

DAVID RIVERA
25TH DISTRICT, FLORIDA

COMMITTEE ON
FOREIGN AFFAIRS

COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0925

March 7th 2011

The Honorable
Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary of State
2201 C St., NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Clinton,

I am writing to express my concern about the impending conviction and sentencing of Alan Gross, a U.S. citizen who has been unjustly jailed in a Cuban prison for his work on behalf of USAID humanitarian efforts.

During a briefing yesterday with State Department Cuba Coordinator Peter Brennan, I was informed that there is no planned or anticipated response by the U.S. government to the all but certain conviction and sentencing of Mr. Gross. Mr. Brennan explained that the position of the Obama Administration is to “play it careful and safe... not to overreact” and in this case to “hope [the Cuban dictatorship] does the right thing”.

Madame Secretary, failing to react strongly and credibly to what is in essence the taking of an American hostage by the Cuban dictatorship is unacceptable. Even Assistant Secretary of State Arturo Valenzuela recently agreed that Mr. Gross is a hostage. The reaction of the U.S. government will be critical to ensuring that the Cuban dictatorship, as well as all foreign governments, understands that there are consequences to the mistreatment of American citizens abroad. The entire world, and particularly rogue terrorist regimes like the Castro regime, will be watching for the consequences from this Administration as a result of this mistreatment of an American citizen.

Our policy of “hoping the dictatorship does the right thing” is a failure. For 52 years, the Castro dictatorship has not done “the right thing.” In recent testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee neither you nor Assistant Secretary Valenzuela could cite a single example of the Castro dictatorship responding positively toward unilateral concessions from our government. Assistant Secretary Valenzuela went even further and said “we need to be patient”. Madame Secretary, being patient with a dictator is not a policy.

417 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
PHONE: (202) 225-2778
FAX: (202) 226-0346

<http://rivera.house.gov>

DISTRICT OFFICES:

12851 SW 42ND STREET
SUITE 131
MIAMI, FL 33175
PHONE: (305) 222-0160
FAX: (305) 228-9397

4715 GOLDEN GATE PARKWAY
SUITE 1
NAPLES, FL 34116
PHONE: (239) 348-1620
FAX: (239) 348-3569

In my conversation with Mr. Brennan yesterday, he said he was not aware of any planned response by your department to a conviction and sentencing of Mr. Gross. Therefore, I respectfully submit the following options for your consideration:

1. Demand the immediate and unconditional release of Alan Gross. Barring this immediate and unconditional release, the U.S. should:
2. Immediately suspend the recent lifting of sanctions and regulations on travel and remittances to Cuba.
3. Immediately diminish or suspend consular activities at the U.S. Interests Section in Cuba.
4. Immediately suspend indefinitely all bilateral talks with the Cuban dictatorship.
5. Immediately pursue alternative broadcast options for Radio and TV Marti from the U.S. Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay into eastern Cuba.
6. Immediately suspend expansion of airport or seaport travel license activity between the United States and Cuba.
7. Immediately suspend the 1994 Clinton-Castro immigration accord that established the current repatriation policy.
8. Immediately seek the indictment of Fidel and Raul Castro for their role in the 1996 Brothers to the Rescue shootdown.
9. Immediately implement Title III of the 1996 Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act (Helms-Burton).
10. Immediately redirect USAID funds to support enhanced internet communications activity via Radio and TV Marti webcasts for the Cuban people.

Madame Secretary, this represents just a few of the many options which I am prepared to discuss with your representatives should you be interested in developing a response to the certain conviction and sentencing of Mr. Gross. Let there be no mistake, Mr. Gross is an American hostage being held by the Castro regime. Allowing the Cuban dictatorship to take this action against an American citizen without serious consequences from our government will endanger Americans around the world and embolden other terrorist and rogue regimes in their anti-American activities.

I urge you to respond strongly and credibly to Mr. Gross' impending conviction and sentencing and not merely sit back and hope for a terrorist dictatorship to "do the right thing."

Sincerely,



David Rivera
Member of Congress