

RELEASE IN FULL

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**From:** Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 8, 2012 3:27 PM  
**To:** H  
**Subject:** FW: Cuba calls exclusion from regional summit "unacceptable" (Reuters)

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**From:** OpsNewsTicker  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 08, 2012 3:19 PM  
**To:** NEWS-Mahogany  
**Subject:** Cuba calls exclusion from regional summit "unacceptable" (Reuters)

HAVANA, March 8 (Reuters) - Cuba said on Thursday it was "unacceptable" that it will not be invited to an upcoming hemispheric summit in Colombia and blamed the United States for insisting that Cuba be excluded.

Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez accused Washington of acting with "disdain and arrogance" in the latest diplomatic dust-up between the United States and Cuba, who have been at odds since the Caribbean island's 1959 revolution.

"It is unacceptable and unjustifiable," Rodriguez said at a press conference. "What (the United States) has done is reiterate an old, failed policy that has lasted 50 years, which doesn't work and which someone should think about revising."

Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos, after meeting with President Raul Castro and convalescing Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez on Wednesday in Havana, said Cuba would not be invited to the summit because there was no consensus to do so.

Santos said the issue of Cuba's exclusion and Cuba's position in general would be discussed at Sixth Summit of the Americas, which will be held April 14-15 in Cartagena. Leaders from 34 countries, including U.S. President Barack Obama, are expected to attend.

The left-leaning ALBA bloc of eight Latin American and Caribbean nations, led by Chavez, had threatened to boycott the event if Cuba did not attend.

The United States said Cuba should not be invited because it is not a member of the Organization of America States, which is backing the event.

It says Cuba does not meet an OAS charter requirement that its member countries be democracies.

Rodriguez said Cuba had accepted the decision of Santos, who as summit host has final decision on invitees.

Cuba was thrown out of the OAS in 1962 at the height of the Cold War and invited back in 2009, but has said it will not rejoin because of U.S. domination of the group.

"The exclusion of Cuba is probably the most notorious, most evident symbol that (these summits) are made in the image of the owner, which is the government of the United States, and they are instruments to exercise domination in a manner not at all democratic," Rodriguez said.

Despite its reservations about the OAS, Cuba has said it would attend the summits if invited.

Chavez, 57, is recovering from surgery last week in Havana to remove a recurrence of cancer in his pelvic region. He has said he will have to have follow-up radiation treatment.

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