



For Immediate Release

For More Information, Contact:
Antonio Gonzalez, 323-868-2049

WCVI Commends President Obama for Cuba Actions

Calls for More Steps towards Normalization

(Los Angeles, CA, Dec. 17, 2014) Antonio Gonzalez, President of the William C. Velasquez Institute (WCVI) commended President Obama for negotiating the release of Alan Gross, a US AID Contractor jailed in Cuba and an unnamed "CIA asset" in prison in Cuba in exchange for the three remaining Cubans imprisoned in the US since the 1990's.

"I commend President Obama for engaging the Cuban Government in talks that resulted in the release of Alan Gross as well as the Cuban 3. This action removes a major obstacle to improving US-Cuban relations," Said Antonio Gonzalez, WCVI President.

The President, early in his first term, relaxed some restrictions on US travel to Cuba. Over the years US and Cuban American opinion has markedly changed to overwhelmingly favor normalization of relations between the two countries.

"Mr. Obama's actions are consistent with his public comments in favor of slowly improving relations in Cuba. Now I respectfully urge him to continue the momentum by removing Cuba from the US terrorist countries list and opening all US travel to Cuba," Gonzalez continued.

US Latino opinion is consistent with general public opinion strongly in favor of restoring relations with Cuba.

Technically, Mr. Gross was released on humanitarian grounds due to his illness. He had been moved from jail to hospital several months ago.

The Cuban 3 (once called the Cuban 5 -two prisoners served their sentences and are back in Cuba) consists of three Cuban agents who turned themselves into the FBI in the late 1990's with information on a terrorist conspiracy emanating from south Florida against Cuba. They were tried and convicted in US court. The remaining three prisoners were released and flown to Cuba today as part of the deal.

For more information on the Cuban Five, click here: <http://www.thecuban5.org/the-case/>

WCVI through its Interhemispheric Initiatives Program has conducted educational programming about US-Cuba relations and advocated for full normalization of US Cuba relations since 1996. For more information see www.wcvi.org.