



Office of the Press Secretary

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Statement from the President

Today I am beyond happy to announce that the Cuban people are beginning to recover from the awful earthquake that struck their nation. The American aid and relief efforts are working and I am now able to announce that Cuba's ports are beginning to reopen and their oil flow has started once again, which means that they now have their power mostly back on and transportation services are now running in many places across the country.

The time of strained relations between Cuba and the United States needs to come to an end. It is time that Cuba opens up its political process to the ordinary men and women and not just statist communist elites. If Cuba embraces the timeless call of freedom and democracy, the United States will provide extensive support in all areas to help Cuba prosper and achieve its full potential. The Cuba embargo is over and the United States is willing to put forth the effort needed to rebuild the once strong relations between Cuba and the United States if Cuba is willing as well.

Tomorrow I will be joining Secretary of State Jerry LeRow in Cuba to meet with their president and to see the reconstruction and relief efforts. The goal of the meeting with President Miguel Díaz-Canel is to warm the relations between Cuba and the United States. We are not only willing to return to normal bilateral relations, but also to sign a free trade agreement and other mutually beneficial agreements, given that Cuba opens its political process to all its people.

With all of that said, I am beyond glad that the relief efforts are working and that the people of Cuba are beginning to recover. I want to send my prayers to those who lost loved ones or friends during the earthquake and I also want to send my prayers to those injured by the earthquake. I continue to call on Congress to pass a disaster relief bill to

send to Cuba to help with the huge economic losses their nation sustained due to the earthquake and to further help with the relief and rebuilding process. I also want to continue to urge the American people to send charitable help and relief to the people of Cuba, if you are able. Thank you, God bless you, God bless the people of Cuba, and God bless the United States of America!

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