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One Hundred Thirteenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere
Committee on Foreign Affairs
256 Ford House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
www.foreignaffairs.house.gov

October 28, 2013

His Excellency Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General
The United Nations
760 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017

Dear Mr. Secretary-General,

Earlier this summer, on July 16th, the Panamanian government discovered and detained the North Korean-flagged Chong Chon Gang cargo vessel traveling from Cuba. Multiple press reports have confirmed that Panamanian officials discovered on board up to 25 cargo containers of Cuban weapons and other U.N.-sanctioned items bound for the rogue regime in North Korea.

On September 26th, we convened a hearing of our House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere to investigate this incident further, and to explore Cuba's alleged history of military proliferation and non-compliance with U.N. sanctions.

The facts in this case are not in dispute. At the time of their discovery, Cuba's foreign ministry said that the tanker was carrying 10,000 tons of sugar and 240 metric tons of "obsolete defensive weapons" including disassembled missiles, two MiG-21 jet fighters, and two disassembled anti-aircraft missile complexes, "to be repaired and returned to Cuba." But here is what the Panamanian officials actually found hidden among the bags of Cuban sugar: night vision equipment, small arms and light-weapons ammunition, rocket-propelled grenades, and artillery ammunition for anti-tank guns. This cargo is a clear violation of the U.N. sanctions imposed on North Korea after its series of nuclear-bomb tests.

We write to strongly suggest that you use all of the resources at your disposal as Secretary-General to ensure that concrete action in the form of full disclosure and full access to Cuba be pursued and granted to the U.N. Panel of Experts in order to investigate the Chong Chon Gang case, and the other 12 North Korean vessels that have called at Cuban ports since 2006.

We believe this is a potentially groundbreaking case where a country in the Western Hemisphere is likely to be found in violation of U.N. Security Council sanctions on weapons proliferation.

The Honorable Ban Ki-moon

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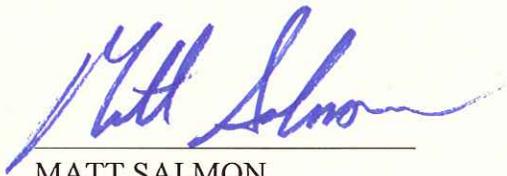
Many experts believe there has been – and the Castro regime itself has admitted to – a violation of international sanctions in this case.

This Subcommittee has learned that while admitting to blatantly violating the international sanctions on North Korea, the Castro regime has begun a full “charm offensive” at the U.N. to convince the Sanctions Committee that it should in fact be applauded for its compliance and cooperation in this case, rather than punished and sanctioned for its intentional breach of the sanctions regime.

We strongly believe that if Cuba is not held accountable and instead is only given a slap on the wrist, the international ramifications would be substantial. Countries, like Panama, would be less likely to put their resources and reputations on the line in order to intercept suspicious vessels and activities. Even more concerning, other countries may be more inclined to violate international sanctions on behalf of rogue regimes like North Korea or Iran for either profit or ideological reasons if they perceive the consequences will be insignificant.

Please give this important matter your personal and immediate attention, and we look forward to a thorough report on this incident from your U.N. Panel of Experts.

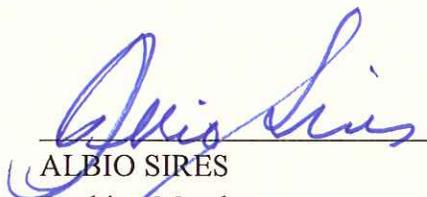
Sincerely,



MATT SALMON

Chairman

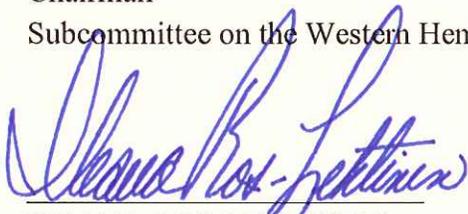
Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere



ALBIO SIRES

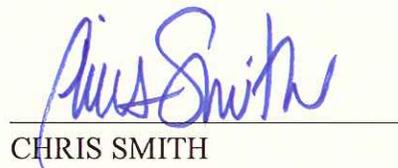
Ranking Member

Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere



ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

Member of Congress



CHRIS SMITH

Member of Congress



MIKE McCAUL

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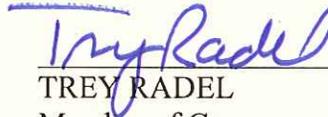
JEFF DUNCAN

Member of Congress

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RON DESANTIS
Member of Congress



TREY RADEL
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable John F. Kerry, Secretary of State, U.S. Department of State.
The Honorable Samantha Power, Ambassador, U.S. Permanent Representative to the
United Nations.