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US corporations and tourism were flourishing-go figure). We didn't help him then, he found an ally in the Soviet Union, and the US has enforced strict sanctions ever since, with devastating consequences for the country's economy.

But, as mentioned earlier the Cold War is over and as a result, the United States is the wealthiest and most powerful nation in the world. But as recent events have so clearly demonstrated, once again, we are not infallible. We are quick to try to solve the rest of the world's problems, but extremely slow to deal with our own, and even slower to admit when we were wrong. The simple fact of the matter is that thousands of people are without shelter, food, and adequate medical attention. This is certainly no time for an ego trip on the basis of an antiquated ideological rivalry. Castro has offered help, not only is his team of doctors in close proximity to the region, but they have the necessary language skills, and have plenty of experience in disaster relief (many went to Southeast Asia after the tsunami). There is no acceptable reason for us not to accept Cuba's aid.

Of course, there is the ever-present threat to national security. Perhaps Castro is in cahoots with some terrorist organization planning an attack on the US once they are admitted into our borders.

But that seems highly unlikely.

The ubiquitous threat of terrorism is the reason that we are in this mess in the first place. In the wake of 9/11, if the powers that be had not decided to cut funding for FEMA, placing it under the newly-created Dept. of Homeland Security, perhaps we could afford to be extra picky with our aid.

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from VISION 2020 page 1

providing adequate parking, among other things.

If Wilmington's rate of growth increases or stays consistent, the city could be well on its way to becoming another east-coast metropolis. With the implementation of the Vision 2020 Plan, downtown would be improved, and also prepared for this type of population growth. Attractive downtown residency also provides an appealing alternative for people who are uninterested in the suburban housing that continues to pop up across the United States. Attention to additional housing downtown is enough to help accommodate a growing population, but other areas that the plan is focused on would not only help ease midtown and suburban sprawl, but also make Wilmington a more cosmopolitan city. Wilmington already has a thriving arts culture, the city is popular with the film industry, and there are several visual art galleries in town. Many restaurants and bars downtown showcase local artwork as well. A more accessible and functional downtown could stimulate the city's art scene, promote diversity, and give tourists, students, and residents more reason to frequent the area.

Vision 2020 could also generate negative effects in the community during its developmental phases, especially with regard to traffic congestion. The plan would call for new

construction, roadwork and renovation, which could make the city's increasing traffic dilemma even more problematic. Road construction is now in progress to help take pressure off of some of Wilmington's busiest streets, however, population increases and other construction projects can have a negative effect on Wilmington traffic. Once completed though, Vision 2020 should actually improve the circulation of traffic downtown. "The Vision 2020 Plan provides a clear roadmap to the development and redevelopment of our downtown area. Although this is designed to be a guide rather than policy, it does give us a vision to follow as we enjoy the increased vitality of downtown Wilmington," Wilmington Mayor Spence Broadhurst said.

An exciting, safe, and livable downtown area is essential for the existence of a large city. Whether residents like it or not, Wilmington is in fact growing at a significant rate and Vision 2020 aims to improve all aspects of downtown Wilmington. Those that have lived in Wilmington for years will appreciate the transformation of downtown and new residents and tourists will discover what they have been missing for so long. 2020 is only 15 years away, but as time has shown us, a lot can happen to a city within 15 years, and Vision 2020 will insure that the majority of Wilmington's happenings will be positive and welcomed.


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