

A New Era in U.S. – Cuba Relations?



What Obama Can Still Do

On December 17, 2014, President Barack Obama announced the United States would finally end its “outdated... failed,” policy on Cuba. Cuban President Raúl Castro reiterated his country’s “willingness to discuss and solve our differences without renouncing any of our principles.” Their historic words generated a wave of optimism on both sides of the Straits of Florida that fundamental change would soon occur in relations between the two countries.

There have been some positive, significant, but largely symbolic changes: the United States rightly removed Cuba from the State Department’s list of state sponsors of terrorism, the two countries re-established diplomatic relations and re-opened embassies in each other’s capitals. And President Obama has unilaterally eased some travel and financial restrictions.

But much more remains to be accomplished before there can truly be normal relations between the two countries. Most of those changes will need to be made by the United States. Why?