

U.S.-Cuba Trade and Economic Council, Inc.

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15 Candidates For President-elect Biden: U.S. Ambassador To Cuba Job Description Requirement: Negotiator

The Honorable Joseph Biden (D), the 46th President of the United States as of 12:00 pm on 20 January 2021, should after his inauguration submit promptly to the United States Senate a nominee for United States Ambassador to the Republic of Cuba.

The Biden Administration would be rewarded by selecting as ambassador a high-profile fluent (preferably or lesson-accepting) Spanish-speaking high-level individual retired from the elected public sector (United States Congress or Governor) or private sector (corporate executive) whose stature will result in a voice respected by the government of the Republic of Cuba- and represent a “*leak-proof back channel to The White House.*”

A career foreign service officer, currently employed or former, as ambassador at this time will neither possess the gravitas to confront the government of the Republic of Cuba nor be respected by the government of the Republic of Cuba nor have an ability to connect with a global network of relationships, particularly governments, companies, and media.

If there exist opportunities for a United States-Republic of Cuba rapprochement, particularly regarding reaching a settlement for the 5,913 certified claims against the Republic of Cuba, and gain assistance from the Republic of Cuba to resolve issues relating to Venezuela, when the United States ambassador shares with H.E. Miguel Diaz-Canel, President of the Republic of Cuba, “*I will discuss with President Biden; I give you my word,*” President Diaz-Canel needs to have confidence in those words.

What is required and what has been thus far absent is a negotiator rather than a diplomat. Private sector executives and those elected to public office are by definition negotiators.

The next United States Ambassador to the Republic of Cuba, even if the individual would commit only to a limited tenure, must be an individual whom President Biden considers a friend and a confidant and someone whose judgement he trusts.

In alphabetical order

Mr. G. Allen Andreas (Florida)

Chairman and Chief Executive Officer- ADM (1997-2006)

Mr. Micky Arison (Florida)

Chairman- Carnival Corporation & plc (2013-Present)

The Honorable Max Baucus (D- Montana)

United States Ambassador to China (2014-2017)

United States Senate (1978-2014)

United States House of Representatives (1975-1978)

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Mr. Lloyd Blankfein (New York)
Senior Chairman- Goldman Sachs (2019-Present)
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer- Goldman Sachs (2006-2018)

The Honorable Bob Corker (R- Tennessee)
United States Senate (2007-2019)

The Honorable Christopher Dodd (D- Connecticut)
Motion Picture Association of America (2011-2017)
United States Senate (1981-2011)
United States House of Representatives (1975-1981)

The Honorable Tom Harkin (D- Iowa)
United States Senator (1985-2015)
United States House of Representatives (1975-1985)

The Honorable Heidi Heitkamp (D- North Dakota)
United States Senate (2013-2019)

The Honorable Ted Kaufman (D- Delaware)
Head- Biden Transition (2020)
United States Senator (2009-2010)
Office of Senator Biden (1976-1995)

Mr. Oscar Munoz (Illinois)
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer- United Airlines (2015-2020)

Mr. Richard Parsons (New York)
President- Time Warner (1995-2002)
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer- AOL Time Warner (2002-2008)
Chairman- Citigroup (2009-2012)
Interim Chairman- Los Angeles Clippers (2014)
Interim Chairman- CBS (2018)

The Honorable Deval Patrick (D- Massachusetts)
Governor (2007-2015)

The Honorable Samantha Power (D- Massachusetts)
Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations (2013-2017)

The Honorable Jose Serrano (D- New York)
United States House of Representatives (1990-2021)

The Honorable Jim Webb (D- Virginia)
United States Senate (2007-2013)

The last United States ambassador to the Republic of Cuba was The Honorable Philip Bonsal (1903-1995) who arrived 3 March 1959 and departed 28 October 1960. There had been twenty ambassadors from 1902 to 1960.

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Since 1960, according to the United States Department of State, there has been one Chargé d’Affaires ad interim, fourteen Principal Officers, and two Chargé d’Affaires.

H.E. Jose Ramon Cabanas Rodriguez, *Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary* of the Republic of Cuba to the United States, has served in Washington DC since 17 September 2015. It is time to even-up the diplomatic bilateral landscape.

There are approximately 11.3 million Republic of Cuba nationals residing on 780-mile-long archipelago ninety-three miles south of from Key West, Florida. There are approximately 2.1 million individuals of Cuban descent residing in the United States with the majority in Florida and New Jersey.

The nomination of an ambassador to the Republic of Cuba is not a reward for the Republic of Cuba. In fact, the full-time presence of a high-profile ambassador in Havana could be irritating for the government of the Republic of Cuba as an ambassador using their official status can create cringe-worthy or greater controversy. An ambassador has an inherent position from which to advocate, officially and unofficially, where a lesser ranking diplomat lacks standing. The appointment of an ambassador represents strength, not weakness or fecklessness.

For the incoming Biden Administration, an ambassador to the Republic of Cuba is re-empowering the United States Department of State, an oft-stated goal of candidate former Vice President (and before that United States Senator) Biden and President-elect Biden, as well as thus far from those he intends to appoint and those he intends to nominate for foreign policy-focused positions in the United States government.

An ambassador to the Republic of Cuba will provide the United States with every level of diplomatic representation, every tool to use throughout a country that has, is and will remain consequential directly to the United States, but particularly relevant currently with respect to resolving issues relating to Venezuela.

A high-profile ambassador to the Republic of Cuba would challenge H.E. Miguel Diaz-Canel, President of the Republic of Cuba, as he would need to accept the credentials of an ambassador knowing the ambassador would have far greater official and unofficial communicative outlets, particularly ambassador-to-ambassador engagement with the approximately one hundred other country and organization diplomatic missions.

Those who espouse the appointment of a United States Ambassador to the Republic of Cuba is rewarding the malign behavior of the government of the Republic of Cuba and provides legitimacy to the government of the Republic of Cuba do have an argument, but not the argument. If appropriate, for example in a dispute, an ambassador may be recalled for consultations- a high-profile rebuke. There is also the potential spectacle of the government of the Republic of Cuba refusing to accept the credentials of the individual selected by President Biden.

Far better for the United States to have in place a formidable diplomatic presence with a protocol-protected voice to focus upon issues of importance to the United States, particularly the unresolved health issues impacting United States diplomats.

On 19 July 2015, the United States had a seven-story structure in Havana built in 1953 formerly designated as the *United States Embassy*, but since 1977 served as the *United States Interests*

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Section whose senior diplomat, The Honorable Jeffrey DeLaurentis, was “Principal Officer [Chief] of the Cuban Interests Section.”

On 20 July 2015, the same seven-story structure reverted to its original status, United States Embassy, whose senior diplomat was now “The Honorable Jeffrey DeLaurentis, Chargé d’Affaires.”

Ambassador Cabanas had since 2012 served as Chief of the Cuban Interests Section in Washington DC. He retained the title of ambassador due to posting in Austria from 2001 to 2005. On 17 September 2015, he presented credentials to The Honorable Barack Obama (D), President of the United States (2019-2017) and became *Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary* of the Republic of Cuba to the United States.

On 27 September 2016, President Obama nominated Ambassador DeLaurentis [title due to previous United States Senate confirmation as United States Ambassador to the United Nations for Special Political Affairs from 2001-2004] to be United States Ambassador to the Republic of Cuba. At the time, the United States Senate was not controlled by the Democratic Party, so Ambassador DeLaurentis would not likely have been confirmed. There may have been an opportunity for a recess appointment.

Unfortunate that President Obama arrived at Jose Marti International Airport (HAV) in Havana on 20 March 2016 and was not met by the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Cuba at the bottom of the staircase with red carpet brought to *Air Force One*.

President Biden will not make a mission of becoming another President of the United States to visit the Republic of Cuba, but he can have in Havana an *Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary* as his personal representative... locked and loaded.

Whichever party is in control of the United States Senate on 20 January 2021 should not be a factor for President Biden- he should submit a nomination and permit the United States Senate to “*advise and consent*” as provided in Article II Section 2 of the United States Constitution. If rejected, the responsibility will be with its 100 members.