Cuba is a step in that direction. To further promote, rather than strangle, democratic transition in Cuba, United States NGO's would now be authorized to help independent Cuban NGO's provide training to Cuban human rights activists. Without employing the expensive baloondoggle of taxpayer-funded TV Marti, for example, United States news bureaus would set up shop directly in Cuba and Cuban news agencies here in the United States. The new regulations are also family friendly, easing procedures for Cuban-Americans who want to visit relatives in Cuba.

However, the proposed policy will not reward a totalitarian regime which continues to violate basic human rights with impunity. In fact, the administration proposes enhanced enforcement of the embargo and the U.S. Neutrality Act. This mixed bag approach—injecting into Castro's system the poison of free thought while continuing to restrict his access to the relief found in free trade—may not be the perfect solution. I think it is time for a new strategy in Cuba, rather than more of the same, which the Helms bill advocates and which has clearly failed. I believe an incremental approach, which minimizes the pain to the Cuban people and the cost to the American taxpayer, while making clear our determination to not do business as usual with the Castro regime, offers the best current hope of effecting change. The Helms amendment does everything but that, so I urge its defeat.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mr. FEINGOLD. I ask unanimous consent that Juan Alsace be granted the privilege of the floor during the consideration of this bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I yield 5 minutes to the distinguished Senator from Georgia.

Mr. NUNN. Mr. President, the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act currently before the Senate presents us with a difficult decision. I am sure we all favor the early return of freedom in Cuba. I am sure the sponsor of this act believes that this legislation would contribute to that aim. There are those of us, though, who have grave doubts.

Mr. President, I am particularly concerned about the impact of this proposed legislation on our Nation's national security interests. For that reason, I requested the views of our responsible military commander Jack Sheehan, commander in chief of the United States Atlantic command, under whose command Cuba falls.

I would like to share the letter I received, dated October 15, from General Sheehan, who is in direct charge of the security aspects of Cuba under his command. It says:

DEAR SENATOR NUNN: I am writing to provide my assessment of the potential effect of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act * * * could have on the United States Atlantic command and operations in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. There are currently 8,000 Cuban migrants in camps at Guantanamo Bay, down from 20,000 5 months ago. The Department of Defense has processed more than 100,000 Cuban and Haitian migrants in Guantanamo Bay over the last few years. When the migrant population was at its peak, it cost the Department of Defense over $1 million a day in operation and maintenance—money which was not in the budget. Additionally, prior to the White House policy announcement in May, we had more than 6,000 U.S. personnel in a potentially explosive situation—guarding and caring for Cuban migrants who were frustrated because there was no hope of leaving the camps.

From a military perspective, the current version of the Helms–Burton bill could create conditions for more migrants. I believe the Cuban economy is at a low point. I have this on interviews of more than 40,000 Cubans who have been through Guantanamo. They say one of the primary reasons for leaving Cuba is to be able to provide a basic quality of food and shelter for their families. The bill in its current form could further punish the people, not Castro or the privileged elites. Furthermore, rather than promoting a peaceful transition in Cuba, the bill could give Castro an excuse to maintain his focus on ''U.S. aggression,'' rather than his own failed ideology. I also question the bill's implied assumption that strengthening the embargo would lead to a revolt from within and create the conditions for a transition to democracy. Cuba is not Haiti—the circumstances which allowed for a successful intervention in Haiti, with only one American casualty, do not exist in Cuba. Any operations involving U.S. forces in Cuba would likely have a much higher cost in terms of lives and national treasury.

Our policy objective should be the peaceful transition of power in Cuba, and I support any congressional language that brings about that change.

Mr. President, in short, General Sheehan believes that our policy objective should be the peaceful transition of power in Cuba to democracy. But he does not believe the legislation before us will make a net contribution to this objective. He believes that this legislation, in fact, will have the opposite effect and that it will basically cause an increase in the very migration that has now finally subsided.

Mr. President, I hope we can work out, before this legislation is concluded, a satisfactory bill that can be agreed to on both sides of the aisle and supported by the administration. I do not believe this legislation meets that test.

I thank the Senator for the time. I yield back whatever time I have remaining.

I ask unanimous consent that General Sheehan's letter be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the letter was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

COMMANDER IN CHIEF,
U.S. ATLANTIC COMMAND,
October 15, 1995.

Hon. SAM NUNN,
Senate, Committee on Armed Services, Senate Russell Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR NUNN: I am writing to provide my assessment of the potential effect the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act (The Helms/Burton Bill) could have on the United States Atlantic Command and operations in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. There are currently 8,000 Cuban migrants in camps at Guantanamo Bay, down from 20,000 five months ago. DoD has processed more than 100,000 Cuban and Haitian migrants in Guantanamo Bay over the last few years. When the migrant population was at its peak, it cost the Department of Defense over $1 million a day in operations and maintenance—money which was not in the budget. Additionally, prior to the White House policy announcement in May, we had more than 6,000 U.S. personnel in a potentially explosive situation—guarding and caring for Cuban migrants who were frustrated because there was no hope of leaving the camps.

From a military perspective, the current version of the Helms-Burton Bill could create the conditions for more migrants. I believe the Cuban economy is at a low point. I have this on our interviews of more than 40,000 Cubans who have been through Guantanamo. They say one of the primary reasons for leaving Cuba is to be able to provide a basic quality of food and shelter for their families. The bill in its current form could further punish the people, not Castro or the privileged elites. Furthermore, rather than promoting a peaceful transition in Cuba, the bill would give Castro an excuse to maintain his focus on ''U.S. aggression,'' rather than his own failed ideology. I also question this bill's implied assumption that strengthening the embargo will lead to a revolt from within and create the conditions for a transition to democracy. Cuba is not Haiti—the circumstances which allowed for a successful intervention in Haiti, with only one American casualty, do not exist in Cuba. Any operations involving U.S. forces in Cuba would likely have a much higher cost in terms of lives and national treasure.

Our policy objective should be the peaceful transition of power in Cuba, and I support any congressional language that brings about that change.

Sincerely,

J.J. SHEEHAN,
General, U.S. Marine Corps.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I do not see any of the proponents on the floor at this point. How much time remains?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Three minutes, forty seconds.

Mr. DODD. Let me take the time. I presume the Senator from North Carolina may come to the floor shortly.

Mr. President, I want to spend some time this afternoon explaining the very complex issue of how the U.S. Government deals with property claims by U.S. citizens who have had their property expropriated by a foreign government and who failed to receive adequate and effective compensation for such action.

I believe that it is important to do so, because what we are prepared to do today, if we enact this pending legislation into law, is to totally reverse more than 46 years of practice on how we as a government have dealt with this question. Not only would it alter the scope of claimants who would be able to seek some remedy from the U.S. Government for acts against property held abroad, it would also change the manner in which the U.S. Government seeks to ensure that claimants are compensated.

So, how have property claims been handled in the past? for which countries? What have been the results?