

The US and Cuba Begin Official Negotiations



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US-Cuba talks mirror negotiations held with Venezuela before the US invasion.

Details. Both Cuban and US officials have confirmed the start of negotiations.

► Although no final agreement has been publicly detailed, sources suggest that negotiations may involve limited easing of travel restrictions, adjustments to sanctions, and cooperation in key sectors such as ports, tourism, and energy, as well as migration and regional security, in exchange for political or economic concessions from Havana.

► Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel described the negotiations as “respect for the political systems of both countries, sovereignty and our government’s self-determination”. Conversely, Trump framed the talks in unilateral terms: “They have no money. They have no anything right now. But they’re talking to us, and maybe we’ll have a friendly takeover of Cuba.”

Context. These developments echo earlier US negotiations with Venezuela, where economic pressure and reported secret talks were followed by a direct US-led coup that installed a pro-US government and secured many of the natural resource concessions rumoured in the talks.

► Cuba’s private sector has grown over recent decades and outperformed state commerce in 2024. Strengthened by foreign trade, these capitalist elements are likely to increase pressure on Havana to negotiate with the US. Simultaneously, for a long time, Havana has been heavily dependent on trade with Russia and China to mitigate the impact of US sanctions.

► For Cuba, the talks follow an intensification of the US embargo, cutting the island off from energy imports and threatening tariffs on countries that sell to Cuba, resulting in widespread blackouts, fuel shortages, worsening food insecurity and some protests.