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January 16, 1992

Mr. Jose Antonio Arbesu Fraga  
Counselor  
Cuban Interests Section  
2630 16th Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20009

Dear Mr. Arbesu,

I write to urge clemency in the cases of Messrs. Diaz Betancourt, Santovenia Fernandez, and Alvarez Pedroso, the three Cuban-Americans arrested December 29, 1991 and sentenced to death. It is my understanding that, although the sentence of Mr. Alvarez has been commuted to a lengthy prison term, the death sentences against the other two remain in force.

Because of their commitment to the value and dignity of human life, the bishops of the United States have repeatedly expressed opposition to the use of capital punishment. Less than two weeks ago, Pope John Paul II, as well as the bishops of the State of Texas, appealed for a stay of execution for a man in that state convicted of the brutal murder of a Franciscan nun.

And just nine years ago yesterday, on the eve of his 1983 visit to Guatemala and the rest of Central America, the Holy Father pointedly urged "clemency and mercy for those condemned to death, especially those who have been condemned for political reasons."

I would be grateful if you would communicate to your government our strong opposition to the death penalty and our call for clemency in these cases.

Sincerely yours,

Reverend Monsignor Robert N. Lynch  
General Secretary