

Gingrich Raps Clinton, Cuba Policy

Speaker Supports Castro's Ouster

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Reuter

MIAMI, June 3—House Speaker Newt Gingrich said today he is committed to a "freedom contract" with the Cuban people to oust communist President Fidel Castro.

Gingrich also told a Miami rally of some 1,000 Cuban Americans that President Clinton should fire officials who were involved in this spring's immigration policy negotiations with the Cuban government.

"President Clinton hires left-wingers who love Fidel," Gingrich said. "They all say to him, 'Fidel is not a dictator. Fidel is a fisherman and a baseball player' and President Clinton gets confused."

A month ago, after talks with the Cuban government, the Clinton administration announced a new policy on Cuban immigration that would repatriate Cubans attempting to reach the United States illegally, a reversal of practice since the mid-1960s that allowed virtually every Cuban attempting to reach the United States to settle here.

The announcement outraged many Cuban Americans. Some of the largely conservative, 1.5 million-strong Cuban American community in Miami protested against the policy shift in the first weeks after the May 2 announcement.

Referring to Clinton's 1992 campaign promise that he would be tough on Cuba, Gingrich said, "If President Clinton wants to keep his word—candidly—he should fire every person involved in the secret negotiations."