

RELEASE IN FULL

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**From:** Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 29, 2009 7:29 PM  
**To:** H  
**Subject:** Fw: Cuba

----- Original Message -----

**From:** Shannon, Thomas A  
**To:** Abedin, Huma; Sullivan, Jacob J; Mills, Cheryl D; Kelly, Craig A  
**Sent:** Tue Sep 29 19:18:52 2009  
**Subject:** Cuba

You will have seen Verma's note regarding Senator Menedez desire to speak to S re direct mail talks with Cuba and our follow on talks with the Cubans and dissidents. He is upset tha he was not consulted and does not think he was briefed sufficiently quickly.

WHA and H had briefed immediately on the direct mail talks, and had briefed HFAC on the follow on talks. We had asked for time to brief SFRC but had not yet done so.

This should be a good news story. We engaged with the Cubans at the Vice-Minister level, breaking a several year shunning of our Interest Section by the Cubans, traveled outside of Havana to view hurricane damage (thus breaking through the barrier of no travel beyond a ten-mile perimeter), we pursued extradition of US fugitives in Cuba, and most importantly, Bisa Williams (my DAS and the head of delegation) met with a broad range of dissidents, civil society reps, and bloggers.

This last point is worth highlighting. The last part of the trip came together late because we would not let the Cubans condition our meetings or determine who we could or could not meet with. The Cubans finally allowed us to meet with dissidents, something they have prevented EU and other visitors from doing. In other words, we have broken th mold and put real pressure on others to do the same.

That said, our briefing and outreach could have been quicker and better coordinated. This has upset Senator Menedez. We are sending Bisa up tomorrow to brief the SFRC.