

RELEASE IN FULL

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**From:** Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 26, 2009 5:47 PM  
**To:** H  
**Subject:** Fw: Latest On Cuba from President Obama

See b/l

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**From:** Curtis, Meghann A  
**To:** Mills, Cheryl D  
**Cc:** Klevorick, Caitlin B  
**Sent:** Sun Jul 26 17:21:29 2009  
**Subject:** FW: Latest On Cuba from President Obama

FYI on TPS for Haitians from Obama

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**From:** De Pirro, Velia M  
**Sent:** Saturday, July 25, 2009 1:55 PM  
**To:** Tighe, Thomas C; Moore, Donald L  
**Cc:** Curtis, Meghann A; Klevorick, Caitlin B; Yutacom, Jessica W; Goertz, Robin W; Ahern, Katharine X; Mizell, Larry (DHS)  
**Subject:** FW: Latest On Cuba from President Obama

Cliff/Don:

Please see President's comments on TPS for Haiti.

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*Director*

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*Department of State*

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**From:** Aynes-Neville, Julianna M  
**Sent:** Saturday, July 25, 2009 10:02 AM  
**To:** WHA-Haiti Internal  
**Subject:** RE: Latest On Cuba from President Obama

Hi Friends, in case you haven't seen this...

CARIBBEAN

# Obama: No rushing changes to Cuba policy, Haiti immigration laws

President Obama won't commit to allowing undocumented Haitians in the United States to stay, and says any changes to U.S.-Cuba policy may be a while in the making.

BY LESLEY CLARK

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WASHINGTON -- President Barack Obama said Friday he's open to more overtures to Cuba, such as lifting restrictions on academic travel to the island, but not without signs of changes from the government in Havana.

"We're not there yet," he said. "We think it's important to see progress on issues of political liberalization, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, release of political prisoners in order for there to be the full possibility of normalization between our two countries."

The president also wouldn't commit to whether undocumented Haitians in the United States should be allowed to stay here temporarily to help stabilize the impoverished nation. He said he's "very sympathetic," but suggested the issue would be part of a larger effort to overhaul migration laws.

Obama's remarks came as he met in the Roosevelt Room at the White House with a panel of regional reporters as part of his campaign to press his imperiled effort to overhaul the nation's healthcare system.

Several members of Congress and groups, including the leading association that promotes student travel to and from the United States, have urged Obama to remove what they said are restrictive regulations on academic and other "purposeful" travel to Cuba imposed by President Bush in 2004. The Association of International Educators said this week that study abroad to Cuba has "declined precipitously."

In April, Obama lifted travel and gift restrictions for those with relatives in Cuba and eased restrictions on U.S. telecommunications firms to do business there. And the administration last week resumed talks with Cuban officials on what Obama called a "narrow set of issues," chiefly migration.

But Obama said further steps may take time.

Obama referenced last week's "government-to-government conversations" in New York and said that the administration's "hope is that if we're seeing progress on those issues, then they can begin to broaden."

"We're taking it step by step, seeing if, as we change some of the old approaches that we've been taking, we are seeing some movement on the Cuban government side," he added. "I don't think it's going to be happening overnight. I think it's going to be a work in progress."

Obama said his administration is still reviewing U.S. policy on deporting undocumented Haitians and would not commit to whether he supports allowing undocumented Haitian migrants to stay and work in the United States temporarily. Haitian advocates -- and most of South Florida's congressional

delegation -- have called on the administration to add Haiti to the list of nations whose citizens in the United States receive such designation, known as Temporary Protected Status.

Obama said Friday the review is not yet done, "so I'm not prepared to make news here today."

But he said he was "very sympathetic to the fact that Haiti has gone through very difficult times, that a sudden influx of people from Florida back into Haiti would be a potential humanitarian problem."

He noted that many Haitians have "put down roots" in the United States and suggested that a resolution to the situation in Haiti was "going to be part of a broader conversation about immigration."

In June, Obama invited House and Senate leaders to the White House to jump-start efforts to overhaul immigration laws. Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano is working with lawmakers on the issue, and White House officials said they'd like to see legislation pass this fall, or early next year.