



Dear Members,

I hope you are all well and healthy.

I am honored to embark on this new role of leading the U.S.-Cuba Business Council (USCBC). I joined the Brazil-U.S. Business Council of the U.S. Chamber in 2011 after more than a decade of practicing trade law. I am excited for the opportunity of working for the USCBC.

As I write my first note as the Executive Director of the USCBC, I ponder about the resignation of Raul Castro from the Communist Party leadership last Friday and the position of the new U.S. administration towards the bilateral relationship. With these two new dynamics in place, 2021 should be an interesting year for U.S.-Cuba relations and may present opportunities to advance the USCBC policy agenda.

Members' engagement is key to the success of any bilateral business council, so please do not hesitate to reach out to me for company updates, guidance or new ideas for the USCBC. I will be happy to schedule a virtual chat or meet you in person when it is safe for all of us.

My sincere appreciation to Neil Herrington for this opportunity and to my colleague Kendra Gaither for her valuable help with the transition. I know Kendra will be an extraordinary addition to the USCC Africa team, and I wish her best of luck on her new role.

Warm regards,

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Key Alerts

- **Raul Castro step down as the head of the party during the VIII Congress of the Communist Party** on April 16, opening a new post-Castro era in Cuba. Raul Castro noted in his speech that his country was willing to "develop a respectful dialogue" and "build a new type of relationship" with the United States." Raul Castro's speech in Spanish can be found [here](#).

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- **Press Secretary Jen Psaki conveyed the consistent message so far about the Biden administration position on Cuba relations:**

MS. PSAKI: Well, broadly speaking, our policy, as it relates to Cuba, is going to be governed by two principles. Support for democracy and human rights will be at the core of our efforts, through empowering and — empowering the Cuban people to determine their own future. And second, our belief that Americans, especially Cuban Americans, are the best ambassadors for freedom and prosperity. A Cuba policy shift or additional steps is currently not among the President's top foreign policy priorities. But it is an issue, of course, we will remain engaged in and focused on. ([WH Press Briefing of April 16, 2021](#))

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- **On May 15, President Biden will inform Congress of a new list of countries not fully cooperating with the US antiterrorism efforts** based on [Section 40A of the Arms Export Control Act](#). It will be one of the first official statements of the new U.S. administration on Cuba. The country was removed from the list in 2015 during the Obama administration but added back to list in May 2020.

U.S. Government Stakeholders

Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC)

[Subscribe to OFAC's list of Specially Designated Nationals \(SDN\) and Blocked Persons](#)

USDA

[USDA is Accepting Applications](#) for FY 2021 Market Access Program (MAP) and Foreign Market Development Program (FMD) – [Cuba is an eligible country](#). Applications are due June 26, 2021. More information can be found [here](#).

Cuba Related Federal Register Notices

[Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Cuba and of the Emergency Authority Relating to the Regulation of the Anchorage and Movement of Vessels](#) | (Feb. 2021)

[Updating the State Department's List of Entities and Subentities Associated With Cuba \(Cuba Restricted List\) Updated Publication of List of Entities and Subentities; Notice](#) | (Jan 2021)

What We're Reading

- [Raul Castro has stepped down. What is next for Cuba?](#) | (NPR, Apr. 18)
- [The end of an era in Cuba](#) | (CNN (video), Apr. 18)
- [Raul Castro steps down as Cuba Communist Party leader](#) | (BBC, Apr.17)
- [Who is the New Minister of Agriculture in Cuba?](#) | (Escambray, Apr 14)
- [Cuba loosens regulations on killing cows and selling beef](#) | (WHBL, Apr 14)
- [Cuba confirms 959 Covid-19 cases and 11 deaths](#) | (Prensa Latina, Apr 14)
- [Cuba to enter post-Castro era at pivotal 2021 party congress](#) | (WHBL, Apr 13)
- [«Joe Biden no es Barack Obama en la política hacia Cuba» dice funcionario de EE.UU.](#) | (CNN Español, Apr 8)
- [Biden under pressure to spell out Cuba policy](#) | (The Hill, Mar 28)

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