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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

July 10, 1981

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NARCOTICS ABUSE AND CONTROL

The Honorable George Bush
Vice President of the United States
The Old Executive Office Building
Washington, D. C. 20501

Dear George:

In our conversation last Wednesday, I spoke briefly of the deplorable and emergency conditions that exist in south Florida as created and provoked by the influx of illegal aliens. I do not have to tell you that our country has been without a workable immigration policy for many, many years; nor do I have to emphasize that the conditions we suffer are a direct result of the previous administration's inability to deal with the situation.

The Immigration and Naturalization Service (I.N.S.) has recorded 44,880 illegal Haitian arrivals in Florida since 1972. The average daily number of daily arrivals has increased from 25 a day last month to 50 a day by the latest count. (366 arrived the first week of July). This flood is caused by the word getting back to Haiti that we are doing nothing to stop the influx. The problems are compounded by the continued presence of 100,000 Cuban refugees who arrived on the Mariel boatlift. We are presently faced with an emergency situation requiring immediate and drastic action by this administration.

As refugee populations have increased in south Florida, incidents of violent crime have also increased. Comparing the first quarter of 1981 with the first quarter of 1980, every category of crime--robbery, larceny, burglary, rape, murder--has shown a staggering increase. Murders have increased 89% in Miami, and 53% in Dade County, in that comparison. There were 27% more robberies in Dade County, 36% more rapes. A comparison of the period from May-December 1980, compared with the same period of 1979, shows a similar, drastic increase in violent crime in that comparison, which parallels the Mariel boatlift.

There is a refugee camp in Miami called Krome north. It has the capacity for 525 people and is presently housing close to 1500 refugees. There has even been talk, by the I.N.S., of opening another detention facility in Miami. This is the worst kind of signal to Haiti, and would be a slap in the face to south Florida.

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With the daily arrival of boatloads of illegal aliens, I.N.S. is simply putting the new arrivals in the front door and letting the old out the back. As recently as June 23, I.N.S. actually released 118 Haitians in a shopping center parking lot in Miami at midnight. They were to have met relatives and sponsors, many of whom did not show up. About 40 refugees were left to wander through the neighborhoods, which, of course, created an outcry in the area. I.N.S. has been paralyzed in their efforts to effect deportation by the courts which have effectively and totally blocked any further proceedings. In the past two years, we have only successfully deported 15 Haitians.

Just when you think everything has gone wrong that could, new problems start to crop up; the instances of tuberculosis, venereal disease, and other diseases are reaching epidemic levels as a result of these new arrivals. 43 Haitians are presently receiving treatment in Miami hospitals.

I believe we must immediately stop the flow of refugees into this country and do so before we concern ourselves with the status of those who are already here. I see three areas in which we can make a significant impact:

1. We no longer should allow courts to consider, on a case by case basis, the question of political asylum. In my opinion, it is absurd that we grant political asylum to refugees fleeing countries that are friendly to the United States. To this end, I am preparing, and will shortly file, a bill to provide that the State Department determine the countries from which refugees would be accepted for political asylum. The open door of political asylum should not be open to every refugee who flees his homeland for economic reasons.
2. The Haitian government must be coerced, if necessary, into cooperating with us to stop the flow of illegal aliens. I support a provision of the Foreign Assistance Act introduced by Rep. Dan Mica of Florida, which addresses this issue. Foreign aid to Haiti would simply be withheld unless it is determined that their government is cooperating with us, in enforcing laws and penalties to be imposed upon refugee smugglers, and are otherwise assisting us in our efforts.
3. The Haitian government should further assist us and agree to a policy of interdiction at sea so that we might stop the Haitian boats and return their cargos to Haiti.
4. Tougher laws should be enacted and penalties enforced for those convicted in our courts of engaging in the smuggling of illegal refugees into this country.

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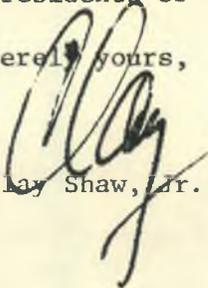
Today we probably take in more refugees than the rest of the nations of the world combined. There is no question in my mind--the flow of refugees from all over this hemisphere will continue to escalate. We already see an increase in the claims of political asylum from Central and South American countries. We are probably the only country in the world unable to provide a workable solution to the influx of illegal aliens; at the same time we are the most sought-after destination.

Six months into the President's term, south Florida is understandably upset, impatient and confused by the lack of a meaningful immigration policy. Most of the Democrats in Congress, I feel, have exercised a great deal of restraint in their remarks to the press, but, unless something is done quickly, the lid is going to blow off. We are going to see a dangerous progression of this very serious problem in South Florida, which will have unparalleled political overtones.

George, I cannot overemphasize the emergency conditions that exist in south Florida, or the urgent need for this administration to provide strong leadership in putting forth an immigration policy for our country.

I appreciate the personal attention that you, the President, and Members of the Cabinet are giving to the problem, and am confident that you will reach a solution which will be forceful and effective. We must place the well-being of our American citizens above the residents of the rest of the world.

Sincerely yours,



E. Clay Shaw, Jr.

ECSjr/st