

President Raul Castro Says Cuba Ready to Talk with U.S. Based on Mutual Respect



Havana, July 15 (RHC)-- Cuban President Raul Castro addressed the closing plenary session of the National Assembly of People's Power on Friday, emphasizing that Cuba is ready to continue negotiating bilateral issues with the United States, but only based on mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and independence.

The Cuban leader said: "Cuba and the United States can cooperate and coexist by respecting their differences and promoting everything that benefits their peoples." He referred to the change of Washington's policy towards Cuba -- announced by U.S. President Donald Trump on June 16th -- as a "setback in bilateral relations."

Raul Castro said that Trump's decisions ignored large sectors of the U.S. and even a majority of Cuban-Americans in support of lifting the blockade and normalizing bilateral ties, and merely satisfied a small group in Florida.

And the Cuban president recalled the previous U.S. administration of Barack Obama, which restored the diplomatic ties with Havana and made progress on issues

of mutual interest "on the basis of bilateral respect." Addressing members of parliament who gathered for an ordinary session of the National Assembly at Havana's Convention Center, Raul said: "We demonstrated that it is possible to live in a civilized way despite our profound differences."

"We reject the manipulation of the human rights issues over Cuba. Our country has many achievements to be proud of, and we do not need to take lessons from the U.S. or anybody else," said the Cuban leader, affirming that any strategy aimed at destroying the Cuban Revolution is doomed to fail. And Raul Castro made it clear, saying that "Cuba will not make concessions concerning its sovereignty and independence, nor negotiate its principles."

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