

COLLECTIONS > HELMS-BURTON ACT

VacuVita™

U.S. Penalizes Israeli-Owned Company for Dealing With Cuba

By RICHARD W. STEVENSON
Published: November 18, 1997

The Clinton Administration said today that it would punish an Israeli-owned citrus company for doing business in Cuba on land expropriated from Americans.

The announcement marks the third time that the Administration has invoked a law passed by Congress last year mandating penalties against foreign companies that invest in property confiscated from Americans in Cuba after Fidel Castro took power in 1959.

The State Department said it sent letters to the company, the BM Group, on Thursday informing its executives that they and their immediate families would be barred from entering the United States unless they could provide evidence within 45 days that they were not in violation of the law.

The United States has previously cited a Canadian mining company, Sherritt International, and a Mexican telephone company, Grupo Domos, under the law, the Helms-Burton Act of 1996.

Washington's application of the law has drawn it into a bitter dispute with some of its biggest trading partners, including Canada and the European Union.



Caviar Black



Pearl White



Oval Room Blue



Royal Dutch Orange



Taggiasca Olive Green

Last Chance

the Sustainable Way to Save Food and Money

More Like This

Canada and Mexico Join to Oppose U.S. Law on Cuba

U.S. Finds Mexico Is Adamant on Cuba Trade

Clinton Troubleshooter Discovers Big Trouble From Allies on...

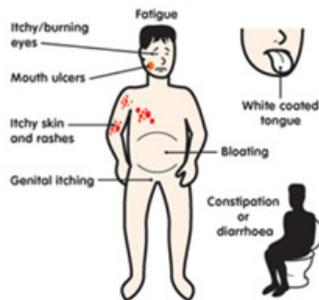
Find More Stories

Helms-burton Act

SIGN IN TO E-MAIL

PRINT

250m Americans Infected



[Learn More >>](#)

The New York Times
JUST 99¢
for 4 WEEKS
OF A DIGITAL SUBSCRIPTION

[TRY IT NOW >](#)

The European Union has threatened to file a complaint with the World Trade Organization arguing that the United States has no right to impose sanctions on European companies and citizens for business activities that are proper under the laws of their own countries.

But some Republicans in Congress have criticized the Administration for not being more aggressive in imposing the law, which President Clinton signed after Cuban warplanes shot down civilian aircraft flown by anti-Castro groups based in Florida.

In citing an Israeli-owned company, the Administration went after a business from one of the few countries that has consistently backed the American position on Helms-Burton and on the general policy of trying to keep President Castro's Government economically isolated.

Only Israel and Uzbekistan joined with the United States in voting against a resolution at the United Nations this month calling on the Administration to end its economic embargo of Cuba. The resolution won 143 votes in the General Assembly.

"Israel supports the policy of the American Government in regards to Cuba," an Israeli official

said today.

State Department officials did not make public the names of the executives from the BM Group who are to be barred from the United States.

Israeli officials said that the BM Group had no operations in Israel but that some of its owners were Israeli citizens. The company is involved in citrus and sugar farming in Cuba and announced in September that it would develop an office building complex in Havana in partnership with the Cuban Government.

Asked in September about the possibility of facing American sanctions, Enrique Rottenberg, the general manager of the Israeli-Cuban real estate project, said the Helms-Burton law "does not concern us," Reuters reported.

"We are working in accordance with the laws of Israel and Cuba," Mr. Rottenberg said.

3 Credit Scores (Free)

freescore360.com

View your latest Credit Scores from All 3 bureaus in 60 seconds for \$0!



[Home](#) | [Times topics](#) |

[Member Center](#)

[Copyright 2014](#) [The New York Times Company](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Help](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Work for Us](#) | [Site Map](#) |

[Index by Keyword](#)