

January 19, 2015  
**The Honorable Barack Obama**  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

# OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT OBAMA: SUPPORT FOR A NEW COURSE ON CUBA

Dear Mr. President,

**W**e write to commend you on the historic actions you are taking to update America's policy toward Cuba and Cuban citizens. Our new posture of engagement will advance our national interests and our values by empowering the Cuban people's capacity to work toward a more democratic and prosperous country—conditions that are very much in the U.S. interests. Many of the signers of this letter wrote to you last year calling for exactly these types of changes. We appreciate that you not only recognized that the moment had come to act but did so boldly.

Both that original letter and this one are examples of the broad support these changes have from across the political spectrum. We may disagree on a number of issues, but we've found common ground for a simple reason; our fifty-four-year-old approach intended to promote human rights and democracy in Cuba has failed.

It has also been clear that the reforms you announced in 2009 have helped to build the foundation for positive change by helping Cuban-Americans reunite with and better support their families on the island. The free flow of information, improved communications, expanded remittances and commerce, and support for Cuban civil society have also helped the Cuban people take greater ownership of their own lives. Access to the Internet and modern communications tools in today's world have become basic rights, because they are paramount to socioeconomic freedom and mobility.

Accordingly, we are encouraged by your declaration that the U.S. Government will continue to call on Havana to respect the human rights of the Cuban people. We applaud your guarantees that the UN Special Rapporteur for Torture and the International Red Cross will travel to the island. Your clear support for facilitating people-to-people engagement affirms the enduring belief that the American people are the best ambassadors of our values. We hope future efforts by the Administration will be matched by quick adoption of streamlined regulations that fulfill your intent and we will continue to monitor those developments.

Bringing Alan Gross home to his loved ones was an indisputable testament to the power of principled diplomatic engagement. That same creativity in the face of seemingly insurmountable challenges must be brought to the human rights arena, where recent experience shows the importance of transparent and principled approaches.

The Summit of the Americas presents one such opportunity. America should never shy away from defending and promoting our values, and your decision to attend the gathering in Panama was the correct one. After several decades in which democracy and the rule of law have been strengthened throughout the hemisphere, the United States must continue to lead and challenge our partners to ensure that this region remains a beacon for human rights in the world.

Mr. President, we also call on you to work with Congress to update the legislative framework with regard to Cuba so that it, too, reflects 21st century realities. In the meantime, we look forward to continued progress in improving U.S.-Cuban cooperation on matters of national interest and stand ready to support this new policy of constructive engagement and U.S. outreach to the Cuban people.

Respectfully,

**John Adams**, Brigadier General, U.S. Army (Retired); former Deputy U.S. Military Representative to NATO; former Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence, U.S. Army

**Gustavo Arnavat**, former U.S. Executive Director at the Inter-American Development Bank

**Joe Arriola**, former Manager, City of Miami, Florida

**Ricky Arriola**, CEO, Inktel

**Bruce Babbitt**, former Governor of Arizona; former U.S. Secretary of the Interior

**Harriet Babbitt**, former U.S. Ambassador to the Organization of American States

**Samuel R. Berger**, Chair, Albright Stonebridge Group, National Security Advisor (1997-2000)

**Tomas Bilbao**, Executive Director, Cuba Study Group

**Carol Browner**, former EPA Administrator; former Director of White House Office of Climate Change and Energy Policy

**Paul L. Cejas**, former U.S. Ambassador and Chairman, PLC Investments, Inc.

**Gustavo Cisneros**, Chairman, Cisneros Group of Companies

**Jon Cowan**, President, Third Way

**Chet Culver**, former Governor of Iowa

**Jeffrey Davidow**, former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for the Western Hemisphere

**Howard Dean**, former Governor of Vermont

**Larry Diamond**, Director, Center on Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law, Stanford University

**Tom Downey**, former U.S. Congressman

**Anita Dunn**, Managing Director, SKDKnickerbocker Communications

**Alfonso Fanjul**, Fanjul Group

**Andres Fanjul**, Fanjul Group

**Christopher Findlater**

**Richard Feinberg**, former Latin American Advisor to the White House; Professor, University of California, San Diego

**Mike Fernandez**, Chairman, MBF Healthcare Partners

**The Right Reverend Leo Frade**, Episcopal Bishop of Southeast Florida

**Pedro A. Freyre**, Partner, Akerman LLP

**Francis Fukuyama**, Olivier Nomellini Senior Fellow, Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, Stanford University

**Joe Garcia**, former U.S. Congressman; former Executive Director, Cuban-American National Foundation

**Maria Garcia Berry**, CEO, CRL Associates, Inc.

**Tim Gill**, Founder and Chairman, Gill Foundation

**Dan Glickman**, former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture; former U.S. Congressman

**Felice Gorordo**, CEO, Clear Path

**Lee Hamilton**, former U.S. House Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

**David Hernandez**, Co-Founder and CEO, Liberty Power

**Ricardo Herrero**, Executive Director, #CubaNow

**Vicki Huddleston**, former U.S. Ambassador and Chief of the U.S. Interests Section, Havana

**Peter J. Johnson**, Associate to David Rockefeller

**James R. Jones**, Chairman, ManattJones Global Strategies

**Wendy W. Luers**, President, The Foundation for a Civil Society

**Thomas F. "Mack" McLarty III**, Chairman, McLarty Associates

**Sascha Meinrath**, Founder, Open Technology Institute at New America

**Eduardo Mestre**, Senior Advisor at Evercore; Board member of Aovis Budget and Comcast Corporation

**Scott Miller**, Board Member, Gill Foundation

**Luis Miranda**, former White House Director of Hispanic Media; Managing Director, MDC Strategies

**Marcelino Miyares**, President, MM Communications Inc.

**Frank Mora**, Director of the Latin American and Caribbean Center, Florida International University

**Moisés Naím**, Distinguished Fellow, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

**Michael Parmly**, former Chief of the U.S. Interests Section, Havana

**Ralph Patino**, Civil Trial Attorney; Futuro Fund Board Member

**Ted Piccone**, Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution

**Thomas Pickering**, former U.S. Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs

**Bill Reinsch**, President, National Foreign Trade Council

**Cecile Richards**

**Bill Richardson**, former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations; former Governor of New Mexico

**Bill Ritter**, former Governor of Colorado

**David Rockefeller**, Honorary Chairman, Americas Society/Council of the Americas

**Hilary Rosen**, Managing Director, SKDKnickerbocker Communications

**Christopher Sabatini**, former Editor-in-Chief, Americas Quarterly; Adjunct Professor, Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs

**Carlos Saladrigas**, Chairman of Regis HR Group and Concordia Behavioral Health; Chairman of the Cuba Study Group; member of the board of Duke Energy Corporation and Advance Auto Parts, Inc.

**Ken Salazar**, former U.S. Secretary of the Interior; former U.S. Senator; former Colorado Attorney General

**Francisco "Frank" Sanchez**, former U.S. Under Secretary of Commerce

**George P. Shultz**, Fellow, Hoover Institution; former U.S. Secretary of State, Treasury and Labor; former Director, Office of Budget & Management; former CEO, Bechtel

**Susan Segal**, President and CEO, Americas Society/Council of the Americas

**Hilda L. Solis**, former U.S. Secretary of Labor; former Congresswoman; member of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors

**Enrique Sosa**, former President, Dow Chemical North America

**Admiral James Stavridis**, USN (Ret); Dean, The Fletcher School, Tufts University; Supreme Allied Commander, NATO (2009-2013); Commander, U.S. Southern Command (2006-2009)

**Sarah Stephens**, Executive Director, Center for Democracy in the Americas

**Alan Stoga**, President, Zemi Communications, LLC; Vice Chairman, Americas Society/Council of the Americas

**Ted Strickland**, former Governor of Ohio

**Strobe Talbott**, former U.S. Deputy Secretary of State

**Neera Tanden**, President, Center for American Progress

**Ted Trimpa**, Principal and CEO, Trimpa Group

**Raul Valdes-Fauli**, Partner, Fox Rothchild; former Mayor, City of Coral Gables, Florida

**Arturo Valenzuela**, former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs

**Melanne Verveer**, former U.S. Ambassador for Global Women's Issues

**Bill Vidal**, former Mayor of Denver, Colorado

**Alexander Watson**, former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs

**James Williams**, Director of Public Policy, Trimpa Group; Board Member, Project on Middle East Democracy

**Timothy Wirth**, former U.S. Senator; Vice-Chair, The UN Foundation

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The above signatories have signed this letter in their personal capacities; they do not reflect the views of their company, organization or university, current or past.