

White House Reportedly Pushing State Department to Review Cuba's Inclusion on Terror List



Washington, February 6 (RHC) -- The White House reportedly is pushing the U.S. State Department to expedite its review of whether to remove Cuba from its list of so-called state sponsors of terrorism in the hope of establishing a Havana embassy for the first time in over 50 years by April, according to Reuters news agency.

Cuba has repeatedly expressed its unfair inclusion on the terror list casts a dark shadow over ongoing talks to restore diplomatic ties and establish embassies. Two U.S. officials with knowledge of the review told Reuters that the process could take until June or longer.

However, the White House is anxious to fully re-establish diplomatic ties with Havana, including the re-opening of the embassy, by the Summit of the Americas, which is due to take place April 10th and 11th in Panama. The officials told Reuters that President Barack Obama is expected to meet Cuban President Raul Castro there for the first time since 2013.

A recent report by the State Department provided no grounds for Cuba's inclusion on

the list, and said it had no indication that the Cuban government provided weapons or paramilitary training to terror groups.

Cuba and the United States announced an agreement to normalize relations on December 17th. Officials from both countries are due to meet in Washington for a second round of talks by early March.

Reuters reports that removal of a country from the State Department's terror list would be finalized if Obama submits a report to Congress stating that its government has not supported terror-related activities for six months, and has given assurances that it will not do so in the future. That country would be automatically dropped from the list 45 days later.

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