

**REMARKS BY THE GOVERNOR
OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO
HONORABLE RAFAEL HERNANDEZ COLON
AT THE DINNER HONORING THOSE WHO
HELPED THE VICTIMS OF HURRICANE HUGO**

NOVEMBER 27 1989

MIAMI, FLORIDA

I am very pleased to be here with you tonight, among very good friends of Puerto Rico. Two months after Hurricane Hugo, our island is way on its path towards a complete recovery from the damage suffered. Painful memories are giving way to new hope.

As you know, my presence in Miami is twofold: to share with you some moments and to participate in the CBI Conference, hosted by the Metropolitan Dade County and the City of Miami.

The winds of change are sweeping our world. Old barriers crumble as we approach a new millennium and the forces of freedom and economic interdependence draw the world together. Divisions and disputes between nations are being replaced by cooperation and collaboration. Western Europe will be an economic --and possibly-- a political union by 1992; Eastern Europe is finding its own path to freedom; China's people are calling for democratic reform; and the invaders of Cambodia and Afghanistan are in retreat. Our own continent is

part of the new democratic surge, as the rule of the ballot is substituting the reign of the bullet.

Democracy in the Caribbean is strengthening day by day, sustained by new efforts to bring about prosperity and the effervescence of the democratic systems that have developed in our Caribbean countries.

The up-coming elections in Nicaragua may well mark a positive challenge to marxism and totalitarianism, and open the the possibility for the establishment of a responsive and legitimate government.

Yet among the dark clouds that still remain amidst the Caribbean sun, there is one of great concern for us all. Unmoved by the spirit of democracy sweeping the Caribbean Basin, Cuba still lingers under the yoke of an obsolete dictatorship. The Cuban people still suffer from the hardships imposed by a capricious and anachronistic leadership, form stagnation of a centralized economy, form the horror of a

totalitarian police state, from the anguish of a dark future.

Communism and all forms of totalitarianism have no place in the dawning of the twenty-first century. If the people of Chile had an opportunity to say no to Pinochet's fascist regime, if the people of Poland could elect Solidarity, if the people of East Germany could freely cross the Berlin Wall, if democratic rule is to come to Hungary and Checoeslovakia, if Perestroika and Glasnost are more than slogans, the people of Cuba have the right to free elections.

Castro's Cuba cannot remain stagnant in the face of democratic upsurge in the world. The winds of change will in time sweep through the Caribbean Basin, and the tyranny that is Castro's rule. The historical imperative of freedom cannot forever be suppressed. The challenge the democratic states of the Caribbean pose to Fidel Castro is to hold free elections in Cuba, now, to yield to the revolutionary idea of the government by the consent

of the governed and allow the will of the people and not the whim of the party to determine their future.

The Iron Curtain has crumbled down in Europe, and the days of Communism and authoritarianism in our continent will open new prospects for hemispheric integration and cooperation, and the people of Cuba, long suffering, will prosper from the fruits of freedom and the benefits of regional interdependence.

So this is what I believe the CBI, starting tomorrow, is all about. It is an economic as well as a political challenge which we must face.

But tonight let me turn once again to Hugo and your kindness.

On behalf of the people of Puerto Rico I wish to thank persons such as the top management of Channel 51 who worked long hours producing the Miami segment of the telethon, Senator Connie Mac who was instrumental in the delivery of 40,000 gallons of water donated by Mr. Anthony Mannello,

Congressman Ileana Roth, Dr. Luis Pagán who till this day is coordinating the shipment of medicines, Mrs. Alicia Baro who was in charge of coordinating the efforts of the other Puerto Rican organizations, Sea Barge Management who donated the shipment of donations, Mr. Antonio Amadeo who coordinated monetary donations, Mr. Alfonso Robles who donated the use of his warehouse and coordinated all collection and shipment of none medical donations.

Your assistance confirmed what we have always felt deep in our hearts, the state of Florida, specially the city of Miami, is the home of our truest friends.

Again, I thank all of you here today for your support and commitment to the reconstruction efforts in Puerto Rico. The sun shines brilliantly once again over our Island.

The holiday season is near. Puerto Rico has one of the merriest Christmas traditions in the world. This year we shall celebrate it with

renewed faith in the nobility of the human spirit,
hope in the future, and a new sense of unity. May
God Almighty bless you all.

