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to extend for another 6 months the suspension of the right to file suit under title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act.

A number of developments show the strengthened international consensus for change in Cuba. The European Union, acting consistent with its traditional democratic values, in December adopted an historic ''Common Position'' binding all 15 member nations to promote democracy and reform in Cuba. The EU's action explicitly makes any improvement in political or economic relations with Cuba contingent on concrete advances in human rights and political freedoms on the island. At the Ibero-American Summit in Santiago in November, heads of state from Latin America, Spain, and Portugal called for democracy and full respect for human rights, thus emphasizing Cuba's isolation as the hemisphere's only nondemocratic nation.

Governments and nongovernmental organizations are increasing their backing for dissidents on the island and keeping international attention focused on repression in Cuba. A new European Platform for Human Rights and Democracy in Cuba is being created to help coordinate NGO activity to strengthen independent groups in Cuba. European business leaders and organizations are supporting a set of best-business practices so, if they invest in Cuba, it will benefit Cuban workers and not the government. Europe's major labor organization, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, has strongly condemned Castro's labor practices and called for free trade unions.

These and other steps have sent a clarion message of hope to the Cuban people. They underscore that it is Castro who is isolated, not those who welcome the democratic tide of history. They demonstrate the international community's resolve to end the dictatorship so the people of Cuba can enjoy the freedom and prosperity they deserve.

The international momentum we have built to promote democracy in Cuba must be preserved and strengthened. During the coming 6 months and thereafter, we will continue working with our allies to develop the most comprehensive, effective measures to promote democracy in Cuba that we can. We also will continue to enforce title IV of the LIBERTAD Act.

The law requires that I review title III every 6 months. I would expect to continue suspending the right to file suit so long as America's friends and allies continue their stepped-up efforts to promote a transition to democracy in Cuba. I hope, furthermore, that the momentum created by the EU's actions will lead to similar Cuba democracy efforts by others, including governments in our own hemisphere.

The Cuban people have lived under tyranny for too long. We must sustain our efforts to hasten the arrival of democracy in Cuba. As a result of increasing international pressure, we have never been closer to that day. We will not be satisfied until that day arrives.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996

January 3, 1997

Dear _____*:*

Pursuant to subsection 306(c)(2) of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996 (Public Law 104–114), (the ''Act''), I hereby determine and report to the Congress that suspension for 6 months beyond February 1, 1997, of the right to bring an action under Title III of the Act is necessary to the national interests of the United States and will expedite a transition to democracy in Cuba.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Jesse Helms, chairman, and Claiborne Pell, ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Mark O. Hatfield, chairman, and Robert C. Byrd, ranking member, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, and Lee H. Hamilton, ranking member, House Committee on International Relations; and Robert L. Livingston, chairman, and David R. Obey, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

December 30

In the morning, the President and Hillary and Chelsea Clinton traveled to Hilton Head, SC, where they attended the annual Renaissance Weekend. In the evening, the President attended a dinner honoring retired Adm. Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr., at the Hilton hotel.

January 1

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority to express condolences on the attack on civilians by an off-duty Israeli soldier in Hebron, West Bank.

In the afternoon, the President and Hillary and Chelsea Clinton traveled to St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, for a vacation.

January 2

The President named the winners of the 1996 National Medal of Arts and the Charles Frankel Prize in the Humanities. He and the First Lady will present the awards on January 9 at the Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium, in Washington, DC.

The recipients of the National Medal of Arts are: Edward Albee, Sarah Caldwell, Harry Callahan, Zelda Fichandler, Eduardo (Lalo) Guerrero, Lionel Hampton, Bella Lewitzky, Vera List, Robert Redford, Maurice Sendak, Stephen J. Sondheim, and the Boys Choir of Harlem.

The recipients of the Frankel Prize in the Humanities are: Rita Dove, Doris Kearns Goodwin, Daniel Kemmis, Arturo Madrid, and Bill Moyers.

Released January 3

The President declared a major disaster in Nevada and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, flooding, mud and land slides beginning on December 20, 1996, and continuing.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

NOTE: No nominations were submitted to the Senate during the period covered by this issue.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor fully covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released December 29

Statement by Press Secretary Mike McCurry on the Guatemala peace accords

Released December 31

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Mary Ellen Glynn

Released January 1

Statement by Press Secretary Mike McCurry on the attack by an off-duty Israeli soldier in Hebron

Released January 2

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Mary Ellen Glynn

Released January 3

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Mary Ellen Glynn

Fact sheet on the President's decision on title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996

Acts Approved by the President

NOTE: No acts approved by the President were received by the Office of the Federal Register during the period covered by this issue.