

U.S. Envoy to UN Visits Cuba's UN Mission



Washington, August 1 (RHC)-- Samantha Power made the first visit by an U.S. ambassador to the United Nations to Cuba's UN Mission in over a half-century on Friday.

U.S. Mission spokeswoman Hagar Chemali said Power discussed the normalization of relations between the two countries and priorities at the United Nations during her first-ever meeting with Cuba's UN Ambassador Rodolfo Reyes Rodriguez.

Cuba and the United States broke off diplomatic relations in 1961. After 54 years of hostilities, U.S. President Barack Obama and Cuban President Raul Castro announced on December 17th that they would negotiate a restoration of ties. That happened on July 20th when the two countries formally re-established diplomatic relations.

"President Obama reversed 50 years of policy on Cuba because he believed, as do I, that we can do more to support the Cuban people and promote our values through engagement," Power said in a statement. She added: "Isolation has not worked."

Power said ending that isolation whether by restoring diplomatic relations, Obama's first meeting with Raul Castro, Secretary of State John Kerry's upcoming visit to Havana, "or the simple act of going down the street to visit the Cuban UN ambassador for the first time in a half-century -- these are the measures

that open dialogue and give us the opportunity to stand up for our values, including human rights and human dignity."

She said this "will ultimately do more to help the Cuban people than the outdated policy of the past."

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