"Cuba had been ruled by the oppressive communist dictator Fidel Castro for more than half a century. During that time, democratic rule was been non-existent and Cuban democracy advocates were harrassed, jailed or killed at the hands of Castro's regime.

"Today, this ugly page in Cubaâ€™s history is slowly turning with the announcement of Fidel Castro's resignation; giving greater hope to those who seek a more representative and free form of government in Cuba.

"The United States and all freedom loving people around the globe should embrace Castro's resignation as an opportunity to move Cuba towards democracy, and to ensure that the Cuban people are no longer subjected to further oppression at the hands of a corrupt and rotting authoritarian regime.

"The next step is for Fidel's brother Raul to step aside as dictator of the country and for immediate free and fair democratic elections to take place.

"The road to democracy in Cuba is long; but it can only be realized with our support and solidarity with the Cuban people."