

## FOCAL Chronicle on Cuba November 2002

### Domestic Affairs

**November 2:** Attempts to build up internal opposition to Cuba's socialist regime don't have the "oxygen" necessary to thrive, Fidel Castro told lawmakers during a regular session of the island's unicameral parliament. "There is no oxygen for the counterrevolution," Castro said, using a term regularly employed in Cuba to describe the political opposition. "They are like fish out of water," he said of the dissidents. This gathering is the parliament's first regular session since activists submitted more than 11,000 signatures to the National Assembly, requesting a referendum that would ask voters if they favor civil rights such as freedom of expression and private business ownership. According to the chairman of the Cuban Parliament's Legal Affairs Commission, José Luis Toledo, the Varela Project is not in the parliamentary agenda. "It is not scheduled for discussion; that is the prerogative of the President (of the Assembly, Ricardo Alarcón)," said Toledo prior to the beginning of the session. (AP, Reuters, 2/11/02)

**November 4:** Four days after being released from prison, Cuban dissident Oscar Elías Biscet called on sympathizers and democratic governments to rid the island of Fidel Castro. "So long as the dictatorship of communist Castro exists, we Cubans cannot live in liberty and democracy, and violations of human rights will continue," Biscet said during a teleconference press briefing from Havana. "I ask the democratic governments of the world, the people who love justice and liberty, to support the Cuban people and not the government of this island, which usurped, betrayed and dishonored the population," Biscet said. (The Miami Herald, 5/11/020)

**November 5:** The dissident organizations that make up the Assembly to Promote Civil Society (Asamblea para Promover la Sociedad Civil) will initiate a month-long, nation-wide campaign to divulge the contents of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The campaign will aim at acquainting pro-government citizens with the text and meaning of the Declaration. (Encuentro en la Red, 6/11/02)

**November 19:** In a scene rare in communist Cuba, several dozen people congregated outside a home where police tried to evict a family living illegally in the overcrowded capital of Havana. Outside the humble three-room home that Ada Irma Fuentes and Felipe Ramirez share with a young granddaughter, two groups of people formed - one in favor of eviction, one against. All of them shouted slogans in favor of Castro and the Cuban revolution. There were no police officers or government officials in sight. The couple insisted that the home is legally registered in the name of Fuentes' son, but acknowledged that their government identity papers are registered to a dwelling in their hometown - the eastern city of Santiago. The government passed a law in 1997 to help stem the flow of newcomers to already overcrowded Havana, home to about 2 million of the nation's 11 million citizens. (AP, 19/11/02)

**November 20:** More than eight million Cubans will elect deputies to the National Assembly of People's Power and delegates to the 14 provincial assemblies in January. The second phase of the general election was announced in a Council of State agreement signed by Fidel Castro. The last elections to select deputies took place in November 1998, with a 98% turnout for both processes. (Notimex, 22/11/02)

**November 21:** Cuba is getting so aggressive in its efforts to attract tourists from Quebec and Ontario that it's developing Canadian villages with long-term rental units and even offering to match Canada's health-care offerings through Cuba's socialized medicine system, said Ellen White, president of the Canadian Snowbird Association. "Some Canadians say they're cutting

their US stays shorter this year because they want to try out Cuba," White said in an interview. (Sun Sentinel, 25/11/02)

**November 24:** The 2002 Havana International Biotechnology Congress was inaugurated with a conference led by Carlos Borroto, vice director of the Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology in Havana. In front of about 200 specialists from 48 countries, including United States, Canada and United Kingdom, Doctor Borroto talked about the impact of agricultural-biotechnology in Cuban agriculture. [For more on this, see section Terrorism.] (Radio Rebelde, 24/11/02)

**November 24:** Three university students have been expelled from school for supporting a petition drive for human rights reform in Cuba, a leader of the effort said. The students were expelled from a university in the eastern province of Camagüey, said Oswaldo Payá, the head organizer of the Varela Project human rights campaign. "We denounce the government (...) and demand the immediate return of those expelled students to their classrooms," Payá said in a statement. (AP, 25/11/02)

**November 25:** It is reported that the number of AIDS-related deaths in Cuba has dropped significantly over the past 1 ½ years following the development of several local treatments, a leading expert said in an interview. "It was a political decision by Cuba to start the generic production of these medicines to save the lives of human beings," Dr. Jorge Pérez, director of the island's leading AIDS treatment center, told the press. Cuba began producing a series of generic antiviral drugs for treating the AIDS virus starting in May 2001, said Pérez, who directs the Pedro Kouri Institute in Havana. He said authorities anticipated a death rate of 25 percent for people with AIDS this year, but so far have seen a death rate of only 7 percent. (The Miami Herald, 27/11/02)

**November 26:** Declaring that Cuba's athletes would not have been safe at the Central American and Caribbean Games, Fidel Castro opened his island's own national Olympics, created as an alternative to the regional event. "For reasons beyond our control we were obligated to suspend participation in an event that our country has never failed to attend," the Cuban president said during the late night inaugural ceremony. Nobel laureates Gabriel Garcia Marquez, of Colombia, for literature, and Adolfo Perez Esquivel, of Argentina, for the peace prize, listened to Castro's speech from front row seats. (AP, 27/11/02)

**November 26:** Fernando Borrego Linares, known in the world of music as Polo Montañez, died in the Carlos J. Finlay Military Hospital, where he had been for a week. Montañez was involved in a car accident when driving from Havana to San Cristobal, in Pinar del Rio, and suffered severe cranial trauma. The popular singer-song writer entered Cuban music like a flash. In less than a year, he headed the Cuban radio hit parade with "Un montón de estrellas," Granma daily recalls. His first disc "Guajiro natural" also won the affection of the Colombian public, as well as people in other Latin American and European countries. His second disc "Guitarra mia", on the Lusafrika label was launched last May, and consolidated his popularity. (Prensa Latina, 27/11/02)

**November 29:** The President of the Cuban National Assembly of the People's Power, Ricardo Alarcón, has convoked its 10th Period of Ordinary Sessions for December 21. (Juventud Rebelde, 29/11/02)

## **Economy**

**November 2:** Cuba's private farmers won a round in their tug-of-war with the state over the weekend, as the government granted them more say in what they produce and do with their earnings. Cuba's parliament changed regulations governing private-farm cooperatives and small-family farms, the Caribbean island's largest private sector in a nation where the state controls 90

percent of the economy and owns 85 percent of the land. The bill, among other reforms, allows Cuba's 1,116 private-farm cooperatives to distribute 70 percent of profits among their 65,000 member farms, compared with 50 percent in the past. Cuba's private farmers produce more than 50 percent of the country's vegetables, beans, tobacco, coffee, cacao, honey, and corn, and more than 30 percent of various other products, including pork and milk. (Reuters, 3/11/02)

**November 2:** An agreement for mutual cooperation to further Cuban-Mexican economic and trade relations has been signed in Havana by Luis Carricarte, president of the Cuban Chamber of Commerce, and Yeidckol Polevnsky, president of the Mexican National Chamber of Transformation Industry (CANACINTRA). (Opciones, 2/11/02)

**November 2:** The members of the Cuban parliament approved the Ministry of Heavy Industry report. According to the document, following years of serious economic slump, this sector has regained momentum, contributing to the national economy in the last three years more than \$87 million USD: \$43.6 million in liquid assets and \$44.3 million in manufactured products. (Granma, 4/11/02)

**November 3:** Mohebi Aviation, a subsidiary of the Zainal Mohebi Group, along with The Ministry of Tourism of Cuba, hosted a conference on the tourism potential of Cuba in Qatar. Dr. Carlos Gutierrez, the Cuban Vice Minister of Tourism, reiterated the many similarities between Arab countries and Cuba, including their roots, culture and traditions. He highlighted numerous attractive aspects of Cuba as a tourist destination with specific reference to the history and culture of Cuba, places of touristic interest, the beautiful beaches, warmth and friendliness of the people and the infrastructure for high quality tourism. (Gulf News, 3/11/02)

**November 4:** The Havana International Trade Fair (FIHAV) is officially open. Cuban Foreign Trade Minister, Raúl de la Nuez, pointed out that only 60 companies from 3 countries participated in the first one whereas nearly 1000 exhibitors from 58 nations are attending this show. This year, De la Nuez indicated, the delegations from Spain, Germany, South Korea, Canada and Brazil are noticeably the largest. (El Universal, 4/11/02)

**November 4:** Sherritt Power Corp. posted another quarterly loss as two recent hurricanes that hit Cuba delayed the final-phase startup at Sherritt's Varadero natural gas power plant. The Canadian-based subsidiary of Sherritt International (TSX:S) has already commissioned 151 megawatts of power capacity in the Caribbean communist country. Lower availability and higher operating and financing costs resulted in a third-quarter loss of \$700,000 or nine cents a share, compared with a loss of \$400,000 or five cents per share a year earlier, Sherritt reported. The second-quarter loss was \$1.55 million. "The commissioning for the final phase of the Varadero facility is almost complete and production of power is expected shortly," the company said in a release. "Synchronization with the Cuban national grid is expected in December, with full ramp-up occurring over the ensuing few months." Sherritt also said there are enough gas reserves at Cuba's Boca de Jaruco site to justify the installation of additional generation capacity. A possible expansion would require a deal with the Cuban government. (Canadian Press, 4/11/02)

**November 4:** Qatar and Cuba will set up a joint technical team to identify the areas where the two countries can cooperate in the hydrocarbon sector, Abdallah Bin-Hamad al-Attiyah, minister of energy and industry, said in Doha. Speaking to Gulf Times after meeting Fidel Castro Diaz-Balart, adviser to the Cuban energy and industry minister, he said Cuba has significant hydrocarbon resources, including gas, where it seeks more investment in the future. (BBC, 5/11/02)

**November 4:** The Chambers of Commerce of Spain traveled to Havana in an attempt to improve the climate for bilateral trade relations. Heading the business delegation, that comprises more than 30 companies from diverse economic sectors, is the president of the Chambers, José

Manuel Fernández Norriella. According to Fernández Norriella, now that companies from other countries are pushing harder to advertise and introduce their products in Cuba, Spain cannot afford to lose its share of that market. (Gaceta de los Negocios, 4/11/02)

**November 4:** The vice-president of the Cuban State Council, Carlos Lage, affirmed that the national economy "is developing" and that there will be enough room for everyone in Cuban future trade relations, particularly for the island's "old trading partners." Addressing a question regarding a growing concern among Cuba's old trading partners following the US Food & Agribusiness Exhibition, Lage said that "there is nothing to be concerned about, as there is plenty of room for all, be they from the US, Spain or the rest of Europe," and other regions. (Europa Press, 4/11/02)

**November 5:** The Havana International Fair (FIHAV 2002) featured Canada with the inauguration of the official pavilion of that nation. Denis Paradis, Canada's Secretary of State for Latin America, noted that Canada remains No. 2 in foreign investment in Cuba, after Spain. He expressed hope for more investment and commerce in the future. The trade balance between the two countries closed at \$1.1 billion Cdn at the end of 2001, but Canadian officials say they expect a plunge of about 38 per cent in trade with Cuba this year because of a general drop in foreign trade by Canada. Canada is a major commercial partner of the communist island, processing most of its nickel exports. It is also a major investor in tourism and petroleum. Sixty Canadian companies are exhibiting in FIHAV 2002. Among them are: Thompson Group, Adeo Inc, Caribbean International Supply, Tokmakjian Group, Manitoba & Investment Corp. and Maple Lodge. (Prensa Latina, Canadian Press, 5/11/02)

**November 5:** The 20th Havana International Fair (FIHAV 2002), in its second day of sessions, was the backdrop for agreements closing the 12th session of the Cuban-Spanish Bilateral Committee. Cuban Vice President Carlos Lage, and Josa Manuel Fernandez, chairman of Spain's Higher Committee of Chambers of Commerce (CCC) headed the closing ceremony. A plan of activities for the 2002-2003 period was agreed upon. The plan establishes the need to continue working for the creation of joint ventures, economic associations and other business operations to allow for an increase in exports of Cuban products to Spain. (Prensa Latina, 5/11/02)

**November 6:** The National Bank for Social and Economic Development (BNDES) of Brazil granted Cuba a loan to purchase wireless telecom equipment. "We have approved \$60 million USD in the sphere of telecommunications and we are only waiting for the Cuban side to sign the transaction," said Renato Sucupira, head of the Bank's exports department. (Reuters, 7/11/02)

**November 8:** Fidel Castro closed the award ceremony of the 20th FIHAV 2002 International Havana Fair, attended by nearly one thousand firms from 56 countries and 500 Cubans. Cuba's European and Latin American creditors, some of which have had difficulties collecting payment owed them for sales on credit, will be paid "to the last cent," affirmed Fidel Castro. The Cuban president addressed "concerns" from his long-time suppliers, some of them upset by his special treatment towards US companies, with whom no credit arrangements are made. Castro seized the opportunity to chastise his long-time business partners for their excessive interest rates of up to 20% on medium-term credit and the unreasonable price mark-up on certain products. (El Nuevo Herald, 10/11/02)

**November 12:** Korean firms won some \$20 million worth of contracts during Latin America's largest trade fair, ExpoCuba, which just ended in Havana after a nine-day run, officials of the Korea Trade Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA) said. The second-largest number of exhibitors to the 20-year-old trade fair were Korean, which drew some 1,500 companies from 57 countries as well as 1.2 million spectators. Korean firms displayed automobile parts, medical equipment, home appliances, textile products and cosmetics at the trade show, attracting some 600,000 spectators, officials said. (The Korea Herald, 14/11/02)

**November 13:** A brief official note in the Cuban press informed that Davidoff Habanos would no longer be distributed in Cuba, ending a long partnership between the Swiss manufacturer and its Cuban counterpart. The reasons behind the break-up were not released. (World Data Service, 13/11/02)

**November 13:** Cuba, shifting from its traditional reliance on sugar, is likely to produce a smaller cane crop this year aggravated by a cash crunch and reduction in processing plant, traders said. Sources in Cuba's Sugar Ministry said the Caribbean island had cut output forecasts of 3.6 million tonnes of raw sugar in 2003. Without giving a precise new target figure, the sources said the cut was due to fewer mills being available to produce raw sugar. Trade estimates for output in 2002/03 range from as low as 2.5-2.8 million tonnes to 3.6 million, with a number of trade sources forecasting between 3.1 million to 3.2 million tonnes. (Reuters, 13/11/02)

**November 16:** After drilling close to the coast for years, Cuba is stepping up its efforts to explore for deep-water oil in the Gulf of Mexico, going down 1,000 feet or more. According to a report by Houston-based consultant HIS Energy Group, waters off Cuban shores hold "great promise" for undiscovered oil and gas reserves. (The Dallas Morning News, 16/11/02)

**November 19:** It is reported that during the quarter ended September 30, 2002, Canadian Pebercan Inc. (TSX: PBC) achieved net earnings of US\$11.8 million or US\$0.17 per share on revenues of US\$23.3 million, compared with net earnings of US\$3.3 million or US\$0.06 per share on revenues of US\$6.5 million in the third quarter of the previous fiscal year. The strong growth in revenues resulted mainly from the sustained increase in oil production from Block 7, which doubled in a year, rising from a daily average of 8,900 barrels in the third quarter of 2001 to 16,800 barrels in the third quarter 2002 - and currently exceeds 20,000 barrels a day. (Canada News Wire, 19/11/02)

**November 21:** Cayman Airways plans to launch service from Grand Cayman Island to Havana. The carrier will operate the service twice a week, using Boeing 737-200 aircraft. No other scheduled carrier offers service on the Grand Cayman-Havana route. Cayman Airways first indicated its interested in flying to Cuba earlier this year. President and chief executive Mike Adam notes that the new service will enable passengers from international flights to make convenient connections to Cuba. (Air Transport Intelligence, 21/11/02)

**November 21:** The 4th National Domestic Economy Control Check investigating price inspections has just been completed. This investigation revealed that consumers are being sold items at altered prices, and receive expired goods or others not listed in the store's stock. According to María Isabel Cárdenas at the National Association of Economists and Accountants (ANEC), part of the control check consisted of 10,882 price inspections, which revealed 5,600 violations. Of the latter, 569 were committed in the capital, where 921 offenders were identified and 918 fines imposed (the average being merely 84 pesos per head). (Granma International, 21/11/02)

**November 21:** Cuba is struggling to restore its railway system, Latin America's oldest, amid an ongoing economic crunch and complaints about delays and aging engines. The railway was born 165 years ago this week, and it has long been central to the economy, hauling tobacco for its famous cigars in the east and sugar cane to feed its mills in the west. Today, Cuba's 2,700 miles of tracks still move about 60 percent of all ground cargo across the island, as well as hundreds of thousands of passengers annually. While there are new efforts to restore the old American-made steam engines to attract tourists, average citizens complain about low-quality service - especially chronic delays - of this cheap form of travel. (AP, 21/11/02)

**November 21:** Spanish air carrier Iberia unveiled new cargo flights between Europe and Central America as well as the countries of the Andean Pact. It has set up a new product distribution centre at the Havana international airport. (Cinco Días, 21/11/02)

**November 22:** The Venezuelan Supreme Court of Justice (TSJ) rejected a cancellation appeal presented by the opposition against the petroleum agreement signed with Cuba. The decision of the Constitutional Hall of the Venezuelan Supreme Court described the petition as inadmissible. The Hall estimated that their arguments lacked enough evidence to sustained the alleged detrimental nature of the agreement for the Venezuelan state. (Prensa Latina, 22/11/02)

**November 23:** Finding and excavating the wrecks in Cuban shallow water has been going on for years, but the real goodies, according to Paulina Zelitsky, lie undisturbed on the sea bed at the depth of about half a mile. Paulina, who once worked as an off-shore engineer at a Russian submarine base in Cuba, is now president of a Canadian company, Advanced Digital Communications, which has an exploration contract with the Cuban government. There is a concentration of wrecks around the coast of Cuba - estimates vary but there are hundreds, if not thousands - because the harbour at Havana was the gathering place for the Spanish silver fleets. (BBC News, 23/11/02)

**November 25:** Upmarket all-inclusive company Sandals has opened a five-star property in Cuba. Sandals Royal Hicacos Resort & Spa is the destination's first couples-only resort. (Travel Trade Gazette, 25/11/02)

**November 27:** Tourism is picking up in Cuba after a dismal year for the country's main foreign exchange earner, according to a Tourism Ministry report. The ministry reported 107,299 tourists came to the Caribbean island last month, compared with 97,773 in October 2001. The 10 percent increase was the first monthly upturn reported since the attacks more than a year ago on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington caused a worldwide decline in tourism as people balked at flying. (Reuters, 27/11/02)

## **Exile Community**

**November 8:** A man of Cuban origin has sued the priest, Joaquin Guerrero, and the Archdiocese of Miami, alleging the cleric raped him as a 14-year-old and that the Catholic Church failed to protect him. "I was brought up to trust people," said the man, now 54, identified as R.E. in his suit. "Then you find somebody who is supposed to be taking care of you doing these things. And you don't know what to do." The man's suit, filed in Miami-Dade Circuit Court, is the first clergy sex-abuse case implicating the archdiocese's venerated Pedro Pan program. The man, a retired social worker, was among 14,000 children sent to the United States by Cuban parents who did not want them to be raised under Fidel Castro's government. (The Miami Herald, 9/11/02)

**November 10:** An alleged video with details from the private life of Fidel Castro, recorded in his home, was sold by one of his former daughters-in-law to a local television station in Miami. The videotape was sold to the station by Dachel Torralba, who escaped from Cuba. Torralba, for several years, was the girlfriend of Antonio Castro Soto, one of Fidel Castro's sons. Torralba ended the relationship one year ago. She is the third daughter-in-law of Castro to leave the island after separating from one of his sons. Ulloa now lives in Madrid, along with Idalmis Menéndez, who was married to Alex Castro, another of Fidel Castro's sons. (EFE, 10/11/02)

**November 13:** Cuban-American legislators Ileana Ross Lehtinen and Linclon Díaz Balart lashed out at US authorities for giving a visa to Victor Dreke, accused by Cuban dissidents of "crimes against humanity". Dreke, who served under Ernesto "Che" Guevara in the Congo and is now vice-president of the Cuba-Africa Friendship Association, was due to address a conference at the Florida International University (FIU) in Miami. (AFP, 13/11/02)

**November 19:** The ex-wife of a notorious Cuban spy has made a legal move to seize an aging biplane that eight Cubans flew to freedom. Ana Margarita Martínez wants to sell the Antonov-2, a rattletrap Russian-made rig outfitted for crop-dusting, as partial payment toward the \$27.18 million judgment a Miami-Dade Circuit Court awarded her for a sham marriage to Cuban agent Juan Pablo Roque. Last year, Judge Alan Postman ordered the Cuban government to pay Martínez that amount to compensate for its role in perpetrating a scheme intended to infiltrate Miami's exile community. A Miami-Dade Circuit Court clerk approved an order filed by Martínez's attorneys that requires the Monroe County Sheriff's Office to place a levy on the plane to serve as the first payment -- if the federal government or another court doesn't step in to block the highly unusual legal move. (The Miami Herald, 19/11/02)

**November 24:** "Democracy Delayed: The Case of Castro's Cuba," a controversial book containing ideas opposing the Havana regime caused its author, Prof. Juan López, to be dismissed from the University of Illinois, denounced the organization Judicial Watch (JW). "It was politically motivated, because I have criticized the government (of Illinois) and voiced ideas against Fidel Castro," pointed López. His teaching record is "excellent," said Edelberto Farres, a legal counsellor for Judicial Watch, who informed of the legal suit filed against the university by that organization before an Illinois district court. (El Nuevo Herald, 24/11/02)

**November 24:** Florida International University officials apologized to Cuban-Americans offended over a recent campus appearance by a controversial former member of Cuba's military. The recent visit by Victor Dreke Cruz, a retired Cuban revolutionary commander and now vice president of the Cuba-Africa Friendship Association, during a conference angered Cubans-Americans who protested the event saying Dreke commanded firing squads during Castro's 1959 Cuban revolution. Some students and others were upset that what was billed as a conference on Cuba-Africa connections degenerated into an anti-embargo forum. (Sun Sentinel, 24/11/02)

## Foreign Affairs

**November 1:** Canada said it had put relations with Cuba back on track, three years after freezing ties and scrapping visits by government ministers in protest at Havana's human rights record. Denis Paradis, Canadian secretary of state for Latin America, will visit Cuba for meetings with senior government officials. "I think it's very important that we reestablish a political dialogue with the people in Cuba. We have to reactivate this dialogue and that's the idea (behind) me going there," Paradis told the press in an interview. Relations deteriorated in early 1999, when four Cuban dissidents were given long jail sentences despite efforts by Prime Minister Jean Chretien to intercede on their behalf. Chretien declared Canada would add "some northern ice" to the relationship and clamped down on high-level bilateral visits. Paradis said the four dissidents had now completed their sentences and had been released. (Reuters, 1/11/02)

**November 1:** Fidel Castro confirmed that he would attend the 12th Ibero American Summit to be held in the Dominican Republic. "So far we have been told that (...) Castro will participate in the Summit," said Rafael Peralta Romero, Deputy Director of Information and Media for the Dominican Presidency. (El Nuevo Herald, 1/11/02)

**November 1:** Three mutual assistance agreements were signed at the Ministry of Public Health's main office during the final session of the Cuba-Ukraine Joint Commission by the Cuban Deputy Minister for that sector, Dr. Julián Gárate, and his Ukrainian counterpart, Yuri Polyashenko. (Granma, 3/11/02)

**November 1:** The head of a Swedish organization working for democracy in developing countries said he was expelled from Cuba after meeting with dissident groups. Erik Jennische, secretary general of the Swedish International Liberal Center, said he was arrested in Havana and placed on a plane to Madrid, Spain. Speaking by cell phone from Madrid, Jennische said Cuban

authorities accused him of violating his tourist visa, which doesn't allow political activities. "They got me on the street in Havana after I spoke to several dissidents for quite some time," Jennische said, adding that he was treated "very correctly and professionally" by the authorities. The Cuban Foreign Ministry did not respond immediately to a request for comment on the expulsion. (AP, 1/11/02)

**November 3:** Canadian Secretary of State for Latin America, Africa and La Francophonie has arrived in Cuba to take part in a major trade fair and exhibition. Denis Paradis is accompanied by representatives of Canadian companies exhibiting their goods and services at the International Fair of Havana. Paradis deemed very important to strengthen bilateral trade relations, adding that high-level political contacts with Cuba were reduced since 1999 and that "what matters now is that we resume and revitalize those political ties. [For more on this, see section Economy] (BBC, Notimex, 3/11/02)

**November 4:** First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Fernando Ramírez de Estenoz, met with the Canadian Secretary of State for Latin America, Africa and La Francophonie, Denis Paradis. A photo exhibit dedicated to Pierre Elliot Trudeau was inaugurated with Foreign Minister, Felipe Pérez Roque, attending. [For more on this, see section Economy.] (Granma, 4/11/02)

**November 4:** The European Union and Cuba "agreed to disagree." The twin sticking points, central to an EU position agreed in 1996, were not the basis for a working relationship between the two, said Cuban Deputy Foreign Minister Angel Dalmau after talks with EU officials in Copenhagen. "It is impossible," he insisted. The text of the EU common position "says the European Union wants to see political transformation in Cuba that will lead to a pluralist system," Dalmau said. "It says we should change our political system in Cuba." "We have said from the beginning this is an interference in our internal affairs," he told journalists, adding: "We agreed to disagree," on the issue. But despite the lack of agreement on the EU position, the reality was one of increasing cooperation between Havana and the 15-member European Union, Dalmau said. "In spite of that, a lot has been happening between members of the European Union and Cuba (...) on the ground what is happening is totally different. Bilaterally, a lot is happening." (AFP, 5/11/02)

**November 4:** In a press release distributed in Havana, the Cuban government stated that if the European Union wishes to maintain trade relations with Cuba it must stop supporting the resolution on Cuba passed every year by the UN Commission on Human Rights. (World Data Service, 5/11/02)

**November 4:** Gambia Health Minister Yakunba Kasama arrived in Cuba heading the Cuban medical brigade that gave health services in Gambia for more than two years. Kasama highlighted the work of this group of Cuban doctors, who carried out over 200,000 consultations and performed more than 8,000 surgeries. (Prensa Latina, 4/11/02)

**November 4:** Iranian Ambassador to Cuba Ahmad Edrisian conferred in Havana with Cuban Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs for International Affairs Abelardo Moreno and Deputy Foreign Minister Fernando Remírez on issues of mutual interest. The officials referred to the need for consultations between the two nations at various international forums. Another topic of discussion was the two countries' shared commonalities on the issue of human rights. (IRA, 5/11/02)

**November 5:** Carlos Lage Dávila, Secretary of the Ministers' Council Executive Committee, met in Havana with Jean Robert Goulongana, Secretary-General of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP). During the meeting, Lage expressed appreciation for the ACP support towards Cuba, which allowed the latter to become a member of that organization in December 2000. (AIN, 5/11/02)

**November 5:** The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) maintains that the economic and social development of Cuba is being hindered by the US embargo. In its response to the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, with regards to the impact of the US policy against Cuba, the ECLAC stated that the current slowdown in the global economy has greatly emphasized Cuba's vulnerability to global affairs, a situation aggravated by the US embargo. (AIN, 5/11/02)

**November 5:** Cuban Minister of State, Ricardo Cabrisas Ruiz, met with a Belizean delegation led by Servulo Baeza, Minister of State in the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Environment, Commerce, Trade and Industry. (Granma, 6/11/02)

**November 6:** Some critics of the Cuban government continue to face harassment and detention for the non-violent expression of their political beliefs, Amnesty International said. While welcoming the recent release of former political prisoner Oscar Elias Biscet -- whom the organization had adopted as a "prisoner of conscience" -- Amnesty International published a new report detailing several cases of people detained in connection with their political activities. Two of them -- Leonardo Bruzón Avila and Carlos Alberto Domínguez González -- are also considered by Amnesty International to be "prisoners of conscience," detained solely for the non-violent exercise of their rights to freedom of expression and association. Both men were detained on 23 February 2002 and have been held without trial ever since. (Amnesty International Press, 6/11/02)

**November 8:** Equatorial Guinea Prime Minister, Cándido Muatetema Rivas, concluded a working visit to Cuba after fulfilling a large agenda that included talks with Fidel Castro. (Prensa Latina, 8/11/02)

**November 11:** In a press conference, Cuban dissident organizations released a document signed All United (Todos Unidos), copies of which have been sent to the Heads of State and Government that will meet in the Dominican Republic for the 12th Ibero American Summit. (El Nuevo Herald, 11/11/02)

**November 11:** Cuban exiles from Miami are joining forces with dissidents on the island in an effort to shine an unfavorable spotlight on Cuba during the upcoming Ibero-American summit in the Dominican Republic. Cuban government opponents said that they plan to ask leaders attending the summit later this week to press the Cuban government for a democratic opening on the island and a greater exercise of civil liberties. "We are going to the summit to represent the Cuban reality," said Sylvia Iriondo, president of the Miami-based Mothers Against Repression in Cuba. The Miami-based organization also plans on distributing two initiatives at the summit. One, known as the Assembly to Promote Civil Society in Cuba, is signed by representatives of more than 300 nongovernment organizations in Cuba. The initiative asks "freedom for all the political prisoners, respect for the human rights (...) and that Cuban citizens not be discriminated against in their own land," according to a taped message from Havana by prominent dissident Marta Beatriz Roque. Another document, prepared by the National Council of Civic Resistance, calls for solidarity and civic liberties for all Cubans. (The Miami Herald, 12/11/02)

**November 11:** Opposition member, Oswaldo Payá, proponent of the Varela Project, requested that the Non-Governmental Forum at the Seoul Conference of the Community of Democracies express its solidarity with the Cuban people, who are demanding their rights "by peaceful and civil means." (AFP, 11/11/02)

**November 12:** For the 11th straight year, the UN General Assembly overwhelmingly adopted a resolution urging the United States to end its four-decade trade embargo against Cuba. The resolution, which is not binding, was approved by a vote of 173-3 with four abstentions - a larger majority than last year when 167 nations voted to lift the embargo. Only the United States, Israel

and the Marshall Islands voted in favor of keeping the embargo, as they did last year. (AP, 13/11/02)

**November 12:** Invited by Fidel Castro, Gustavo Noboa Bejarano, president of Ecuador, is in Havana with a top-level delegation for an official three-day visit to the island. (Prensa Latina, 12/11/02)

**November 13:** According to a French source, France has donated equipment to the Cuban General Customs Office, as part of a collaboration that will "contribute to the modernization of this sector." (World Data Service, 13/11/02)

**November 13:** Cuba and Ecuador have signed in Havana six mutual assistance accords, during President Gustavo Novoa's visit to the island. The agreements cover the manufacture of generic drugs and agricultural pharmaceuticals, higher studies foreign degree homologation, forms and regulation of medical care that Ecuadorian patients can receive in Cuba, and other topics. (AFP, 13/11/02)

**November 13:** Deputies of the Russian State Duma are expected to consider a draft resolution with an address to Fidel Castro on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Cuban Missile Crisis. A document prepared by a group of deputies from the lower house reads that joint actions taken by the Soviet Union and Cuba during the Caribbean crisis turned out "a brilliant foreign-policy operation that accounted for a graver look on the part of the US and their allies on the alignment of forces in the world arena after the Second World War." "For the first time since the founding of the USSR, it was seen as one of the world's two Great Powers," goes on the document. (TASS, 13/11/02)

**November 13:** Brenda Chamberlain, Member of Canada's Parliament for Guelph-Wellington, on behalf of the Honourable Susan Whelan, Minister for International Cooperation, announced a \$750,000 contribution over six years to the University of Guelph to support environmentally sustainable development in Cuba. "Environmental sustainability is an essential part of long-term development," Ms. Chamberlain said. "In order to achieve this goal, the University of Guelph has been sharing its expertise and experience with developing countries for a number of years. This work also provides an opportunity for our university community to learn from their peers overseas." Canada, through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), will help the University of Guelph work in cooperation with the Instituto Superior Politécnico José Antonio Echeverría of Havana. (Canada News Wire, 13/11/02)

**November 13:** The Honourable Andy Scott, Member of Canada's Parliament for Fredericton, on behalf of the Honourable Susan Whelan, Minister for International Cooperation, announced a \$750,000 contribution over six years to the University of New Brunswick to help Cuba develop a biomedical engineering education program. "In order to sustain a health system, it is necessary to develop expertise in new technology," Mr. Scott said. "By helping to develop education and professional skills, this project will enable Cubans to acquire modern and up-to-date biomedical capability." (Canada News Wire, 13/11/02)

**November 13:** China donated computers and related equipment to Cuba's parliament to promote its work. The donation includes 150 Pentium 4 personal computers, 70 lap-tops, six servers as well as other equipment. Addressing the handover ceremony, Chinese ambassador Wang Zhiqian stressed the traditional friendship between the two countries. (Xinhua, 13/11/02)

**November 15:** Fidel Castro will not be attending a summit of Ibero-American countries in the Dominican Republic, the state-run Granma daily said. According to Granma, instead of Castro the Cuban delegation to the summit will be led by Cuban Vice President Carlos Lage. Castro did not

attend the Ibero-American summit last year in Lima, Peru, nor did he travel in May to a Europe-Latin America meeting in Madrid. (DPA, 15/11/02)

**November 15:** Fidel Castro met with the ministers of Education from the Latin American and Caribbean countries, as well as Sir. John Daniel, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education, and representatives from other International Organisms in the field, attending the First Inter-governmental Meeting of the Regional Education Project of Latin America and the Caribbean (PRELAC I). (Juventud Rebelde, 16/11/02)

**November 15:** Two staff members of the Cuban Embassy in Prague have defected and are seeking asylum in the Czech Republic, the Lidove Noviny newspaper reported. An embassy driver and his wife fled with an embassy vehicle and were placed in a refugee camp, according to the newspaper. (DPA, 15/11/02)

**November 16:** The president of the International Olympic Committee arrived in Havana for a five-day visit that will include listening to Cuba's concerns about a proposal to drop baseball from the Olympics. Cuba, renowned for its world-class baseball players, opposes the idea. "I feel great respect for Cuban sports," Jacques Rogge said after arriving with his wife at the Jose Marti International Airport. "I've come to Cuba to discuss various topics with local authorities". Cuban sports authorities said they also planned to discuss their concerns about the defection of their athletes to other countries. Cuba complains that sports teams from richer countries "rob" the communist nation's athletes by offering them lucrative contracts. The IOC president also planned a visit to Cuba's new \$2.7 million anti-doping laboratory, which the Caribbean country hopes the IOC will accredit in the coming months. (AP, 16/11/02)

**November 18:** Reporters Without Borders (RWB) denounced the lengthy imprisonment of Cuban journalist Bernardo Arévalo Padrón who served a five-year sentence for calling Fidel Castro a "liar." According to RWB, Arévalo Padrón used the same qualifier when talking about Cuban Vice-president Carlos Lage during a radio broadcast. (EFE, 18/11/02)

**November 17:** The IAAF Board of Directors has received a letter from the Cuban Athletics Federation expressing agreement with the lifetime suspension from competition handed Javier Sotomayor, the currently retired high-jump world record holder, who tested positive for nandrolone in July 2001 at a meet in Tenerife, Spain. The matter was in the hands of the Cuban Federation, competent at first instance to take disciplinary action in doping cases, and with the life ban is now considered settled. By testing positive in Tenerife, Sotomayor became a second-time offender as he had previously failed a test for cocaine during the Winnipeg '99 Pan American Games. (El Nuevo Herald, 17/11/02)

**November 18:** Cuban Council of State Vice President Carlos Lage Dávila arrived in Havana after the 12th Ibero-American Summit in the Bávaro resort in the Dominican Republic. Before returning to Havana, Lage met with Guatemalan President Alfonso Portillo and Bolivian President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, with whom he analyzed current world matters and Latin America's economic and political situation. (Prensa Latina, 18/11/02)

**November 19:** Iranian Ambassador to Cuba Ahmad Edrisian, in a meeting with Cuban Vice president Carlos Lage in Havana, expressed Tehran's willingness to expand ties with the Caribbean nation. At the meeting, Edrisian informed Lage of the measures taken to boost mutual ties including exchange of high-ranking delegations between Tehran and Havana in near future. (IRNA, 19/11/02)

**November 19:** A high ranking delegation of Laos led by Mr Khampane Philavong, Director General of the Public Prosecutor General's Office, who is also chairman of Lao-Cuban Friendship

Association left for a weeklong working visit to Cuba, according to the Cuban Embassy in Vientiane. (KPL, 19/11/02)

**November 19:** The head of Cuba's medical brigades in Tegucigalpa will become the island nation's first ambassador to Honduras in more than 40 years, Cuban officials told the press. The Honduran government approved the designation of Elis Alberto González Polanco to serve as Cuba's ambassador in Tegucigalpa, the officials said. Honduras has yet to announce its choice for an ambassador to Cuba. (EFE, 19/11/02)

**November 19:** Problems of broadening cooperation in the field of telecommunications technologies dominate the agenda of the Council of the international organization for satellite communications "Intersputnik" which met in Havana. The Russian delegation to the forum is headed by first deputy minister for communications and information sciences Alexander Kiselyov. The Intersputnik, created in 1971 for operating global satellite communications systems, incorporates 24 countries. The organization has a number of Russian-made satellites, fifty monitoring stations and 1,500 television terminals at its disposal. Intersputnik provides services to private and state-run companies from all over the world. (ITAR-TASS, 20/11/02)

**November 20:** Cuba's international relations, especially with its Caribbean neighbors, will be the main focus for Santa Lucia's Chamber of Deputies president Matthew Vernon Roberts, who is visiting the Island. Vernon Roberts will meet Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP) vice-president, Rolando González Tellez and Foreign Relations vice-minister Pedro Núñez Mosquera. (Prensa Latina, 20/11/02)

**November 20:** Cuba feels "deep anguish and concern" for the continent's destiny at the US invitation to create the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), declared Ricardo Alarcon in Brazilia. The Cuban National Peoples' Power Assembly (Congress) President expressed his concern to legislators from 35 countries attending the Continental Integration Parliamentary Summit, summoned by Brazil's Deputy Chamber President Aecio Neves. (Prensa Latina, 20/11/02)

**November 20:** The Salvadoran government blames the FMLN and Fidel Castro for planning destabilizing actions during the coming 19th Central American and Caribbean Games. The on-line edition of Granma, Castro's official newspaper, writes that the next few days, despite the athletic celebration, could generate major social tensions. To René Figueroa, Vice-minister of State, such statements only hint at events that they will cause to occur. [For more on this, see section Terrorism.] (El Diario de Hoy, 20/11/02)

**November 21:** Two Cubans have been arrested by the El Salvadoran National Civilian Police (NCP), and charged with entering the country with forged documentation. Yohamis Ordaz Serrano and Nelson Ordaz Padrino were attempting to catch a flight to Spain when, according to an officer with the NCP's Borders Division, the Cubans were placed under arrest at the San Salvador International Airport, where their Nicaraguan passports, altered and under fake names, were seized. (El Diario de Hoy, 23/11/02)

**November 22:** A total of 459 Cuban doctors, providing services in Guatemala since late 1998, will extend their stay for another three years, under the terms of an agreement between the governments of Alfonso Portillo and Fidel Castro. (AFP, 20/11/02)

**November 22:** Reporters Without Border (RWB) protested the Cuban government's seizing of material belonging to French journalist Catherine David. The organization also complained about Havana's visa policy which, in its opinion "serves to control information and the country's image" and "forces (foreign journalists) to work illegally." In a statement, RWB noted that David, who works for the weekly Le Nouvel Observateur, had been detained at Havana's international airport

on October 8 by Cuban authorities who took her audio tapes, computer diskettes, books, documents and photographs. (EFE, 22/11/02)

**November 22:** Protestant leaders and personalities from 10 Latin American countries and two European states are meeting in Havana to study the repercussions of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), announced a highly placed source within the Organizing Committee. "We are looking for a common ground on the FTAA for all the Latin American churches," Cuban Pastor Sergio Arce, from the Christian Movement for Peace in Latin America and the Caribbean, told the media. (DPA, 22/11/02)

**November 23:** Cuba and South Africa have signed an agreement to have 50 Cuban educators train South African sciences and mathematics teachers, reported The Citizen. (EFE, 23/11/02)

**November 24:** Caribbean leaders are headed to Cuba next month to mark the 30th anniversary of relations between the Caribbean Community and the communist island, officials said. Fidel Castro invited the 15-member Caribbean Community to mark the anniversary, grateful that the group established diplomatic relations with Cuba on December 8, 1972, said Cuba's ambassador to Caricom. (The Miami Herald, 24/11/02)

**November 25:** Fidel Castro joined hundreds of political activists from across the Western Hemisphere to coordinate regional opposition to a US-backed free trade agreement for the Americas. "Latin America is not a free and happy partner, but an instrument" of The United States under the proposed Free Trade Area for the Americas, said Cuba economist Osvaldo Hernandez. The proposed accord known as FTAA will be used to "make up the United States' commercial deficit," said Hernandez, who predicted the pact would only widen the gap between the region's rich and poor. Evo Morales, leader of Bolivia's coca farmers, called on Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and Presidents-elect Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of Brazil and Lucio Gutierrez of Ecuador to reject the FTAA. "For the first time in Latin America, the empire can be defeated," Morales said, referring to the United States. (AP, 25/11/02)

**November 25:** Fidel Castro stated that hunger is a menace that is hanging over the future of mankind during a speech delivered at the Second Hemispheric Meeting Against the FTAA, which is taking place at Havana's Palacio de las Convenciones convention centre with the participation of almost 1,000 delegates from 41 nations. Castro took part in the debates of the panel titled "From the North American Free Trade Agreement to the FTAA: A vision from the United States", which was presented during the evening session of the meeting. After presentations from delegates of Mexico, Canada and the United States, Castro asked about the damages done to the agriculture of Latin America due to the policy followed by Washington of subsidizing its own production. He then spoke about other ailments that are affecting the region like capital flight and the instability of national currencies. (AIN, 25/11/02)

**November 25:** The UN World Food Program in collaboration with the British Department for International Development will deliver more than 800 tonnes of Cuban raw sugar to Chechen refugees, the WFP said in a statement. The shipment is due to arrive in St. Petersburg by mid-December. Cuba, not traditionally a donor to the UN, has recently provided sugar to WFP operations in Rwanda, Angola and North Korea. (TASS, 25/11/02)

**November 26:** Fidel Castro accused El Salvador of being a "hideout of mercenary killers," that did not offer "the minimum guarantee" for the Cuban athletes expected to attend the 19th Central American and Caribbean Games. "A country that, with the complete support of its government, has been and is the hideout of mercenary killers (...)" who until recent years have been carrying out terrorist attacks against Cuban hotels, said Castro during the inaugural speech at the opening ceremony of the first National Sports Olympics. The event was conceived and organized by the Cuban authorities in four weeks, in lieu of the Central American and Caribbean Games, which the

Cuban delegation would not be attending. [For more on this, see section Terrorism.] (El Universal, 26/11/02)

**November 26:** Fidel Castro predicted more hunger for mankind in the future and said the world cannot be ruled "by posting a US soldier in every factory". Addressing almost one thousand delegates from the approximately 40 nations taking part in the Second Hemispheric Meeting of Struggle against the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), Castro said the neoliberal system "is doomed and untenable". (BBC News, 26/11/02)

**November 26:** Mexico's new ambassador to Cuba arrived in Havana, where she will try to improve Cuban-Mexican relations that are chillier than they have been in decades. In a statement, the Foreign Relations Secretariat (SRE) said longtime diplomat Roberta Lajous' arrival on the island would immediately "intensify close contact between Mexico and Cuba." Lajous met privately with President Vicente Fox at the presidential residence of Los Pinos before leaving to head the country's Cuban mission, the statement said. (AP, 27/11/02)

**November 28:** High-level Cuban and Bahamian officials discussed strategies to combat drug trafficking. At the opening meeting of the bilateral commission, Cuban Justice Minister Roberto Diaz reminded that both countries are geographically on the route used by South American drug-traffickers to take drugs illegally to the United States, the world's largest narcotics market. Diaz reiterated the drug problem was serious in Cuba, because drugs reached Cuba when attempts to smuggle them to the North American countries failed. Cuba, which has signed cooperation agreements with 29 countries in the Past two years, is currently undertaking Operation Ache, aiming to prevent the activities of drug-traffickers near the island's coast. (Xinhua, 28/11/02)

**November 28:** The European Union (EU) has agreed to Cuba's participation under an "informal observer" status in the negotiations for Economic Partnership Agreements with the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) States, according to a document signed by the president of the EU Foreign Ministers Council, Per Stig Moller. (Notimex, 28/11/02)

**November 28:** The leftist Labour Party of Brazil confirmed that Fidel Castro will attend Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva's presidential takeover in January. Labour Party deputy Ester Grossi said that Castro plans to visit the country to take part in the ceremony, where Lula will be sworn in as Brazil's new leader, and attend the leftist Brazilian leader's inauguration party. (BBC News, 28/11/02)

**November 28:** In a speech, Fidel Castro called on Latin American countries to "sink" a plan for free trade in the Americas sponsored by the United States and known in the region by its Spanish acronym ALCA. "We must sink ALCA, or if you prefer, 'sink the ALCA'," Castro said, quoting a phrase used by Winston Churchill during World War II referring to the Bismarck, the biggest German battleship. In a speech that began late Wednesday and ended after more than three hours early Thursday, the aging revolutionary bitterly attacked the Free Trade of the Americas Agreement which is due to go into effect in 2005. (Tehran Times, 30/11/02)

**November 28:** Fidel Castro arrived in Ecuador's capital to attend the inauguration ceremony for an art museum by the late artist Oswaldo Guayasamín. Castro was a friend of the Ecuadorean artist, whose unfinished "Chapel of Mankind" museum will be inaugurated in Quito. (AP, 28/11/02)

**November 28:** The Ecuadorean President, Gustavo Noboa, talked in private in Quito with his Cuban counterpart, Fidel Castro, who arrived in the capital to preside over the inauguration of visual artist Guayasamín's "Capilla del Hombre" (Man's Chapel). (El Comercio, 29/11/02)

**November 28:** The Liberian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has refuted reports that it had expelled the Ambassador of Cuba to this country. The Ministry also denied ordering the closure of the Cuban Embassy in Liberia. (All Africa Global Media, 28/11/02)

**November 29:** Fidel Castro gave a speech at the opening of the Chapel of Man in Quito and was received warmly by excited fans. Castro and his Venezuelan counterpart Hugo Chavez were the guests of honor at the event to inaugurate the art museum, which is based on an idea by deceased Ecuadorian painter Oswaldo Guayasamin. (EFE, 29/11/02)

**November 29:** Ecuadorean President Elect, Lucio Gutiérrez, declared that it was a "coincidence" that he visited Colombia while Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez and Fidel Castro, with whom he is said to share ideological views, were in Quito. "It was no strategy of mine to avoid being photographed with them; it was a mere coincidence." (AFP, 30/11/02)

**November 30:** Fidel Castro spoke in Quito for more than 2 1/2 hours Saturday to some 3,000 Ecuadorians who tirelessly applauded the words of the septuagenarian communist leader. Deafening screams of "Fidel ...Fidel" opened the tribute to Castro organized by pro-Cuban groups, whose members filled the Theater of Culture in this capital. Seemingly inspired by the effusive welcome, the president embarked on a tirade against the United States, repeatedly calling for an end to Washington's 40-year-old economic embargo against Cuba. Despite the embargo, he said, Cubans "were prepared for what comes" and ready for "the leap in the quality of our revolution, underway at this very moment." (EFE, 30/11/02)

## Security

**November 4:** Cuba deposited the Instrument of Adhesion to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in Moscow. With Cuba's adherence, 188 States are parties to this International Instrument. (Cubaminrex, 4/11/02)

**November 19:** The Cuban Armed Forces initiated a month-long period of "military exercises and war games" involving battle tanks, the air force and anti-aircraft artillery to improve their national defence readiness, said an official press release. (Notimex, 19/11/02)

## Terrorism

**November 1:** Cuba's Foreign Minister Felipe Pérez Roque denied a charge by Washington's top diplomat for Latin America that Havana is developing biological weapons. Responding to the allegation by Otto Reich, Perez Roque demanded Washington back up its allegations, and told reporters Cuba's research facilities were open to visiting scientists. (AFP, 1/11/02)

**November 1:** A soldier missing from Guantanamo Bay Naval Base in Cuba was declared dead, but his family still hopes to find him alive, his mother said. "We just don't feel that the Army is looking hard enough (...) As far as we're concerned, he's been taken by somebody," said Ann Foraker, mother of Staff Sgt. Ryan Foraker. (AP, 1/11/02)

**November 2:** Castro dismissed it as an "absolute lie" that Cuba may be manufacturing chemical and biological weapons and said that the country has no fear of a US surprise attack planned on the grounds of such accusations. In a speech before the National Assembly of the People's Power, Castro called the US Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, Otto Reich, who made the accusations, "mediocre, an idiot and a terrorist." (Notimex, 2/11/02)

**November 18:** The Cuban authorities are studying the request made by Spain for them to exercise greater control over the activities of the ETA members who live in the island. A more

cooperative attitude towards controlling the terrorists and especially their financial connections is regarded by Spain as a necessary condition for trying to raise the low level of bilateral relations between Madrid and Havana since more or less two years ago. The foreign minister, Ana Palacio, conveyed this to her Cuban opposite number, Felipe Perez Roque, when they met at the end of the recent Ibero-American summit in Dominican Republic. The talks took place in two phases. The first brief meeting sufficed solely for the minister to express to the Cuban foreign minister Spain's support for Cuba joining the Cotonu Agreement, if the Cubans decide in the end to apply again. The following day the two ministers met again to discuss in greater detail the situation of bilateral relations, including the non-payment by Cuba for several years of its debt to Spain of over 800m euros. However one of the main purposes of the talks, at least on the Spanish side, was to tackle the situation and the activities of the ETA members living in the island. (ABC, 24/11/02)

**November 25:** The United States of America lacks any evidences to accuse Cuba of producing biological weapons, according to a statement by Albert Sasson, UNESCO Advisor in the area of Biotechnology. What the US government is saying has no reliable basis, according to the expert of the United Nations specialized agency, who has visited the Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology Center facilities since it was founded in 1986. The US government, its scientists, the World Health Organization and other international institutions know that the Cuban policy is aimed at improving the quality of life of the population and not at making biological weapons, the UNESCO expert stated. (National News Agency, 25/11/02)

**November 27:** Cuba opened its labs and biotechnology institutions to the 250 foreign specialists, some of them from Canada and the US, attending the Congress Biotechnology Havana 2002, and accredited media. Carlos Borroto, deputy director of the Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (CIGB), told both Cubans and foreigners that they will be given a detailed tour of the center. He also announced a meeting of the management of these installations with the press. (Prensa Latina, 27/11/02)

**November 28:** The President of the Cuban Parliament, Ricardo Alarcón, denounced the United States in Havana for "training subversive commandos" in Miami to target "not only Cuba, but also Venezuela and Brazil," during the 2nd Hemispheric Meeting of Struggle against the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). (Europa Press, 28/11/02)

**November 28:** Cuba handed Panama new evidence against a group of anti-Castro individuals led by Luis Posada Carriles, who will appear in court to answer for their alleged plan to assassinate Fidel Castro. The Cuban ambassador to Panama, Carlos Zamora, delivered the documents. (Notimex, 28/11/02)

## US-Cuba Relations

**November 1:** The US Coast Guard returned home four Cuban migrants, increasing the number of Cubans repatriated over the past four days to 16. The Coast Guard cutter Metompkin intercepted the most recent group after their small rustic boat was intercepted 25 miles northeast of La Isabel, Cuba. Six Cuban migrants and a dog were repatriated after being rescued from a vessel 48 miles north of Matanzas, Cuba. Six others were sent back after their raft was sighted by another boat 25 miles southeast of Key West. All three vessels were destroyed as hazards to navigation. The 16 migrants, who received food, water and any needed medical attention, were interviewed by Immigration and Naturalization officials before they were sent back. (AP, 1/11/02)

**November 1:** The commissions of members of the Cuban National Assembly will convene to lay the groundwork for the next session that will discuss, among other important topics, the current state of US-Cuba relations. As a matter of procedure, these permanent parliamentary

commissions hold their sessions prior to the National Assembly's plenary meetings. (World Data Service, 1/11/02)

**November 4:** Film director Steven Spielberg, visiting Cuba for the first time, said the United States should end its trade embargo against the communist-run island and allow more cultural interaction with Cubans. "I personally feel that this embargo should be lifted. I do not see any reason for accepting old grudges being played out in the 21st Century," Spielberg said at a news conference. "It does not make sense to me that my country will trade with North Korea and China, but not with Cuba." He will speak to Cuban filmmakers and students and meet with the Jewish community. Spielberg discussed US-Cuba cultural exchanges, history, politics, the environment and many other subjects during an eight-hour meeting with Fidel Castro. (Reuters, AP, 5/11/02)

**November 5:** Citing unacceptable activities, the State Department ordered the expulsion of two Washington-based Cuban diplomats for their role in support of a spy for Cuba who recently was sentenced to a 25-year prison term, a State Department official said. In a separate action, two members of Cuba's mission to the United Nations were asked to leave the country for "engaging in activities deemed to be harmful to the United States." State Department press officer Frederick Jones said two first secretaries of Cuba's diplomatic mission in Washington, Oscar Redondo Toledo and Gustavo Machín Gómez, were declared "persona non grata" and were ordered to leave the country in 10 days. Jones said Redondo and Machin were linked to the case of Ana Belén Montes, an employee of the Defense Intelligence Agency who spied for Cuba for years. As for the New York-based Cubans, Jones said only that they acted outside their official capacity as members of the Cuban mission to the United Nations. "These expulsions represent our response to the unacceptable Cuban activities for which Ana Belén Montes was arrested and convicted," said Charles Barclay, a State Department spokesman for the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs. (AP, The Miami Herald, 6/11/02)

**November 7:** US President George Bush raised hope among some and skepticism from others when he said Haitians should be treated the same as other immigrant groups, except Cubans. "The immigration laws ought to be the same for Haitians and everybody else, except for Cubans. And the difference, of course, is that we don't send people back to Cuba because they're going to be persecuted. And that's why we've got the special law on the books as regards to Cubans," Bush said at a news conference. (Sun Sentinel, 8/11/02)

**November 8:** Cuba rejected US charges that four Cuban diplomats who were ordered to leave the United States engaged in unacceptable activities, and said American diplomats in Havana were involved in "subversive" work. "The government of the United States knows that we can present ample evidence of their activities of espionage and constant subversion against Cuba," said a Foreign Ministry statement published by the Cuban official daily Granma. "Cuba has the right to respond, and will, at the appropriate moment," it said. (AP, Reuters, 8/11/02)

**November 11:** A cargo plane carrying seven Cuban adults and one child landed at Key West International Airport, US immigration officials said. The biplane was escorted by two US fighter jets as it landed at the airport, Director Peter Horton said. The passengers were in the custody of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, and agents were conducting interviews to determine whether they wish to seek political asylum, INS spokeswoman Maria Elena Garcia said. (AP, 12/11/02)

**November 11:** Fidel Castro and an American group led by US Representative James McGovern, a Massachusetts Democrat, signed an agreement to collaborate on the restoration and preservation of 2,000 letters, 3,000 personal photographs and some draft fragments of Ernest Hemingway's novels and stories that were kept in the humid basement of Finca Vigía, the villa outside Havana where the writer lived from 1939-1960. "I personally have much for which to thank Hemingway," said Castro. "The honor that he gave us by choosing our country in which to live and write some of his best work." Funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, the effort by the

New York-based Social Science Research Council and the Cuban National Council of Patrimony will produce microfilm copies of the material, restore some documents damaged by the Caribbean climate, and help conserve the house, including a 9,000-volume library and Hemingway's fishing boat, El Pilar. (Chicago Sun Times, 12/11/02)

**November 11:** Key West resumed scheduled international flights for the first time since souring US relations with Cuba stopped regular air service with Havana in 1961. The airline is offering round-trip flights between Key West and Nassau three times a week. (AP, 11/11/02)

**November 12:** The Cuban government has demanded the immediate return of an AN-2 fumigation aircraft that illegally transported a group of people, including a minor, to Key West, Florida. A statement from Cuba's Ministry of Foreign Affairs was published by the press, informing that on the same day, the island's authorities requested in a diplomatic note the return of the perpetrators of the hijack, the aircraft and the rest of the illegal emigrants. Cuba also requested Washington to present all the information available to its authorities as soon as possible. (Granma International, 12/11/02)

**November 12:** During a daily press conference, US Department of State's Spokesman, Richard Boucher, answered questions about a hijacked Cuban aircraft that landed in Key West with immigrants: "A crop duster flew from Cuba to Key West the morning of November 11th. There were eight passengers and crew on board. They represented three generations of one family. All members of the family wish to go to the United States. The family is being processed by the Immigration and Naturalization Service. We would expect to work with the Cuban Government to return the aircraft," Boucher said. (Daily Press Briefing, US Department of State, 12/11/02)

**November 12:** Claiming to have new evidence showing that a fair jury was impossible to get in Miami, appellate lawyers for five convicted Cuban spies asked for a new trial. The five men were convicted last year on espionage charges. Lawyer Leonard Weinglass said the spies should be granted a new trial because the U.S. government has taken "contradictory" positions about community biases regarding Cuba and Cuban Americans. The US attorney's office argued that an impartial jury could be chosen. One year later, the same office tried to get a change of venue when the government was sued for discrimination by a Miami-based Hispanic immigration agent. (The Miami Herald, 13/11/02)

**November 13:** Fidel Castro "seemed very interested" in creating trade links with thousands of black American farmers under a US law allowing some agricultural transactions with the island, the NAACP's leader said. Kweisi Mfume and other members of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People delegation discussed the issue with Castro during a four-hour meeting. The delegation includes John Boyd, president of the National Association of Black Farmers, representing more than 12,000 growers in 38 states. (AP, 13/11/02)

**November 13:** The Cuban People's Power National Assembly showed its support to the motion presented by attorney Leonard Weinglass in the process against the five Cuban prisoners in US jails. In a press release, the permanent congressional committees of Constitutional and Judicial Affairs and Foreign Affairs were in favor of Weinglass' Motion for Cuban citizens Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González and René González. The motion is for a new trial in an appropriate location, not in Florida where they were previously tried. (Prensa Latina, 13/11/02)

**November 13:** Fidel Castro assured that his country is prepared for "an eternity" of US economic embargo. "Nothing lasts forever," said Castro when asked about the overwhelming majority vote at the UN General Assembly in favour of a resolution against the US-imposed economic embargo. (Notimex, 13/11/02)

**November 16:** Cuba's vice president said the United States was encouraging "terrorism against Cuba" by allowing eight Cubans to remain in Florida after they flew a Soviet-built crop-duster to Key West. Vice President Carlos Lage told leaders of 21 nations at the Ibero-American Summit that "the number of terrorists protected by that country (United States) increases" by giving asylum to the eight, including a 2-year-old girl. (AP, 17/11/02)

**November 16:** A leading US trade group warned that the expulsion of four Cuban diplomats in retaliation for an espionage case may jeopardize nascent efforts to improve commerce between the United States and the communist island. US Wheat Associates, which has long lobbied for further easing of Washington's four-decade-old trade embargo on Fidel Castro's government, said one of those expelled had been a champion of expanded trade. The expulsions "may ultimately interfere with the legitimate development of US commercial markets in Cuba," the group said in its weekly newsletter. In particular, it said the expulsion of Gustavo Machín Gómez, one of two first secretaries at the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, could do damage. "Gustavo was a friend who contributed a great deal to improving relations and (agriculture) trade between the two countries," US Wheat Associates Vice President Nelson Denlinger said. (AFP, 16/11/02)

**November 17:** Thirty DePaul University College of Commerce students will have a rare opportunity to study business practices in Cuba during a weeklong faculty-led study tour of the communist island nation that begins in December. The trip is one of four sold-out overseas study seminars that the Chicago college's Driehaus Center for International Business will sponsor for undergraduate and graduate students. (Ascribe News, 17/11/02)

**November 18:** Congress will face new proposals to relax the US trade embargo on Cuba next year, advocates say, probably highlighted by a bid to allow US tourism to the next-door nation in the Caribbean. "Travel is the crown jewel" in the tussle over US sanctions, said Brian Alexander of the Cuba Policy Foundation, which supports an end to the embargo. Alexander foresaw debate over smaller issues as well as lightning rods like the travel ban. US tourism to Cuba is banned in most cases. This year's initiatives foundered because "Congress ran out of time to do its business," he said, not due to a lack of interest among lawmakers. (Reuters, 18/11/02)

**November 18:** Five Cubans formerly employed at the Cuban diplomatic mission in Washington were charged in a complaint by a federal prosecutor with conspiracy to threaten and assault demonstrators protesting in front of the mission in April 2000. The US attorney for the District of Columbia, Roscoe C. Howard Jr., said a conviction could carry an imprisonment of 180 days on conviction. But, as diplomats, the five have immunity from prosecution. In any case, they all have departed the United States. Brígida Benitez, an attorney for the demonstrators, said that due to the complaint against the accused, they will never receive visas to enter the US again. The melee took place on April 14, 2000 as the demonstrators were calling for democracy in Cuba and also were demanding that Elian Gonzalez, not be returned to Cuba. (AP, 18/11/02)

**November 18:** Fidel Castro led tens of thousands of people in a rally outside the American mission in Havana to protest the US government's decision to free eight Cubans who left the island on a stolen crop-duster plane. Students in school uniforms, army cadets and workers of varying ages cheered and waved red, white and blue Cuban flags as Castro arrived at the plaza outside the US Interests Section. Dressed in his olive green uniform and cap, Castro stood in the front row of the crowd facing the stage, but did not address the gathering. (AP, 18/11/02)

**November 18:** Travants, a leader in online travel agent marketing, released a guide for Americans interested in legally traveling to Cuba. The Travants Destination Lowdown on Cuba helps US tourists understand restrictions and address several common misconceptions about travel to Cuba. Travants can help interested travelers plan a trip through several travel agents in the Travants network who specialize in American travel to Cuba. (Business Wire, 18/11/02)

**November 18:** Cuba's highest-ranking diplomat in the United States told a University audience that Cuba is willing to cooperate with the United States on many issues, despite current US policy. "We do think that the time has come for Cuba and the United States to make important and fundamental decisions for our two countries and our two peoples," said Dagoberto Rodriguez Barrera, head of Cuba's diplomatic mission in Washington, which is not considered an embassy since Cuba and the United States have no formal relations. Speaking to an audience of several hundred people at the University's Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, Rodriguez spoke of the troubled history of US-Cuba relations since that country's 1959 revolution. (The Minnesota Daily News, 19/11/02)

**November 18:** The US Coast Guard repatriated two Cuban fishermen found adrift, aboard a government-owned boat that Cuban authorities had reported missing a week earlier. (The Miami Herald, 19/11/02)

**November 19:** Advocates of liberalizing trade and travel between the United States and Cuba say the retirement of Senate Foreign Relations ranking member Jesse Helms, and the departure of Senator Robert Torricelli, may reduce opposition to their cause. But results of the 2002 elections and changes in congressional leadership make them pessimistic about prospects for legislation in the 108th Congress. (Congress Daily, 19/11/02)

**November 20:** Puerto Rican government officials and business leaders have been working quietly over the last several months to position this Spanish-speaking US territory to become a key trading partner of Cuba should the embargo against the government of Fidel Castro be lifted. In an effort that has earned unanimous support among Puerto Rico's usually contentious political parties, economic development officials have been meeting with representatives of the US Department of Commerce since February on growing commercial ties with the Caribbean's largest nation. Together, the government and private sector have launched an export association in part to help small and medium-size companies gain access to a market mostly closed to Americans and enable them to compete with the Canadians and Europeans already doing business there. (The Hartford Courant, 20/11/02)

**November 20:** America's "National Grange," the nation's oldest farm and rural interests organization, wants the US government to lift trade and travel restrictions against Cuba. It passed a resolution to that effect at its national convention. "Citing the belief that the 40 years of sanctions against Cuba has never proved effective in changing the country's form of government, the National Grange recommended a policy to remove trade, financial, and travel restrictions to Cuba," the Grange said in a statement from its national convention in Portland, Oregon. (CNS News, 21/11/02)

**November 20:** Four men traveling with the popular Cuban band Carlos Manuel y Su Clan filed for political asylum in the United States -- four days after they walked off following their raucous performance at Club Cristal, according to the Cuban American National Foundation. (The Miami Herald, 20/11/02)

**November 20:** A Cuban man pleaded guilty to federal air piracy and kidnapping charges in the 1980 hijacking of a Delta Airlines flight to Havana. Miguel Aguiar Rodriguez faces a possible life sentence. He was arrested in August when he appeared under an alias for an appointment with the Immigration and Naturalization Service in Miami. Aguiar first arrived in the United States at Key West, during the 1980 Mariel boatlift. The hijacking, four months later, was one of many that followed the boatlift as homesick Cubans returned. Aguiar crossed the Mexican border into Brownsville, Texas, with fake identification documents in 2000. (AP, 20/11/02)

**November 21:** A Cuban-American was sentenced to life in prison for running an alien-smuggling operation that ended with a Cuban woman's death on a barren Bahamian island. Jorge

``Bombino" Aleman and his ring were accused of picking up 22 Cubans in January 2001 on a 26-foot power boat near Villa Clara, Cuba. (AP, 21/11/02)

**November 21:** A Bahamasair jetliner landed in Havana, opening a new charter service to Cuba aimed at American tourists, and brought 32 US travel agents to gauge the potential of the communist-run island. The US travel industry is increasingly interested in Cuba, long a forbidden land for American tourists under trade sanctions adopted against Cuba after Fidel Castro took power in 1959. "We came to experience Cuba so that when it eventually opens up to American tourists we will have a clue of what it has to offer," said Bobbie Sundsten, of Travel Professionals, which represents American Express in Seattle. (Reuters, 21/11/02)

**November 25:** Otto Reich is being replaced as head of the Latin America bureau at the State Department but will provide expert advice as a special envoy for the region, a spokesman said. Richard Boucher said Reich, "like other special envoys before him, will continue to have substantial responsibility in developing US policies in the region." Reich was appointed assistant secretary by President Bush last January while Congress was not in session. (AP, 25/11/02)

**November 26:** The US government decided to let a 13-year-old Cuban boy come ashore after he had spent the night on a boat off the Florida coast. The Coast Guard boarded the boat off Key West and discovered six Cubans on board, according to CNN. Five of the Cubans - all adults - jumped off the ship and made it to shore. The boy was left behind. According to CNN, the boy is being allowed to come ashore as a material witness in a smuggling case. Two men who piloted the boat carrying the six Cubans are being charged with smuggling, the CNN report said. (Cable News Network, 26/11/02)

**November 26:** Attorney Belden Bly, a veteran traveler of Russia, South America, and Europe, is heading to Cuba. Bly will represent the American legal community for a special program, People to People. Bly will spend a week participating in conferences with Cuban legal professionals in an attempt to foster understanding between the two nations. People to People is a private organization dedicated to the improvement of international understanding through non-political action. Founded by President Dwight Eisenhower, it is now directed by his granddaughter, Mary Eisenhower. (Saugus Advertiser, 26/11/02)

**November 27:** The mother of a Cuban teenager detained as a witness in an alien-smuggling case said in a phone call from Cuba that she wants the boy to stay in the United States with his father. In a 10-minute conversation with Mayda Orozco Fernández, identified as the mother of Leonel Figueroa Orozco, the attorney for the boy's Miami relatives established that she would not make any claim to him. "I want him to stay with his father," Orozco said on a speaker phone. (The Miami Herald, 28/11/02)

**November 27:** The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People plans to open an office in Havana. "Cuba likes the idea of an NAACP chapter established there, and we are very open to it," said Hilary Shelton, director of the NAACP's Washington office. "We have no timeline on this and haven't set a date to open the office." He added that establishing a chapter on the island run by Fidel Castro is a "great move." (The Washington Times, 27/11/02)