

Pascal in Latin Lawyer: Better Cuba Relations, Better Business Chances

By Larry B. Pascal | September 25, 2017

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While many lawyers believe U.S. businesses with investments in Cuba are unfazed by President Donald Trump's proposed changes to U.S.-Cuba policy, a number have raised concerns about the implementation of clear-cut regulations to guide companies' operations on the island, *Latin Lawyer* [reported](#).

Speaking in the symbolic Little Havana district of Miami on 16 June, Trump pledged to "cancel" the Obama administration's "completely one-sided" deal with Cuba. Trump announced various new commercial and travel restrictions designed to prevent U.S. companies and individuals doing business with GAESA, the Cuban military conglomerate that controls numerous enterprises in the country. ...

The conglomerate is headed up by Luis Alberto Rodríguez, President Raúl Castro's son-in-law, and owns numerous Cuban hotels, retail store chains, car rental companies and import agencies. ...

Lawyers have agreed that the changes are worrisome for Cuba and its economy. GAESA is particularly prominent in the tourism sector, which is set to suffer reduced U.S. investment under Trump, as most hotels and touristic ventures are owned by the military. Tourism accounts for around 60 percent of the Cuban economy, but the number of visitors could go down as a result of new travel restrictions proposed by Trump. ...

Cuba's foreign minister Bruno Rodríguez described Trump's speech as a "grotesque spectacle straight from the Cold War" and insisted it will not affect the island. "Cuba will make no concessions on its sovereignty and its independence, will not negotiate over its principles and will never accept [imposed] conditions," said Rodríguez. ...

Taking a long-term view, there is concern that the change in tone from the White House could hurt U.S. interests. [Larry Pascal](#), co-chair of Haynes & Boone, LLP's International Practice Group, says the measures undertaken towards Cuba by the Obama administration enhanced the U.S.'s standing in Latin America. "It cast us in a more sympathetic light, which made it easier for others in the region to cooperate with us in areas we previously couldn't," he says.

Reversing those measures marks a step back and stands in the way of Trump achieving some of his own objectives, adds Pascal. "Better relations with our Latin American neighbours could open new export markets, which is a priority that our current government has spoken about."

Excerpted from *Latin Lawyer*. To read the full article, click [here](#).