Coach Lewis. I look forward to congratulating him on his election into the Basketball Hall of Fame in the very near future.

COMMENDING MR. RONNIE RAPER

HON. ZACH WAMP

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 11, 2003

Mr. WAMP. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the bravery of Rhea County Commission Chairman Ronnie Raper. Earlier this week, Chairman Raper risked his own life to save Melinda Andrews, 13, from the raging waters of the Richland Creek in Rhea County, Tennessee.

On Monday, April 7th Ronnie Raper, a building inspector, happened to be in his car and heard a 911 call over his radio indicating