

Right of Reply

**Statement by Eileen P. Merritt
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Mr. Chairman,

The United States must respond to the statement made earlier in this committee by the delegate from Cuba.

The United States Government takes its international obligations very seriously, including its obligations under the ITU Constitution, Convention and the Radio Regulations.

The United States also supports the right of the Cuban people to freedom of expression and the free flow of information, in furtherance of Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Our policy has been and will continue to be to broadcast information to the Cuban people out of concern for their welfare and in recognition that they do not have free access to information. We believe that everything we are doing is proper.

Last year the U.S. announced measures to increase the degree of contact between Americans with family members in Cuba by expanding family travel and to increasing the opportunities for communication among Cubans on the island and between Cubans and persons worldwide by authorizing U.S. businesses to negotiate agreements to facilitate various types of telecommunications connections and support endeavors. We have done this because, as I have mentioned, we believe in and promote free flow of information, freedom of expression and freedom of conscience.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your attention.