



CUBA

## U.S. Embassy in Cuba: Diplomatic population 10

BY MIMI WHITEFIELD

*[mwhitefield@miamiherald.com](mailto:mwhitefield@miamiherald.com)*

April 06, 2018 03:43 PM

Updated April 06, 2018 04:57 PM

At a time when Cuba faces a significant generational shift in power with Cuban leader Raúl Castro expected to retire from the presidency on April 19, the United States has few official eyes and ears on the island.

An embassy roster, which was updated on March 22 on the State Department's website, lists no political or economic officers and a total of only 10 diplomats, including Chargé d'affaires Philip S. Goldberg, the chief of mission in the absence of an ambassador. There are no public affairs or cultural officers listed either.

Most of the jobs that remain after the United States reduced personnel levels in response to mysterious incidents affecting the health of its diplomats deal with maintenance, security or the internal functioning of the embassy that sits along Havana’s seaside Malecón.

On March 2, the State Department announced that for the indefinite future it would staff the Havana embassy at the minimum level “necessary to perform core diplomatic and consular functions.”

---

## Breaking News

Be the first to know when big news breaks

Enter Email Address

I'm not a robot

reCAPTCHA  
[Privacy - Terms](#)

SIGN UP

---

In the wake of what the United States has deemed “health attacks” on its diplomats, the embassy had been operating under temporary ordered departure status since Sept. 29. About two-thirds of the embassy staff was withdrawn after two dozen diplomatic personnel complained of mysterious symptoms ranging from hearing loss and ringing in the ears to mild concussions, headaches and memory and sleep disorders. The United States also expelled 17 Cuban diplomats from Washington and issued a travel alert for U.S. visitors to the island as part of its response.

When the temporary status expired in March, a new permanent staffing plan was put in place that kept personnel levels at a minimum and didn’t allow family members to accompany diplomats to the Havana post.



Workers at the U.S. Embassy in Havana leave the building on Sept. 29, 2017, after the State Department announced that it was withdrawing all but essential diplomats from the embassy.

Emily Michot - [emichot@miamiherald.com](mailto:emichot@miamiherald.com)

---

Now just a single consular officer, Consul General Brendan Mullarkey, is listed on the embassy roster.

Previously, the embassy had a large consular staff that processed visa requests for family visits, immigrant visas and other requests from Cuban nationals. Now appointments for immigrant visa interviews for Cubans are being handled at the U.S. Embassy in Georgetown, Guyana, and Cuban applicants for routine non-immigrant visas may apply at any U.S. embassy or consulate outside Cuba.

The embassy staff is now far smaller than when the U.S. diplomatic post operated as an Interests Section before the United States and Cuba restored diplomatic relations on July 20, 2015, as part of the Obama administration's rapprochement with Cuba.

Those officers who remain at the embassy carry titles such as facilities manager, human resources officer, general services officer — a job whose duties include managing physical resources and logistics, information systems officer, post occupational safety and health officer, and regional security officer.

The State Department says it still does not have “definitive answers” on what caused the adverse symptoms experienced by the diplomats and it is still investigating. Although the United States hasn’t directly blamed Cuba, the State Department has said it holds the Cuban government responsible for not protecting the diplomats while they were on Cuban soil. Cuba has said repeatedly that it is not responsible for the incidents.

*Follow Mimi Whitefield on Twitter: @HeraldMimi*