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## *Timeline*

- December 17, 2014** President Obama announces the beginning of normalization of relations with Cuba. The announcement mentions plans to ease travel and financial restrictions on Cuba over the following months.
- January 16, 2015** Department of Commerce and Treasury announce first round of regulatory changes to Cuba sanctions, implementing changes that Obama announced on December.
- January 20-24, 2015** First round of diplomatic conversations between the United States and Cuba. Roberta Jacobson, Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs, travels to Havana to meet with Cuban officials
- February 27, 2015** Second round of diplomatic talks. Josefina Vidal, General Director of Cuba's U.S. Division in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, travels to Washington, D.C.
- March 31, 2015** First formal conversation on human rights between Cuba and the United States.
- April 11, 2015** Presidents Obama and Castro meet and have a face-to-face conversation for the first time at the Summit of the Americas in Panama.
- April 15, 2015** President Obama indicates the Administration's intent to rescind Cuba's State Sponsor of Terrorism designation.
- May 21, 2015** Third round of diplomatic conversations takes place in Washington, D.C.
- May 29, 2015** U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry officially removes Cuba from the State Department's state sponsors of terrorism list.
- July 1, 2015** President Obama announces that the U.S. and Cuba will reopen their embassies almost 55 years after they first closed.
- July 20, 2015** The Cuban embassy officially opens and holds flag-raising ceremony in Washington, D.C.
- July 23, 2015** The Senate Appropriations Committee approves three amendments that would end restrictions on travel to Cuba, allow private financing for agricultural sales to Cuba, and lift restrictions on ships docking on Cuban ports.
- August 14, 2015** The American embassy officially opens in Havana.  
John Kerry presides over the flag-raising ceremony. He is the first U.S. Secretary

of State to visit Cuba in almost 70 years.

John Kerry and Cuba Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez announce the creation of the Cuba-U.S. Steering Committee, which aims to discuss opportunities for cooperation between the U.S. and Cuba on issues including direct mail service, human rights, environmental protection, and human trafficking.

**September 11, 2015** Cuba-U.S. Steering Committee holds first meeting in Havana.

**September 18, 2015** U.S. Departments of Treasury and Commerce announce a second round of regulatory changes. The changes allow the expansion of telecommunication opportunities in Cuba and allow certain American businesses to establish offices and bank accounts on the island. Cuban businesses and residents are now able to set up offices and bank accounts in the United States, as well.

**September 29, 2015** Presidents Obama and Castro meet on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly. For the first time in more than 60 years, a U.S. president meets with a Cuban president on U.S. soil.

**October 6, 2015** U.S. Secretary of Commerce Pritzker makes official trip to Cuba. He becomes the second U.S. cabinet official to visit the island since 1959.

**October 14, 2015** Nine U.S. state governors sign onto bipartisan letter supporting the end of the embargo on Cuba.

**October 27, 2015** Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas visits Cuba to discuss security and trade issues with Cuban government officials.

**November 6, 2015** Cuba-U.S. Steering Committee holds second meeting in Washington, D.C.

**November 18, 2015** Cuba and the United States sign historic environmental pact to protect nearby fish and marine life living off the coasts of both countries and to allow American and Cuban scientists to collaborate on research.

This is the first accord between the two countries since the beginning of the normalization process.

**November 19, 2015** U.S. debit cards become available to use in Cuba.

**December 8, 2015** The United States and Cuba hold the first round of discussions on mutual property claims.

**December 11, 2015** The U.S. State Department and Cuban officials agree to establish a pilot program to provide direct mail flights between the United States and Cuba.

**December 16, 2015** The U.S. House of Representatives forms the bipartisan Cuba Working Group.

**December 17, 2015** Cuba and the United States announce the start of commercial flights between both countries. U.S. airlines will now be able to negotiate with the Cuban

government to plan routes to the island.

- December 18, 2015** U.S. government appropriations funding bill passes with bipartisan support and without restrictions on U.S.-Cuba policy.
- January 26, 2016** U.S. Departments of Treasury and Commerce announce a third round of regulatory changes. The new measures make it easier for U.S. companies to film movies, finance exports and do business with Cuba on public infrastructure projects.
- March 15, 2016** U.S. Departments of Treasury and Commerce announce a fourth round of regulatory changes. “People-to-people” travel can be carried out on an individual basis, authorized financial transactions are expanded, and Cuban nationals can open U.S. bank accounts.
- First direct mail service between the U.S. and Cuba starts.
- March 20-22, 2016** The President Obama and his family visit Cuba. A bipartisan congressional delegation and American business leaders accompany President Obama.
- Presidents Obama and Castro hold joint press conference.
- President Obama meets with Cuban dissidents, civil society organizations, and local entrepreneurs.
- President Obama delivers a speech at the National Theater in Havana, which is broadcast on national Cuban television and radio.
- May 2, 2016** Carnival Cruise Line’s Adonia ship is the first cruise to dock in Cuba in nearly 40 years.
- May 16, 2016** Fourth round of official diplomatic discussions takes place in Havana.
- June 10, 2016** The U.S. Department of Transportation authorizes six U.S. airlines to schedule roundtrip flights from the U.S. to Cuba.
- June 13, 2016** The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Cuban government sign a memorandum of understanding to encourage cooperation on health matters. HHS Secretary Sylvia Mathews Burwell and Cuban Minister of Public Health Roberto Morales Ojeda meet in Washington, D.C. and agree to work together on global health issues, including infectious diseases like Zika, and the medical challenges that come with aging populations.
- June 16, 2016** U.S. Senate Financial Services Committee approves four Cuba-related amendments regarding U.S. travel to Cuba, the extension of credit to Cuba for agricultural goods, U.S. telecommunications companies in Cuba, and transport regulations.
- June 20, 2016** U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Chief Maria Contreras-Sweet meets

with Cuban Foreign Trade and Investment Minister Rodrigo Malmierca and other deputy ministers in Havana.

**July 7, 2016**

The U.S. Department of Transportation awards eight airlines flight routes to Havana, giving 10 U.S. airports at least one weekly non-stop flight to the Cuban capital.

**July 13, 2016**

The U.S. State Department and the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs holds third round of regulatory dialogue in Havana.

**July 28, 2016**

The United States and Cuba hold the second round of discussions on mutual property claims.

**August 31, 2016**

The first U.S. passenger flight to Cuba in over 50 years lands in Santa Clara. Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx is among the passengers on board JetBlue Airways Flight 387.

**September 12, 2016**

The United States and Cuba hold the inaugural Economic Dialogue in Washington, D.C. Both delegations discuss trade and investment, labor and employment, renewable energy and energy efficiency, small businesses, intellectual property rights, economic policy, regulatory and banking matters, and telecommunications and internet access.

**September 14, 2016**

Florida International University releases poll of Miami-based Cuban-Americans showing strong support for normalizing U.S. relations with Cuba.

**September 30, 2016**

The United States and Cuba hold the fourth Bilateral Commission in Washington, D.C. General Director of Cuba's U.S. Division in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Josefina Vidal and the Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs Mari Carmen Aponte chair each country's respective delegation.

**October 7, 2016**

Second Lady of the United States Dr. Jill Biden travels to Havana, where she visits a teachers' college and tours the city's historic parts.

**October 14, 2016**

The administration announces a new set of amendments to the Cuban Assets Control Regulations (CACR) and Export Administration Regulations (EAR). Notably, the new policies allow for joint medical research between U.S. and Cuban nationals, U.S. clinical trials and sales of pharmaceuticals developed in Cuba, and the importation of Cuban merchandise for personal use.

**October 20, 2016**

US Health and Human Services Secretary Sylvia Burwell visits Cuba for meetings regarding infectious and non-communicable diseases. There, the two countries signed a MOU on cancer research.

- November 17, 2016** West Virginia Governor Earl Ray Tomblin and the state's Department of Commerce Secretary visit Cuba.
- December 6, 2016** After the death of Fidel Castro and the election of Donald Trump, the U.S. and Cuba hold the fifth bilateral commission in Havana. The talks are continued the following week in DC, where the two sides reportedly "draw up a roadmap for deepening their détente."
- December 8, 2016** Three major U.S. cruise lines, Pearl Seas Cruises, Norwegian Cruise Line, and Royal Caribbean Cruises, receive approval to sail to Cuba beginning in spring of 2017.
- December 12, 2016** The Cuban government and Google sign an agreement allowing the internet giant to provide faster access for Cubans to its data on the island. The deal will make services like YouTube and Gmail 10 times faster for Cuban users, significantly increasing speeds for one of the slowest internet systems in the world.
- January 12, 2017** President Obama ends the controversial "wet foot, dry foot" policy that granted residency to Cubans who arrive in the U.S. without visas. The policy had long been a source of grievance for the Cuban government, who saw the policy as encouraging Cubans to leave the island in an unsafe manner. The Cuban government issued a statement calling the policy change "an important step in the advance of bilateral relations" that will guarantee "regular, safe, and orderly migration."
- January 17, 2017** U.S. State Department and Cuba sign a memorandum of understanding on law enforcement cooperation. The agreement outlines cooperation on security and criminal-related issues like terrorism, narcotics, money laundering, smuggling, and immigration.

\*Some of the information above was drawn from a similar document produced by [Engage Cuba](#).