

RELEASE IN FULL

JAMES P. MCGOVERN
5th District, MASSACHUSETTS

VICE CHAIRMAN
COMMITTEE ON RULES

COMMITTEE ON BUDGET

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2103

<http://www.jmcgovern.house.gov>

January 7, 2010

President Barack Obama
The White House

Janet Napolitano
Secretary of Homeland Security
Department of Homeland Security

Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary of State
Department of State

Dear President Obama and Secretaries Napolitano and Clinton:

I write to express my recognition, appreciation and concern for the difficult task you have to identify and ensure that states that sponsor and harbor terrorist networks and organizations are unable to do grave harm to our nation and people. The urgency of this matter, as demonstrated by the attempt on Christmas Day to destroy a U.S. passenger airliner, requires you to take quick decisions in the immediate term to protect U.S. citizens. Over the coming days and weeks, however, I encourage a more detailed and robust review of information and intelligence so that individuals, organizations and nations that have been placed on "watch" lists for political or reasons unrelated to terrorism – or whose circumstances have changed over time – are removed from such lists. This cleansing and updating of information is critical so that U.S. attention, resources and energy are focused on where threats genuinely reside, rather than squandered where there is no documented threat.

One such State, for example, that should be removed from the State Sponsors of Terrorism list and other similar "watch" lists is Cuba. The Pentagon, U.S. intelligence agencies or the State Department's Office on Counter-Terrorism have not identified Cuba as a threat to U.S. security. It is not engaged in nuclear proliferation or the production of biological or chemical weapons. Shopworn arguments regarding relationships with terrorist groups, such as the ETA, FARC or ELN, run contrary to fact. The individual ETA members who reside in Cuba are there as a result of a 1984 agreement between Spain and Cuba to keep them on the island. As Spain now assumes the presidency of the European Union, it is actively encouraging EU members to ease restrictions and open up expanded relations with Cuba – hardly the action of a country concerned about a terrorist attack being launched from Cuba. The Cuban government engaged the Colombian guerrilla group, the ELN, in negotiations at the request of and with the full and active engagement of Colombian President Uribe and his government. Cuba also made the same offer to the FARC, at the request of the Uribe Administration, even though the FARC

408 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-2103
(202) 225-6101

DISTRICT OFFICE:
34 MECHANIC STREET
WORCESTER, MA 01609
(508) 831-7358

ATTLEBORO OFFICE:
8 NORTH MAIN STREET, ROOM 200
ATTLEBORO, MA 02703
(508) 431-8325

FALL RIVER OFFICE:
371 MAIN STREET, #102
FALL RIVER, MA 02723
(508) 677-0140

MALDENBOROUGH OFFICE:
255 MAIN STREET, ROOM 104
MALDENBOROUGH, MA 01752
(508) 460-8207


and Cuba are long-time ideological antagonists. In 2009, President Uribe re-established full relations with Cuba, opening an embassy and sending an ambassador to serve on the island. Further, there has never been any accusation, not even by U.S. authorities, that Colombian guerrilla organizations have ever used Cuba as a site for terrorist or insurgent activities.

There are several individuals living in Cuba who are wanted for crimes, including murder, in the United States. However, these are *criminal* activities, unrelated to *terrorism*. Due to more than five decades of diplomatic isolation, the U.S. has no extradition treaty or any other law enforcement or judicial mechanism set up with Cuba that would allow for their transfer back to the United States to face trial. As you are aware, many of our closest friends and allies in Latin America and elsewhere will not extradite or return individuals indicted for crimes in the United States, in general because of objections to the U.S. death penalty, so this is not a justification for a nation to appear on the terrorism list.

The United States has many long-standing political and diplomatic problems with Cuba, but none of them relate to terrorism. In fact, engaging, collaborating and enlisting Cuba in the fight against international terrorism would be to the advantage of U.S. national security.

As noted, this is but one example of a country that should be removed from the list of State Sponsors of Terrorism; no doubt, there are other individuals and organizations that appear on other lists that also merit serious review and possible removal. I encourage you to carry out a thorough and judicious review of such lists, purge from them nations and organizations that appear due to political and policy reasons unrelated to the threat of terrorism, and restore integrity to these watch lists so that our own precautionary measures and our coordination with international intelligence and law enforcement agencies may be used to maximum effect and the enhanced protection of our nation and citizens.

Thank you for your serious attention to these recommendations. Please know that I would welcome any opportunity to discuss these matters in more detail with you.

Sincerely,

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

JPM:cmb