



Dear Members,

Like you, all of us at the U.S.-Cuba Business Council have been closely monitoring the protests in Cuba this week, as well as the reactions from U.S. government stakeholders. We continue to press the Biden Administration to consider measures to promote bilateral engagement that, if adopted, would aid in reducing the suffering of ordinary Cubans.

For instance, on July 1, the U.S.-Cuba Business Council and its members met with the U.S. Department of State team, led by [Emily Mendrala](#), Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs covering Cuba and regional migration. We presented the priorities outlined in the U.S.-Cuba Business Council's [policy recommendation document](#) and requested that they be considered during the ongoing policy review conducted by the U.S. Department of State. We thank all of you who were able to participate in the meeting.

As you well know, a core pillar of the U.S.-Cuba Business Council is to empower the Cuban people. We hope that the latest developments create momentum for change in U.S.-Cuba relations to the benefit of Cuban and U.S. citizens.

Best regards,

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Key Alerts

- On July 11, thousands of Cubans in Havana and Santiago de Cuba [protested](#) against the Cuban government. The protests were the largest in decades and believed to be spurred by the worsening economic and health crisis on the island. Read U.S. and Cuban Government officials' reactions to the protests below.
- U.S. Secretary of State [Antony J. Blinken](#): "The Biden-Harris administration stands by the Cuban people and people around the world who demand their human rights and who expect governments to listen to and serve them rather than try to silence them. Peaceful protesters are not criminals, and we join partners across the hemisphere and around the world in urging the Cuban regime to respect the rights of the Cuban people to determine their own future, something they have been denied for far too long."
- U.S. Department of State Spokesperson [Ned Price](#): "I certainly would not say that we are following [...] the policy of the previous administration. As you know, our Cuba policy is under review. But importantly—and I think this is a pivotal distinction—our policy [...] focuses on the wellbeing of the Cuban people, and at the center of that policy are democracy and our human rights. And what we are assessing in the context of that policy review is how the United States can best support the aspirations of the Cuban people."
- Florida Senator [Marco Rubio](#), as reported in *Newsweek*: "In a six-point letter sent to Biden and shared with *Newsweek*, Rubio demanded the president warn Cuba against using mass migration as a weapon, permit the U.S. to facilitate outside internet access across Cuba, instruct the State Department to engage Western allies for united condemnation of the Cuban government's actions, authorize sanctions on any Cubans deemed to be involved in acts of violence against protesters, communicate to Havana that Washington is prepared to provide COVID-19 vaccines and other humanitarian assistance, but only if it is distributed by independent organizations and, finally, that the administration 'issue a clear and unambiguous statement that the current U.S. policies towards the regime implemented by the Trump Administration will remain in place.'"
- Massachusetts Representative [James McGovern](#): "It's deeply disappointing that President Biden has failed to reverse Donald Trump's executive orders, which support an outdated Cold War strategy and an embargo that only adds to the suffering of ordinary Cubans. By perpetuating Trump's policies, the Biden Administration is failing to offer the Cuban people the type of hope that President Obama spoke about when he traveled to Havana. Hope that is rooted in a future that Cubans can choose for themselves as they build their own country. President Biden should use this moment to restore U.S. leadership in the region and immediately reverse Donald Trump's counterproductive and misguided policies."
- U.S. President [Joseph R. Biden](#): "The U.S. stands firmly with the people of Cuba as they assert their universal rights. And we call on the government of Cuba to refrain from violence in their attempt to silence the voices of the people of Cuba."
- Acting Assistant Secretary for U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs [Julie Chung](#): "Cuba's people continue to bravely express yearning for freedom in the face of repression. We call on Cuba's gov't to: Refrain from violence. Listen to their citizens' demands. Respect protestor & journalist rights. The Cuban people have waited long enough for iLibertad!"

- [U.S. Embassy in Cuba](#): "The United States supports all Cuban people, especially during this time. The right to be informed is vital for all free societies. We urge the Cuban government to restore all forms of connectivity."
 - Cuban President [Miguel Díaz-Canel](#): "All these processes that we have tried to overcome and confront, in the face of a policy of economic asphyxiation to provoke social unrest in the country, have cumulative effects. I believe the problems that we are experiencing have to do with those accumulative processes."
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- [White House Press Briefing by Press Secretary Jen Psaki](#) (July 12, 2021)
- [U.S. Department of State Press Briefing by Department Spokesperson Ned Price](#) (July 13, 2021)

U.S. Government Online Resources & News

- [OFAC Cuba Sanctions and Recent Actions](#)
- [BIS Cuba page](#)
- [State Department Travel Advisory – Cuba](#)
- [U.S. Embassy in Cuba](#)
- [CBP Cuba - Travel](#)
- [DOS Cuba Prohibited Accommodations List](#)

Cuban Government Online Resources & News

- [Washington's accusation in its report that Cuba engages in people trafficking is a lie \(gob.cu\)](#) (July 2021)

What We're Reading

- [Cuba Sees Biggest Protests for Decades as Pandemic Adds to Woes](#) (Reuters | July 12, 2021)
- [Cubans Denounce 'Misery' in Biggest Protests in Decades](#) (New York Times | July 11, 2021)
- [Demonstrators in Havana Protest Shortages, Rising Prices](#) (Associated Press | July 12, 2021)
- [Cuba's New Covid-19 Vaccine Finds Testing Ground in Venezuela](#) (Wall Street Journal | July 12, 2021)
- [Cuba Arrests Activists as Government Blames Unrest on U.S. Interference](#) (U.S. News & World Report | July 12, 2021)

- [As Cubans Protest, Government Cracks Down on Internet Access and Messaging Apps](#) (NBC News | July 13, 2021)

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