

# *U.S. Government Opposes Cuba's Participation in Summit of the Americas*

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Washington, September 5 (RHC) -- Not a surprise to anyone, the U.S. government has criticized Panama's decision to invite Cuba to participate in the 2015 Summit of the Americas, which the Central America country will host.

During a daily press briefing, U.S. State Department spokesperson Jen Psaki briefly discussed the possibility that Cuba could attend the summit, conditioning Cuba's attendance on "necessary political changes."

Earlier, Panama's Foreign Minister Isabel Saint Malo stated: "As the host nation, Panama owes itself to all the participating nations of the Summit and the regional wish is that Cuba should participate."

Although not yet formalized, the Panamanian foreign minister confirmed Cuba will be invited to the Summit of the Americas.

The Secretary General of the Organization of American States, sponsor of the summit, José Miguel Insulza, said that "there is no legal reason" to prevent Cuba from attending the Summit of the Americas in

2015, if the host decides to invite it, suggesting that the U.S. "try something else" after years of attempting to isolate Cuba.

For his part, former Panamanian President Martín Torrijos supported Havana's participation in the hemispheric meeting and said that this would be a "collective triumph" of the region. "Hopefully, the Panama Summit 2015 will prove that there can be unity in diversity, and both Cuba and the U.S. will attend," he said.

The Summit of the Americas is a gathering of hemispheric leaders that first started in 1994 and are held every three to four years. The most recent Summit was held in Colombia in 2012.

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