

# *The Long Road to Truly and Friendly Relations*

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Cuba and the United States have begun the long and complex road towards the normalization of relations with the creation of a joint commission that will select the specific issues to be discussed between both nations.

The decision to create this mechanism seems to be positive after the conclusion of the first stage of the reestablishment of relations, including the reopening of the respective embassies, in which both the agreements as well as the issues separating both sides came out in the open.

Even though Secretary of State John Kerry in his speech in Havana openly voiced the opinion of leaving behind the strategy of applying an illegal blockade to Cuba, he still resorted to the old habit of his country to give lessons on democracy and human rights.

The different interpretations of history, above all that developed

after 1959, also came out in the open, and will exert a negative weight on the links between the two nations.

Another source of friction is the attempt to condition demands on Cuba for the end of the illegal and immoral blockade of the Island, as suggested by right wing US legislators who reject the normalization of diplomatic links between the two countries.

Republican presidential hopeful Marco Rubio, a right wing Floridian,

has defiantly proclaimed that he will oppose the designation of a US Ambassador to Cuba.

Everything can be discussed as long as both sides maintain respect for each other. Secretary of State Kerry said so himself when he declared that after all, the future of Cuba depends on the Cubans themselves.

And he is right. To conduct changes in Cuba is something reserved for the Cubans themselves, without any foreign interference, as required by the nation's Constitutional Charter.

The US Secretary of State received a warm welcome in Old Havana and was also respectfully received during his tour of the city's famed Historic Center.

Kerry was received by people that want to see mutually respectful and civilized relations with the United States and the recognition of the respective options to reach agreements beneficial to both sides.

Next month, precisely, Cuba and the United States will begin negotiations on maritime security, climate change and environmental protection.

An agreement, already reached, calls for students at the Johns Hopkins University to attend classes in Cuba for one semester, and another one was signed by Cuban and Floridian aquariums on the conservation of coral beds.

Many more agreements will follow, no doubt, but all of them within a framework of mutual respect and benefit for both Cuba and the United States.

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