

# *Foreign Ministry Official Examines Prospects for Cuba-U.S. Relations in 2016*

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Havana, January 13 (RHC)-- The director for the U.S. at the Cuban Foreign Ministry, Josefina Vidal, said that bilateral links with Washington are expected to advance in 2016.

"But we have to be realistic," she noted, arguing that it is an electoral year in the U.S., and "we don't know what's going to happen."

In statements to the Cuban News Agency, Vidal said there is still a year ahead to keep advancing bilateral projects, but that politically speaking it is a year that will be shortened by the U.S. electoral campaign.

On the possibility for a setback of what has been achieved over the past year, Vidal was cautious. She said: "I have read with interest academics and even U.S. congress people, who categorically assert that the process cannot be turned back. I would not be that absolute; there are aspects that can be reversed."

Josefina Vidal said that she cannot imagine a new U.S. president, no matter who he or she might be, breaking relations with Cuba and closing their embassy in Havana. However, there are issues in which relations could undergo a setback, such as cooperation in some areas, and the instruments adopted

through Obama's executive actions.

The Cuban foreign ministry official said that as Obama takes steps in the commercial and economic areas, although not in full, he would be keeping the process from being reversible, because in the U.S., she said, businesses are crucial to the system.

Vidal also announced upcoming high-level meetings between the Cuban Health Ministry and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Resources to agree on bilateral cooperation.

Referring to areas for further bilateral advancement the Cuban foreign ministry official mentioned the accord for regular direct flights and improved postal service. And Josefina Vidal said Cuba and the U.S. will continue talks on compensation, a complex issue that will take time.

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