

TALKING POINTS

ALLIANCE FOR CUBA ENGAGEMENT AND RESPECT

CLARIFYING THE HYPE OF NOV. 15.

In response to questions and concerns, as well as misinformation, surrounding the protests planned for November 15, 2021, and overall continued incendiary rhetoric related to Cuba, here is additional context and background that may prove useful.

Role of the economic and humanitarian crisis facing Cubans in spurring frustration

- The organizers of the planned protest on November 15, 2021 have expressed their support for lifting the U.S. embargo against Cuba.
- While protests that emerged on July 11, 2021 were in direct response to widely shared frustration stemming from the economic and humanitarian crisis caused by the pandemic and U.S. sanctions - including widespread shortages of food and medicine that continue - the protest that was scheduled for November 15 would have occurred precisely as the country's pandemic landscape is shifting. Currently, over 70% of Cubans are fully vaccinated, and nearly 90% have received at least one vaccine shot.
- November 15 was a historic day for other reasons: it was the day announced months in advance when approximately 600,000 children across the country resumed in-person classes at school and when Cuba opened up to international travel again. The majority of Cuban society is more concerned about their country re-opening and resuming normal activities, like attending school, work and recreational life.

Role of the United States in supporting, orchestrating and helping coordinate the failed protest and related actions

- The main organizers of the November 15 protest received documented coordination, support, and possible financing by U.S. actors, citizens and organizations that receive U.S. taxpayer funding. The lead organizer met with the U.S. Ambassador in Havana ahead of the planned protest and acknowledged speaking with and/or coordinating with a foreign government (the United States).
- Organizers of the protest publicly acknowledged receiving support and guidance from U.S.-based or funded groups, including those with troubling histories of supporting, protecting and orchestrating violent and/or terrorist attacks against democratically elected governments and civilian populations and labeled as a terrorist threat by the U.S. government.
- A political action coordinated with, orchestrated or supported by a foreign government that encourages unlawful interventionism cannot be understood to be reflective of the genuine and sincere will of a people, but rather as a politically motivated operation.

Problematic double standard, sovereignty and legal considerations

- The permit to march that was solicited by the protest organizers was denied by Cuban officials due to the unconstitutionality of the stated reasons for the protest. The United States then threatened to further sanction Cuba if the Cuban government interfered - in its interpretation of its constitutional framework - interfered with citizens' ability to march, constituting an unlawful exercise of interference into the sovereign affairs of another country and highlighting hypocritical diplomacy.
- Threats of sanction against Cuba - yet again this year - constitute a violation of international law and undermines the exercise of the full range of human rights.
- President Biden has not only fully adopted the Trump sanctions, but has intensified them by adding more - including in the middle of an on-going global pandemic. The result is an enhanced embargo by President Biden that continues to impose and enforce unilateral sanctions and to exacerbate the economic impact of the pandemic on the Cuban people, while denouncing hunger and poverty in Cuba.
- The United Nations has specifically denounced the U.S. embargo on Cuba as ineffective, cruel and targeting civilian populations.
- The human rights framework recognizes that all rights have a limit, which is where the exercise of the right infringes upon the rights of another, as recognized in the Cuban constitution.