

Cuba-US: Now what?

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Two major events took place in the last two weeks. Cuba's interest section and future embassy in US soil could finally open a bank account after receiving the OK from the US Treasury Department. On top of that, Cuba has been removed from the terrorist list. There is no right for a country to unilaterally elaborate such a list. Indeed, there was never a moral or legal reason to include Havana in such group of nations.

Almost all economic measures aiming at harming countries labeled as terrorists are also present in most of the regulations that define the US economic, media, commercial, and financial blockade against the island. Moreover, there are also laws that support economically the scraggy and discredited, but greedy domestic and foreign counter-revolution.

Therefore, even though Cuba's removal from that list demonstrates Washington's goodwill, it must be assessed from the moral perspective. Certainly, we should not omit the positive psychological impact on travel agencies and airlines and shipping lines, which were afraid of establishing links with Cuba because of the draconian fines imposed by the US to banks and entities with economic ties with the island.

The psychological aspect is so important that after announcing the restoration of relations the number of visitors from US, UK, France, Germany, and Spain to Cuba increased notably .

Highly significant, this new measure will provide Obama with the necessary executive authority to notify the US Congress the national interest of lifting the ban for Cuba with regards to

international bodies controlled by the US like the World Bank, IMF, and IDB. Actually, if it is a real fact that the Congress can invalidate the blockade, it is nonetheless true that the Executive has the advantage to use a pencil and sign.

In the last four months, some symbolic and not-so-symbolic events have taken place. Among them, the favorable official visit of an American delegation that reported on new measures to ease the blockade.

Similarly, the reinstatement of the ferry shuttle between Florida and Havana which had been suspended for years, the permission to a New Yorker hospital to carry out a clinical protocol to a Cuban vaccine against lung cancer, the visit of the Minnesota Symphonic Orchestra to Havana, the participation of American boats in the fishing tournament Ernest Hemingway, and the friendly match between the New York Cosmos and the Cuban national team are also clear examples of such ease.

As we see, slow advances take place in a process that president Raul Castro described as long and complex. The most important thing has yet to be solved: the lifting of the blockade. Not to mention old claims like the return of the Guantanamo Naval Base. Now both sides have to agree on the implementation of the Vienna Convention. And as we know, the US is prone to violate regulations and Cuba is reluctant to violate them.

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