

## Rothman Argues For U.S. To Continue Trade And Travel Embargo With Cuba Says Castro Must Return U.S.

May 20, 2003

Rothman Argues For U.S. To Continue Trade And Travel Embargo With Cuba

Says Castro Must Return U.S. Fugitives Being Given Safe Haven, Stop Human Rights Violations, Hold Free Elections; Blasts Dictator's Support For Terrorism

Washington, DC — Saying that Fidel Castro must return the 74 U.S. fugitives currently being given refuge in Cuba, improve his human rights policies, and hold free elections, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ9) argued the merits of the U.S. trade embargo and travel ban on Cuba last week in a panel discussion on Capitol Hill sponsored by the George Mason University. Rothman, a member of the influential House Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations which allocates U.S. foreign aid, was invited by George Mason University to address university students and Capitol Hill staff members.

“Cuba is harboring U.S. fugitives from the law, including Joanne Chesimard, who killed a New Jersey State Trooper and fled to Cuba. Why should the United States allow trade and travel at the same time Cuba is preventing justice from being served,” Rothman argued. “Additionally, Cuba is on the U.S. State Department’s list of seven state sponsors of terrorism, which also includes Iraq, Iran, Syria, North Korea, Sudan, and Libya. In fact, according to the State Department, Cuba has actively been trying to subvert the U.S. war on terrorism around the world. When these factors are combined with the brutality of the Castro regime, the lack of free markets, free elections or freedom for Cuba’s people, this is not the right time to change how we treat the Castro regime in Cuba.”

Rothman has authored legislation that would require Castro to extradite all U.S. fugitives who are currently receiving sanctuary in Cuba prior to the U.S. lifting the travel ban. This is in addition to other measures that must be met, such as free and fair elections. Rothman’s passion for the return of criminal fugitives from American justice lies in the case of New Jersey State Trooper Werner Foerster. In 1973, Trooper Foerster was killed during a routine traffic stop on the New Jersey Turnpike that turned into a shoot-out with Joanne Chesimard and her two companions. Trooper Foerster’s partner, James Harper, was wounded. Chesimard was convicted of murder, sentenced to life in prison, escaped, and fled to Cuba. She has been living under the protection of the Castro dictatorship ever since.

In addition, Castro continues to harbor 73 other fugitives, including Michael Robert Finney and Charles Hill, wanted for the murder of New Mexico State Police Officer Robert Rosenblum, and Victor Manuel Gerena, an armed robber and a member of a terrorist group who has carried out bombings of U.S. military and civilian targets and is a member of the FBI’s 10 Most Wanted List.

“In recent months, Castro has led a brutal crackdown against 75 independent journalists, economists, and activists, and sentenced them up to 28 years in solitary confinement for speaking their minds against his government and working to establish free elections. He has also executed three people who were desperate enough to try and flee his regime by boat,” Rothman said. “This would be the worst time in recent memory to even consider lifting the travel ban and ending economic sanctions on Fidel Castro. The United States does not reward brutal dictators who repress their people and commit severe human rights violations.”

Rothman has been a strong supporter of the Cuban people, the establishment of free and fair elections, and the Cuban trade embargo and travel ban during his four terms in Congress.

###

[Go back](#)

