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Cuba: A major change in the US policy of Cuba is crucial

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21/12/2015



Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez issue a statement on December 17, one year after the historic announcements by Presidents Raul Castro and Barack Obama and the return to Cuba of the five Cuban heroes who served unfair prison sentences in the United States.

In his statement the minister said that some advancement has been made in bilateral relations.

The reestablishment of diplomatic relations and the reopening of embassies in the two countries on July 20 were preceded by the withdrawal of Cuba from the US list of countries sponsors of terrorism.

Aside from the meetings of the two presidents and the two foreign ministers, other high-level visits have taken place, while the dialog between the two sides confirms the convenience for the two parties and for the region of expanding cooperation, the minister said.

Air and aviation security, maritime and air search and rescue, the fight on the traffic of narcotics, illegal migration, trafficking on persons and migratory fraud, are areas in which bilateral cooperation has been expanded.

New opportunities for common benefit are opening in environment protection, law enforcement, port and maritime security and health, the minister noted.

However he said, in the economic and commercial field scarce tangible results appear. The measures adopted by President Obama, though positive, have been limited in scope and have not allowed further advancement. In order to revert this trend, the US President should use his executive powers, expand the reach of the measures that he has already taken and adopt new ones.

Better than the announcement of a new policy, a major change in the US policy of Cuba is crucial, which does not discard the historic and legitimate claims of the Cuban people, the minister stressed.

In order to enjoy normal relations, the United States must unconditionally eliminate the economic, commercial and financial blockade of Cuba.

We cannot speak of normalization as long as the territory illegally occupied by the US naval base in Guantanamo is not returned to Cuba and other policies from the past are not eliminated, which harms Cuba's sovereignty.

The minister said that Cuba has reiterated its willingness to keep advancing towards the improvement of relations and the expansion of cooperation in issues of mutual interest.

There are and there will be differences in many areas, but responsible coexistence on the basis of respect and equality is necessary to build a different relationship in the benefit of the two nations and their people. This will be the best contribution for current and future generations of Cubans and Americans and for the whole region, the minister concluded.

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