

*Wayne Smith, career U.S.  
diplomat and friend of Cuba, dies  
at 92*

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Havana, June 30 (RHC)-- Wayne Smith has died and his departure is regretted today by those who admired the career diplomat, who was the first head of the United States Interests Section in Cuba (1979-1982).

"With deep pain we say goodbye to Wayne S. Smith," Ambassador Lianys Torres, charge d'affaires of the Cuban embassy in Washington, DC, wrote on her account on the social network X. In her message, Torres highlighted that Smith "worked for most of his life for better and respectful relations between our two nations. "Sincere condolences to his daughter and his family."

The Alliance for the Commitment and Respect of Cuba (ACERE) also published on its own Internet platform its solidarity with the family of the senior American diplomat who died this Friday.

"For decades, Smith criticized the U.S. embargo (blockade) on Cuba and worked to normalize relations between the two countries," the group emphasized.

While the miracle of the archives offers this reporter the possibility of resuming a virtual interview that she did with Smith in 2008.

At that moment, when recreating the atmosphere, the journalist stressed: They say that on the walls of his office there were maps and photos of some Latin American countries, and an old board with a sign in Russian that said: "Hands off Cuba."

The interview highlighted his 25 years of service in the State Department (1957-1982), time during which he served, among other positions, as executive secretary of President John Kennedy's team for Latin America.

Wayne Smith alternated his classes at John Hopkins University in Baltimore with the International Policy Center in Washington at the end of his diplomatic life.

Smith advocated for the return to their homeland of the Five Cuban anti-terrorist fighters who served long sentences in U.S. federal prisons.

In his statements 16 years ago, he said that the decision in the case of The Five -- as they became known in the international campaign for their release -- "was simply wrong, and it seems that it was politically inspired. At some point, we hope, justice will be served," he said.

Throughout his career and in other public statements, Smith stated that the idea that, if the blockade "and a hostile environment were maintained, we could overthrow (Fidel) Castro's government was absurd."

In his opinion, "it was a delirium on the part of the United States and American leaders. "I began to feel ashamed that leaders could be so wrong." (Source: Prensa Latina)

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