

**American lawmakers wrap up trip calling for easing of U.S. policy toward island**

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HAVANA (AP) - Three Democratic U.S. representatives called for the easing of American trade and travel restrictions toward Cuba on Monday as they ended a trip to the communist island that included a lengthy meeting with President Fidel Castro. "The core question confronting U.S. policy-makers is whether America's policy of isolating Cuba advances or thwarts the national interests of the American people," said a joint statement by U.S. Representatives Sam Farr and Lynn Woolsey, both of California, and Jan Schakowsky, of Illinois.

"The information we gathered this week reinforces our strong conviction that the policy of isolating Cuba is counterproductive and should be replaced by an active policy of engagement," it added. During their four-day visit, described as a fact-finding mission, the lawmakers met with National Assembly President Ricardo Alarcon, five foreign ambassadors to Cuba, Foreign Minister Felipe Perez Roque, and Cuban scientists, physicians and others.