

# *U.S. Embassy in Cuba Officially Reopens*

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Havana, August 14 (RHC) -- U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry officially reopened the U.S. embassy in Cuba more than 54 years after it was closed, saying his country welcomes the new relationship with Cuba.

The solemn ceremony Friday morning saw the raising of the U.S. flag at the Embassy, located on Havana's sea-side drive, the Malecon.

Speaking at the ceremony, Kerry said both nations will mutually benefit from restored relations, when their citizens are able to meet, exchange ideas, culture and do business as normal.

Likewise, the top U.S. diplomat said the United States and Cuba were certain that it was time to reach out to one another, as two peoples who are no longer enemies or rivals, but neighbors, who wish each other well.

Kerry came accompanied by an entourage of 20 US political figures, including the Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs Roberta Jacobson, Democratic Senator Patrick Leahy, and other members of Congress, federal agencies, selected Cuban-Americans, entrepreneurs and a large media contingent.

Later on Friday, John Kerry met with Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez to discuss the latest developments and the path ahead in the normalization of relations between Washington and Havana.

The U.S. secretary of state was also scheduled to meet with the Chief of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of the Swiss Confederation, Didier Burkhalter, currently in Cuba, and with the Archbishop of Havana, Cardinal Jaime Ortega Alamino.

John Kerry is the highest-ranking U.S. official to visit Cuba since the Franklin Roosevelt administration.

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