

# PRESS RELEASE

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## Cuban Embassy Hosts Cuba Consortium Reception

February 10, 2016

(Washington, D.C. / February 8, 2016) A reception for The Cuba Consortium was recently held at the Cuban Embassy in Washington, D.C. About 75 people representing various industries, government organizations, think tanks and academia attended the event, which was hosted by Cuban Ambassador José Ramón Cabañas Rodríguez on January 28.

Senator Tom Daschle, co-chair of the Advisory Board of The Cuba Consortium, opened the reception with remarks and an introduction of Ambassador Cabañas, who officially took on the role of Cuban Ambassador to the U.S. in September 2015 after serving as head of the Cuban Interests Section since 2012. In his comments, Ambassador Cabañas spoke about the optimism of the Cuban people and their eagerness to work with Americans.

The event also included comments from Jodi Bond, vice president of the Americas for the International Division at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, who discussed the activities of the Chamber's U.S.-Cuba Business Council and their recent trip to Cuba. Dan Jones, senior vice president at The Daschle Group, provided an update on the prospects for Congress taking action to lift the embargo or further normalize relations with Cuba.

Scott L. Campbell, president of The Howard Baker Forum, rounded out the event by highlighting The Cuba Consortium's first conference, which will be held on February 18, 2016, at the United States Institute of Peace in Washington, D.C. Mr. Campbell announced that U.S. Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker and Cuban Minister of Foreign Trade and Investment Rodrigo Malmierca are among the many notable thought leaders and policymakers who will speak at the conference.

Other confirmed speakers for the conference include Ambassador Cabañas; Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South America and Cuba Alex Lee; former Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano; U.S. Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Tom Donohue; Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategic Communications and Speechwriting Benjamin J. "Ben" Rhodes; and American University professor and Cuba expert Dr. William LeoGrande.

Media will be invited to attend The Cuba Consortium Washington conference. More details will be made available soon.

The Cuba Consortium was formed in 2015 to examine U.S.-Cuba relations. The bipartisan group convenes policy makers, academic experts, political leaders, and heads of business who have an interest in the normalization process. The Consortium does not lobby either government, but examines the issues in order to sustain the conversation as Washington enters its hectic election year, and to continually assess progress being made in the improvement of U.S.-Cuba relations.

The Cuba Consortium is a project of The Howard Baker Forum, which was founded by the late Senator Howard Baker to examine critical issues facing the United States. The Forum organizes a variety of programs and research projects to highlight current public policy challenges facing the nation.