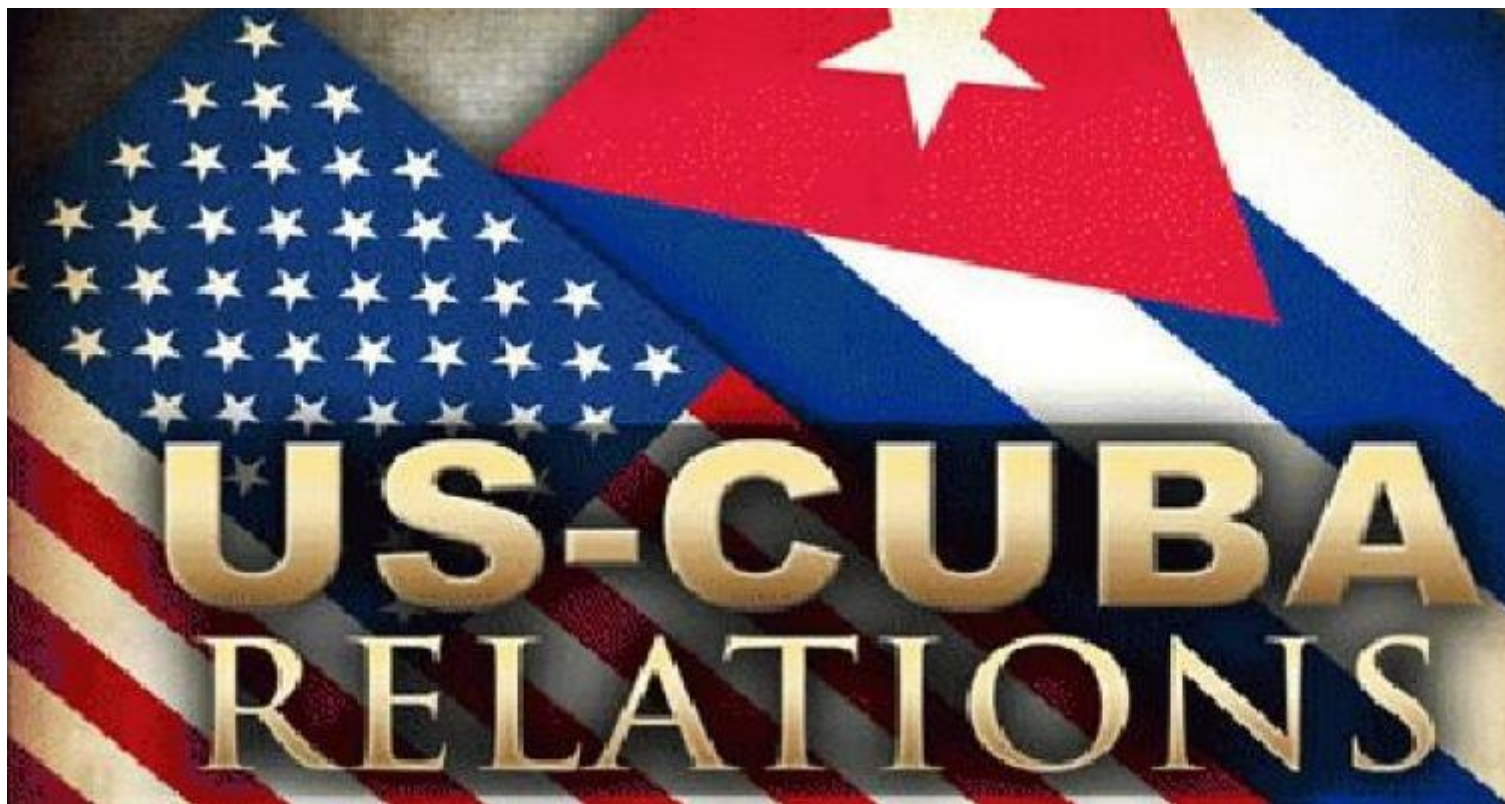


# *China welcomes normalization of Cuba-U.S. ties*

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BEIJING, April 13 (Xinhua) -- A Foreign Ministry spokesman said on Monday that China welcomes and supports the normalization of relationship between Cuba and the United States.

"The improvement of Cuba-U.S. relations is in the interests of the two countries and their peoples, which is also helpful for stability and development in the region," spokesman Hong Lei said at a daily news briefing.

"China always holds the view that the Cuban people's rights to choose their development path and to decide on their domestic affairs should be respected," Hong said.

The presidents of the U.S. and Cuba on Saturday held their first face-to-face talks in over half a century in Panama City on the sidelines of the Seventh Summit of the Americas, in which Cuba participated for the first time.

"We are happy to see the American countries developing their relationships on the basis of mutual respect, equality and non-interference in each other's internal affairs," Hong said, adding that China hopes the Summit of the Americas will continue playing a positive role.



**Radio Habana Cuba**