

# *Obama Avoids Blockade Issue When Defending Visit to Cuba*

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Washington, Feb 20 (Prensa Latina) US President Barack Obama today defended his upcoming visit to Cuba as another step towards the normalization of bilateral relations, although he did not refer to his country's blockade of Cuba.

In his traditional speech to the nation on Saturday, Obama expressed confidence that his stay in Havana "is the best way to advance American interests and values".

However, he limited to promote US interests, the strengthening of the "private sector" and more access to Internet, avoiding mentioning the economic, commercial and financial blockade that Washington has imposed on Cuba since 1962, despite world rejection.

"I'll speak candidly about our serious differences with the Cuban government, including on democracy and human rights," he noted.

"In both our countries, there's overwhelming support for this new relationship," he said. That relationship has been criticized by the most conservative wing of the Republican Party, especially the presidential hopefuls Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio.



**Radio Habana Cuba**