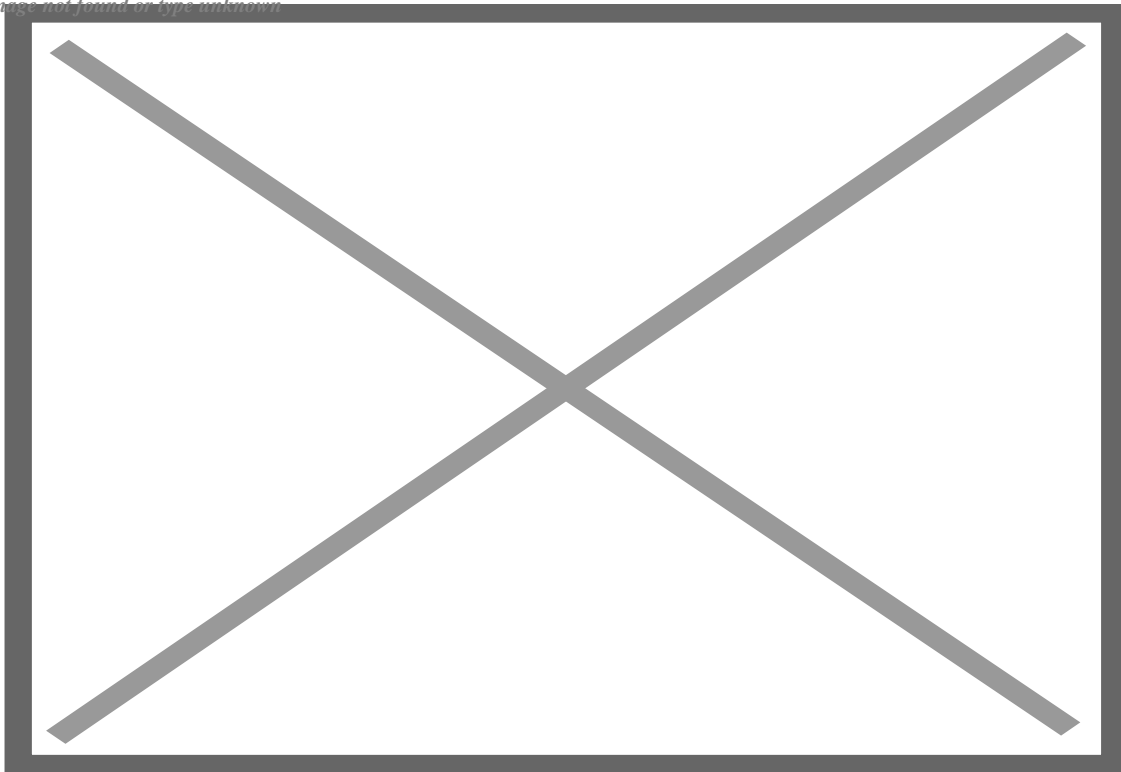


Cuban diplomat insists baseball players are discriminated against

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Cuban diplomat Miguel Fraga
Photo: Roberto Morejon

Havana, January 25 (RHC)-- Diplomat Miguel Manuel Fraga Gonzalez, an expert on U.S. affairs, recently addressed the discriminatory treatment of Cuban baseball players preparing for the 5th World Baseball Classic.

In an exclusive interview with the AP, Fraga recalled that in order to participate in the event, it was not enough for the Cuban team to qualify, but the organizers had to obtain a license from the U.S. government, granted by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), which does not occur with any other team in attendance.

He also stressed that "in order for Cuban baseball players with U.S. residency, whether or not they belong to Major League Baseball (MLB), to be part of the Cuba team, the organizers had to obtain another permit

from the U.S. government, which is not the case with other players or teams. And he detailed that such license, as informed to the Cuban Baseball Federation (FCB), has limits".

Among these are that "players, MLB or not, cannot travel to Cuba to participate in any action related to the V Classic.

"That is why they cannot come to train or travel to Cuba after the event, not even if they win the championship. That does not happen to any other player or team," he denounced.

Fraga also explained that "all MLB circuit players, regardless of the country they play for, will only be able to join their teams on March 3. But in the case of Cuba, this also applies to non-MLB players with legal residence in the United States, who will only be allowed to join on March 3. This does not happen to any other player or team in that condition".

In summary, for the specialist of the General Directorate of the United States of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "the limitations imposed on Cuban baseball players and our baseball for their participation in the V Classic, by the U.S. government, are unfair and discriminatory. And nothing justifies them".

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