

Our Man in Havana
12-10-2012 by Harry Zirkelbach

The Cuba-United States relationship has a complex history. Their present man in Havana has not helped lower the level of shouting, but then neither have most presidents since Fidel Castro rose to power with the overthrow of Baptista in January 1959. Sixty four years is a long time to be a dominant figure in any country.

Cuba was discovered by Columbus on 1492, claimed for Spain, remained under Spanish rule until the Spanish American War of 1898, given independence from US in 1902. This conflict began when the Battleship Maine was visiting Havana 25 Januaing Puerto Rico, the Philippines, Guam to the United States. Roosevelt was now President ceded independence to Cuba May 20 1902.

At the same time through the Platt Amendment, Cuba Leased the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base to the United States. This property occupies much of one of the 15 Provinces of the Iand, this in the extreme southeast corner of the cigar shape Island.

*In WW I and WW II Cuba sided with the Allies. Cuba declared War on Japan on Dec 9 1941, on Germany and Italy December 11 1941. It provided foods to the allies,
no military troops.*

Fidel, and his brother Raul have dominated Cuba since July 1959 with the overthrow of Baptista. It is one of the longest continuous rules in the world.

Eleven million live on the Island of Cuba, the most populous island nation in the Caribbean. Literacy is 99.8%. Life expectancy is 77.64. It had universal health Care. Cuba continues to be noted for Cuisine, beautiful Caribbean beaches, music, baseball, boxing. It participates in the World Olympics.

Cuba has the highest Doctor-To-Patient ratio in the world, while exporting more than 30,000 doctors (and a larger number of nurses) to more than 40 countries around the world.

*Cuban cigars are world renown. Tourism passed sugar of a source of hard currency in 1996, has tripled in the last decade.
Most of these sun lovers come from Canada and the European Union.*

Medical tourism brings others, from Europe, Latin America, Canada, even America.

With tourism, businesses have began to construct better hotel, luxury facilities, the money again from Canada and the European Union. Hidden in these are American company names, all this modest development, permitted and encouraged by Raul Castro.

Americans crowded Cuba as tourists in the first half of the 20th Century. It is likely these visitations will return, soon.

In 2008 the European Union and Cuba resumed full relations and Cooperation activities.

On April 17, 2009 Obama visited nearby Trinidad and Tobago said the United States seeks a new beginning in Cuba, reversed Bush prohibitions on travel there and remittance by Cuban Americans from the United States to Cuba.

It is too early to recognize our man in Havana. His complex task will certainly mean an end to any Lease of Guantanamo Naval Base, relocation of its prisoners.

Then back to these white sand Caribbean beaches, fun vacation, investment opportunities galore. Be certain to use a high-number sun screen, thrill to the ride in a pre-Castro American cab.

*And remember,
Cubans are expected to cheat at any gambling.*