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<http://news.antiwar.com/2014/12/17/obama-us-re-establishing-relations-with-cuba/print/>

## Obama: US Re-Establishing Relations With Cuba

By Jason Ditz

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President Obama today announced his intentions to normalize diplomatic relations with Cuba, ending 53 years of hostilities, and planning to reopen the US Embassy in Havana soon.

The deal centers around a prisoner exchange, including USAID spy Alan Gross, and another, unnamed spy held for 20 years. The rapprochement will partially end the long-standing travel ban on Cuba.

Yet while the travel ban easing will allow people to travel to Cuba for government or business purposes, and also some family visits, the US will continue to ban all travel to the island for tourism.

The US severed all diplomatic ties with Cuba in 1961, and while most of the rest of the world ended the Cold War era hostility decades ago, maintained it through today. President Obama declared that in this case, isolation didn't work.

Ending Cold War hostilities was never going to please anybody, and several Republicans expressed "outrage" over the announcement, saying it amounted to "appeasement" of the Cuban government. Sen. Marco Rubio (R – FL) vowed to block the normalization in the Senate.