

---

U.S. Experts Push for Normalizing Relations with Cuba

09/10/2014



The complete prerogative of the U.S. administration to make such decisions was emphasized in a videoconference on the effects of the blockade on Cuba attended by experts from both Washington and Havana.

“The president of the United States can not only rescind many of the elements of the embargo with very few exceptions, but he could also normalize relations with Cuba in all areas,” said U.S. attorney Robert Muse.

In a panel discussion organized at the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, Muse said that U.S. policy toward the communist-ruled island is “abnormal” and there is nothing that would hinder a U.S. president from ending the embargo and normalizing relations, and so this would be simply a matter of “will.”

“The next U.S. president could be Hillary Clinton and recently she said that she favors the normalization of relations with Cuba,” commented Muse, and he went on to list the main steps in eliminating the current policy vis-a-vis Cuba.

The current extraterritorial application of the embargo, via sanctions on those who trade with the island, and the elimination of Cuba from the list of countries that sponsor terrorism, would head the list, he said.

Meanwhile, academic and president of the Cuban Research Group Phil Peters said that,

although a specific figure is not known, trade between the two countries would increase and Cuba could get started exporting tobacco and rum to the United States, along with “very qualified labor.”

“It would have an impact in the very short term,” said Peters, emphasizing that U.S. tourism to the island would grow by some 500,000 visitors quite quickly and there would be opportunities in the energy sector for U.S. companies.

In Havana, in a simultaneously-held panel at the foreign ministry headquarters, Cuban researchers Andres Zaldivar and Jonathan Queiros noted that over the past two decades a system of laws had intensified the effects of the embargo via fines and extraterritorial actions.

On Oct. 28, Cuba once again will present its annual report on the effects of the embargo before the United Nations.

---