

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 26, 2023

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
2703 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20593

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We write to express our serious concerns about an upcoming visit to the United States by Cuban regime officials as part of the United States Coast Guard's (USCG) International Port Security Program.

During the week of February 27, a Cuban delegation consisting of officials from Cuba's Border Guard and Ministry of Foreign Affairs is expected to visit the United States to meet with the U.S. Coast Guard and tour U.S. port facilities. According to the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs, the Cuban delegation will visit the U.S. Coast Guard headquarters in Washington, DC before touring port facilities in Wilmington, North Carolina under the supervision of U.S. Coast Guard personnel.¹

We are deeply concerned about the U.S. national security implications of allowing government officials with a known adversarial foreign intelligence service to access sensitive U.S. Federal Government facilities. Not only is Cuba still a U.S. designated State Sponsor of Terrorism along with North Korea, Iran, and Syria², but Cuba remains a chief counterintelligence threat. The U.S. Director of National Intelligence consistently identifies Cuba as a core and continuing counterintelligence mission, similar to Iran and North Korea.³ Additionally, Cuba and Russia have continued to deepen bilateral relations, including in security cooperation, amplifying the threat to U.S. national security.

On January 15, 2021, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control placed Global Magnitsky Sanctions on the Cuban Ministry of Interior for its complicity in serious human rights abuses in Cuba.⁴ The Cuban Ministry of Interior is responsible for Cuba's internal security and frequent oppressive and deadly crackdowns against Cuban citizens. The Ministry of Interior also oversees Cuba's Directorate of Border Guard Troops. Inviting this

¹ U.S. Dep't of State, Bureau of Leg. Affairs, *U.S. Department of State Message to Congress on Cuban Officials Visiting United States for International Port Security Program*, (February 24, 2023) (On file with the Committee).

² U.S. Dep't of State, Bureau of Counterterrorism, *State Sponsors of Terrorism*, (retrieved February 25, 2023) at <https://www.state.gov/state-sponsors-of-terrorism/>

³ Office of the Director of National Intelligence, *National Counterintelligence Strategy of the United States of America*, (February 2, 2020)

⁴ U.S. Dep't of the Treasury, *Treasury Sanctions the Cuban Ministry of the Interior and Its Leader for Serious Human Rights Abuse*, Press Release (January 15, 2023) at <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sm1237>

same Border Guard entity to visit the United States and tour U.S. Federal Government facilities would have serious intelligence and national security consequences.

We strongly urge you to table the consideration of such a visit that ignores the Cuban regime's brutality, its repression of its citizens, and its designation as a State Sponsor of Terrorism, while also exposing our Nation's port infrastructure to potential vulnerabilities and jeopardizing our national security.

To better understand the security implications of a visit by the Cuban delegation to the United States, and the Department of Homeland Security's actions and interagency coordination to extend such an invitation, we respectfully request that you provide the following information:

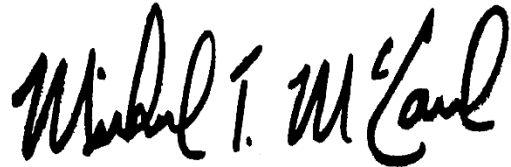
- a. Which federal agency was the lead for this coordination?
- b. Please provide documents relating to all background checks conducted on members of the Cuban delegation, as well as any documents suggesting the degree, if any, to which the U.S. Department of Homeland Security synchronized their vetting efforts with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the U.S. Department of State, and other agencies within the Intelligence Community.
- c. Please provide records and information for each member of Cuba's Border Guard and Ministry of Foreign Affairs visiting the United States including the visa category pursuant to which each of these officials will be admitted to the United States, the port of entry where they will be admitted, and the expected dates of admission and departure.
- d. The Cuban delegation was invited to visit the United States as participants in the U.S. Coast Guard's International Port Security Program. Is this construct governed by a memorandum of understanding or other agreement? If so, please generally describe the agreement.
- e. Which U.S. Coast Guard or senior officials within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security were responsible for developing plans for the visit to the United States by the Cuban Delegation? Please identify the office and the most senior official serving within that office. If this was an interagency effort, please identify which department and official led this initiative.
- f. Since January 20, 2021, have any other officials from a country designated as a State Sponsor of Terrorism visited U.S. Federal Government facilities within the interior of the United States under the International Port Security Program?
- g. Did any DHS Visa Security Unit personnel review applications of the Cuban delegation? If so, please identify the location of the DHS personnel that conducted the review, whether the review included background check vetting, and whether DHS was aware that Cuba's Ministry of Interior is placed under Global Magnitsky Sanctions.

Please provide responses to these questions as soon as possible, but by no later than 5:00 p.m. on Monday, February 27, 2023. If you have any questions about this request, please contact Roland Hernandez of Chairman Green's staff at (202) 226-8417, and Ana Quintana of Chairman McCaul's staff at (202) 225-5021. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Mark Green, MD
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security



Michael McCaul
Chairman
Committee on Foreign Affairs



Carlos A. Gimenez
Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation
and Maritime Security
Committee on Homeland Security



Maria Elvira Salazar
Chairman
Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere
Committee on Foreign Affairs

cc: The Honorable Antony Blinken
U.S. Secretary of State