Cuban embargo unlikely to end on Obama’s watch

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President Obama may not have enough time remaining in his term to end the U.S. embargo against Cuba despite his executive orders ending the U.S. policy of isolating the island nation.

Diplomatic relations have been restored, trade and travel between the two countries have increased, and a bilateral pact on oil-spill cleanups is pending.

But the Obama policy of engagement may prove fleeting unless Congress lifts the longstanding embargo. The new U.S. relationship with Cuba is based on presidential executive orders that Obama’s successor can reverse.

However, Congress cannot consider ending the embargo unless the Castro brothers are no longer running Cuba and U.S.-certified claims against the Cuban government for nationalizing American-owned businesses and properties in the 1960s.

Fidel Castro resigned his post as president of Cuba in 2008, and his successor and brother Raul Castro has said he will resign by February 2018.

Settling U.S. claims against Cuba could take much longer, and with less than 250 days remaining in the Obama presidency, his administration may not have time to negotiate a U.S. claims settlement and further normalize relations with Cuba.