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ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
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September 9, 2024

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken:

On August 15, 2024, Manuel Menéndez Castellanos, a Cuban national and a well-known "former provincial-level Communist Party chief who belonged to Fidel Castro's 'coordination and support team,'" entered the United States at the Miami International Airport through "a family reunification process."[1] According to press reports, in 1972, Menéndez Castellanos "joined the Central de Trabajadores de Cuba (CTC) and was later promoted to First Secretary of the Communist Party in Cienfuegos, a position he held from 1993 to 2003."[2] Menéndez Castellanos "also represented the Cuban regime in international events."[3] According to Biden-Harris Administration records obtained by the Committee, based on his status as a parent of an adult U.S. citizen, Menéndez Castellanos was issued an immigrant visa by the Department of State.[4] He then entered the United States at a U.S. port of entry pursuant to that immigrant visa.[5]

Menéndez Castellanos's entry into the United States raises serious questions about the Biden-Harris Administration's application of federal immigration law and the vetting procedures used during the immigrant visa application process. Under the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), an alien is inadmissible as an immigrant if the alien "is or has been a member of or affiliated with the Communist, or any other totalitarian party, domestic or foreign."[6] According to Biden-Harris Administration records obtained by the Committee, in his immigrant visa application and when questioned by immigration officials, Menéndez Castellanos denied any

[1] Frances Martel, *'Family Unification': Fidel Castro Henchman moves to Miami, Smacks Reporter's Camera When Confronted*, BREITBART (Aug. 16, 2024), https://www.breitbart.com/latin-america/2024/08/16/family-unification-fidel-castro-henchman-moves-miami-smacks-reporters-camera-when-confronted/.
[2] Hannah Aguilar, *Former Cuban Official Arrives in Miami*, CUBAHEADLINES (Aug. 16, 2024), https://www.cubaheadlines.com/articles/286959.
[3] *Id.*
[4] Biden-Harris Administration records (on file with Committee) [hereinafter Biden-Harris Administration records].
[5] *Id.*
[6] INA § 212(a)(3)(D), 8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)(3)(D).

membership in, or affiliation with, the Communist party.[7] In a subsequent immigration application document, Menéndez Castellanos admitted to previous membership in the Communist Party of Cuba, but he downplayed that membership.[8] Incredibly, according to the Biden-Harris Administration records obtained by the Committee, advanced background vetting of Menéndez Castellanos did not find any information that made him inadmissible under the INA.[9]

While the INA contains a limited number of exceptions to the inadmissibility ground,[10] it does not appear that the Biden-Harris Administration even invoked one of the exceptions to approve an immigrant visa for Menéndez Castellanos.[11] Instead, Biden-Harris Administration immigration officials seemingly ignored Menéndez Castellanos's own admission as to his affiliation with the Communist Party of Cuba.[12] Potentially even more concerning is that security vetting conducted by the Biden-Harris Administration failed to find evidence that Menéndez Castellanos was affiliated with Fidel Castro's brutal regime, despite overwhelming publicly-available evidence of his long-time and extensive work within that regime.[13] Had the Biden-Harris Administration bothered to conduct a simple, five-minute internet search, it would have uncovered Menéndez Castellanos's disturbing ties to the Castro regime.

The Biden-Harris Administration's inexcusable admission of Menéndez Castellanos into the United States further underscores the Administration's lax approach to national security. It also highlights the Biden-Harris Administration's continued desire to placate Communist regimes and undermine America's values and standing on the world stage.

Pursuant to the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to conduct oversight of federal immigration policy and procedures.[14] To assist the Committee with its continued oversight of federal immigration policy and procedures, we ask that you please provide the following materials regarding Manuel Menéndez Castellanos:

1. Case history information, including, but not limited to, the alien's immigration history, immigration benefits applications, the alien file (A-file) or consular file (including all consular notes), and immigration detention status and history.

2. Information regarding the time, date, and place of any and all of the alien's entries into the United States.

3. An explanation of the lapses in vetting that led to the Administration's lack of awareness of Menéndez Castellanos's affiliation with the Castro regime, and a

[7] Biden-Harris Administration records, *supra* note 4.
[8] *Id.*
[9] *Id.*
[10] *Id.*
[11] *Id.*
[12] *Id.*
[13] *Id.*
[14] Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, R. X (2023).

substantive description of the changes in vetting process and procedures being implemented to help ensure that such a lapse does not reoccur.

4. An explanation of why Menéndez Castellanos's own admission of membership in the Communist Party of Cuba did not subject him to the ground of inadmissibility under section 212(a)(3)(D) of the INA.

Please provide this information as soon as possible, but no later than 5:00 p.m. on September 23, 2024. If you have any questions, please contact Committee staff at (202) 225-6906. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Jim Jordan
Chairman

Tom McClintock
Chairman
Subcommittee on Immigration
Integrity, Security, and Enforcement

Mario Diaz-Balart
Member of Congress

Carlos A. Gimenez
Member of Congress

Maria Elvira Salazar
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Jerrold L. Nadler, Ranking Member

The Honorable Pramila Jayapal, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Immigration Integrity, Security, and Enforcement