

**THE VATICAN'S ROLE IN THE RECONCILIATION BETWEEN THE US AND
CUBA¹**

EL PAPEL DEL VATICANO EN LA RECONCILIACIÓN ENTRE EEUU Y CUBA

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Abstract:

For over fifty years, the United States and Cuba had not maintained direct diplomatic relations. In December 2014, the Presidents of both countries announced that they were prepared to re-establish direct relations and re-open their respective embassies in the capital of each country, which occurred in July 2015. This change in formal relations was the first step in the normalization of relations between the two countries. At the same time it marked the end of a process of reconciliation in which the Vatican had played an important role through its diplomatic system and the direct intervention of high-ranking officers, including Pope Francis himself. These Vatican diplomacy efforts show us the effect of the choice of the first Pope in Latin America ("the Francis effect") and his forceful introduction of the ideas of encounter and dialogue in diplomacy.

Resumen:

Por más de cincuenta años, los Estados Unidos y Cuba no habían mantenido relaciones diplomáticas directas. En Diciembre 2014, los Presidentes de ambos países anunciaron que estaban preparados para reestablecer relaciones directas y reabrir sus embajadas respectivas en la capital del otro país, lo que ocurrió en Julio 2015. Este cambio en las relaciones formales era el primer paso para la normalización de relaciones entre los dos países y a la misma vez el fin de

¹ The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Inter-American Defense College, the Inter-American Defense Board, the Organization of American States, or the national government or government agency of the author.

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un proceso de reconciliación en lo cual el Vaticano había jugado un papel importante, a través de su sistema diplomático y la intervención directa de oficiales del alto rango, incluyendo el Papa Francisco. Estos esfuerzos de la Diplomacia Vaticana nos muestran el efecto de la elección del primer Papa de América Latina (“el efecto Francisco/the Francis effect) y su introducción con fuerza las ideas de encuentro y dialogo en la diplomacia.

Key Words: Cuba, United States, Diplomacy, Vatican, Obama, Raul Castro, Francis, Parolin, Becciu.

Palabras clave: Cuba, Estados Unidos, EEUU, Diplomacia, Vaticano, Obama, Raúl Castro, Francis, Parolin, Becciu.

On December 17, 2014, the seventy-eighth birthday of Pope Francis,³ President Obama announced that the United States and Cuba were approaching a resolution of the obstacles to the restoration of full, formal diplomatic relations.⁴ One of the obstacles that had to be removed was the more than five-year detention and incarceration of Alan Gross, a United States Agency for International Development (USAID) contractor whom the Cuban authorities had arrested, charged, tried, and convicted of espionage.⁵ The White House fact sheet noted that Gross would be freed as a humanitarian gesture (Gross was in poor health and suffered from several medical conditions) while a United States intelligence human asset (aka a spy; later identified by the press as Rolando Sarraff Trujillo) would be exchanged for three Cuban intelligence operatives who remained in prison after having been convicted in June 2001 of illegal surveillance and intimidation of Americans of Cuban descent and of Cubans in the United States with relatives in Cuba as well as other offenses.⁶ (The three Cubans were part of a group commonly known as the Cuban Five or Miami Five.) Since the December 2014 announcement, in addition to the restoration of full, formal diplomatic relations, many actions with a view to improve U.S.-Cuba relations have occurred – the United States removed Cuba from the list of State Sponsors of Terrorism, the United States eased travel restrictions to Cuba, Secretary of State Kerry visited Havana to raise the flag over the United States Embassy, and President Obama made the first visit to Cuba by a sitting U.S. President in over ninety years.⁷

³“Biography | Francis,” accessed June 2, 2016,

<https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/biography/documents/papa-francesco-biografia-bergoglio.html>.

⁴ “Statement by the President on Cuba Policy Changes,” *Whitehouse.gov*, December 17, 2014, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/12/17/statement-president-cuba-policy-changes>.

⁵ “FACT SHEET: 2014 Charting a New Course on Cuba,” *Whitehouse.gov*, December 17, 2014, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/12/17/fact-sheet-charting-new-course-cuba>. Accessed March 20, 2016.

⁶Ibid.

⁷The White House, “President’s Travel to Cuba and Argentina, Statement by the Press Secretary,” *Whitehouse.gov*, February 18, 2016, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/02/18/statement-press-secretary-presidents-travel-cuba-and-argentina>. Accessed March 20, 2016.

It is impossible to imagine that full, formal diplomatic relations and the cascade of other events would have taken place without the release of Gross. Likewise, it is most unlikely Raul Castro would have moved forward with restoration of relations absent the release of the three Cuban intelligence operatives remaining in custody. The United States had made it clear it would never swap Gross for any of the Cuban Five as such an action would put all U.S. personnel engaged in legitimate official business at peril of being taken hostage by a foreign government seeking to gain leverage over the United States. Information released by the White House and in a statement from President Obama credited Vatican officials and Pope Francis with having played a crucial role in the successful efforts to have Gross released on humanitarian grounds and the three Cuban intelligence operatives released via an exchange for an American intelligence asset.⁸ Given the nuggets of information provided in the statement from a normally reticent Holy See, it is worth quoting in its entirety the text released by the Vatican—it is brief:

The Holy Father wishes to express his warm congratulations for the historic decision taken by the Governments of the United States of America and Cuba to establish diplomatic relations, with the aim of overcoming, in the interest of the citizens of both countries, the difficulties which have marked their recent history. In recent months, Pope Francis wrote letters to the President of the Republic of Cuba, His Excellency Mr. Raúl Castro, and the President of the United States, The Honorable Barack H. Obama, and invited them to resolve humanitarian questions of common interest, including the situation of certain prisoners, in order to initiate a new phase in relations between the two Parties. The Holy See received Delegations of the two countries in the Vatican last October and provided its good offices to facilitate a constructive dialogue on delicate matters, resulting in solutions acceptable to both Parties. The Holy See will continue to assure its support for initiatives which both nations will undertake to strengthen their bilateral relations and promote the well-being of their respective citizens.⁹

Later, in a press interview, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Vatican Secretary of State (in effect the Prime Minister of the Vatican), stated that Pope Francis had played a key role in facilitating and promoting dialogue between the United States and Cuba.¹⁰ Parolin's deputy, Archbishop Angelo Becciu, in a televised interview some weeks later, added details on the diplomatic initiative

⁸Associated Press in Havana, "US Spy Roland Trujillo Missing after Reportedly Being Freed in Cuba Deal," *The Guardian*, December 19, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/dec/19/us-spy-cuba-rolando-sarraf-trujillo>. Accessed June 2, 2016.

⁹Vatican Information Service, "POPE EXPRESSES JOY FOR HISTORIC DECISION OF UNITED STATES AND CUBA TO ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS," *VIS News - Holy See Press Office*, Last 5 news, <http://visnews-en.blogspot.com/2014/12/pope-expresses-joy-for-historic.html>. Accessed March 20, 2016.

¹⁰Pietro Parolin, "Cardinal Parolin: On Holy See's Role in US/Cuba Agreement," accessed June 2, 2016, http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2014/12/18/cardinal_parolin_on_holy_see%E2%80%99s_role_in_us_cuba_agreement/1115269.

Vatican officials and Pope Francis had taken.¹¹ This too was somewhat out of the ordinary, as the Vatican has always conducted its diplomacy discreetly and without fanfare; its senior diplomatic officials rarely give interviews and even more rarely interviews on the details of sensitive diplomatic efforts. While a few statements do not necessarily indicate a change in how the Vatican does its diplomatic business, it may reveal a greater willingness than in the past, before the reign of Pope Francis, for Vatican diplomats to more actively engage the world and also might reflect the current Pope's emphasis on engagement with others, even if the others adhere to policies at odds with the Catholic Church. As Parolin said on 18 December, this Pope has adopted a culture of encounter and engagement.¹²

This particular Vatican diplomatic engagement leads to many questions, among which are: What was this crucial role? For how long had it been planned? What does it reveal about Vatican diplomatic efforts in Latin America going forward? What was the purpose of this particular Vatican engagement? Does it signal a radical change in the way the Vatican will conduct diplomacy in the future?

Before answering these questions, a review of key dates would be useful, for from a review of the timeline in Appendix one, it is clear that Vatican diplomacy plays a "long game" while remaining nimble enough to take advantage of unforeseen developments – this is the crux of Pope Francis' "culture of encounter."¹³

For many years, the Vatican pursued efforts to allow the church more freedom of action in Cuba.¹⁴ Francis' facilitation of improved relations between Washington and Havana would have been impossible without the "seeds sown by his predecessors."¹⁵ The visits of John Paul II and Benedict XVI were designed to communicate to the Catholic faithful that they could be loyal Cuban citizens and to the Cuban leadership that the Church and its members were no threat to the current political power. While calling on the United States to end its embargo on trade with the Cuba, the Pontiffs called on the Castro regime to respect the fundamental right of Cubans to worship as they chose and to allow the Catholic Church to manage its own affairs in Cuba without government interference. The Church welcomed of course the decisions to restore first Christmas and later Good Friday as official holidays.¹⁶ Many observers speculated that these actions by Fidel and Raul, respectively, were gestures of reconciliation towards the Catholic Church as they were

¹¹Angelo Becciu, "Papa, Mons. Becciu: 'Cuba E Usa Hanno Firmato Disgelo Davanti Al Segretario Di Stato Vaticano' | Tv2000," accessed June 2, 2016, <http://www.tv2000.it/blog/2015/09/18/papa-mons-becciu-cuba-e-usa-hanno-firmato-disgelo-davanti-al-segretario-di-stato-vaticano/>.

¹² Pietro Parolin, "Cardinal Parolin: On Holy See's Role in US/Cuba Agreement."

¹³ Timeline at Appendix 1; citations within Timeline for discrete items.

¹⁴ Constance Colonna-Cesari, *Dans les Secrets de la Diplomatie Vaticane*, Éditions du Seuil, Paris, 2016, p. 106.

¹⁵"Un rol que habría sido imposible sin el trabajo de la diplomacia vaticana y sin las semillas sembradas por sus antecesores, Juan Pablo II y Benedicto XVI." Andres Alvarez, "Francisco, Mediador Clave En Histórico Acuerdo Estados Unidos-Cuba," *LaStampa.it*, accessed June 2, 2016, <http://www.lastampa.it/2014/12/17/vaticaninsider/es/vaticano/francisco-mediador-clave-en-historico-acuerdo-estados-unidoscuba-1JLFWozj60iKr6S1FueDIO/pagina.html>.

¹⁶"Dec. 25 Off Is Cuba's 1st In 30 Years," *The New York Times*, December 26, 1997, sec. World, <http://www.nytimes.com/1997/12/26/world/dec-25-off-is-cuba-s-1st-in-30-years.html>. Accessed June 2, 2016.

announced near the time of visits by John Paul II and Benedict XVI.¹⁷ As Rome made efforts to open Cuba to the world and to reduce the difficulties facing the Church and the people in Cuba, so did the local church leadership in Havana, principally through Cardinal Ortega's engagement with the Cuban authorities, including during efforts to support the several church-going dissidents and their families without alienating the political leadership.¹⁸ During an interview with TV2000 in September 2015, some few days before Francis was to travel to Cuba and the United States, Becciu noted that several years before, the Cuban government had called on the Church, through Cardinal Ortega and himself as Nuncio at that time, to facilitate discussion on the liberation of over 100 dissidents.¹⁹ He went on to note that this change in the attitude of the Cuban government toward the Church and its willingness to use the Church as a mediator reflected the government's increased understanding of the changed role of the Church as well as its continuing support among the people. Not everyone in Cuba was satisfied with the church's efforts to accommodate itself to the realities of the Castros' Cuba, in particular many pro-democracy dissidents,²⁰ but the Church leadership in Rome and in Cuba realized that an open, direct challenge to the regime would not succeed. The Bishops of Cuba knew that the end of Communism in Cuba was as inevitable there as it had been in Eastern Europe, and just as John Paul II wished and worked for a nonviolent end of Communism in his homeland, they surely wished the end of Communism in Cuba to be as nonviolent as possible. The soil may have to be tilled for years to bear good fruit, but John Paul II knew from personal, firsthand experience that a firm commitment to protecting the dignity of each human person could bring about nonviolent change, though it might take years.

With the soil tilled and made ready for planting, the unforeseen arrival in 2013 of the church's first Latin American pope enhanced the opportunities to reap progress from the years of efforts to cultivate good relations between the Vatican and the Castros. As Francis appointed trusted subordinates, it is noteworthy that he put in place two diplomatic veterans with previous Cuban engagement: Cardinal Parolin as Secretary of State, who had served as Papal Nuncio to Venezuela at a time of extensive Cuban-Venezuelan interaction between Fidel Castro and Hugo Chavez; and Archbishop Angelo Becciu, appointed as Parolin's deputy, who had served as Nuncio to Cuba.²¹ These seasoned diplomats could be relied on to support Francis' diplomatic initiatives and use their extensive experience to ensure the success of those initiatives, which, combined with their firsthand knowledge of Cuban affairs, would allow them to play a role of mediating between others and the Cuban leadership.

¹⁷"Cuba to Mark Good Friday as Holiday Thanks to Benedict XVI's Visit – ZENIT – English," accessed June 2, 2016, <https://zenit.org/articles/cuba-to-mark-good-friday-as-holiday-thanks-to-benedict-xvi-s-visit/>.

¹⁸ Gaetan, Victor. "The Political Pope." *Foreign Affairs*. September 25, 2015. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2015-09-25/political-pope>. Accessed June 2, 2016.

¹⁹ Angelo Becciu, "Becciu: 'Cuba and US Signed Deal Restoring Diplomatic Relations in Parolin's Presence,'" *LaStampa.it*. <http://www.lastampa.it/2015/09/18/vaticaninsider/eng/the-vatican/becciu-cuba-and-us-signed-deal-restoring-diplomatic-relations-in-parolins-presence-VpLtepuSK3X1THzD5cyUNL/pagina.html>. Accessed June 2, 2016.

²⁰ Gaetan, Victor. "The Political Pope." *Foreign Affairs*.

²¹ This is not to imply that a role for Parolin and Becciu vis-à-vis UNITED STATES -Cuba relations was foreseen by Francis' predecessors – good diplomatic staffing and career development do not imply clairvoyance.

Press reports indicate that Francis raised the issue of Cuba with Obama, or that Obama raised it with him, when Obama visited the Holy See in March 2014.²² By then, U.S.-Cuban discussions concerning the release of Alan Gross and subsequent restoration of relations had been going on for some time. All publicly available indications are that the Obama administration embarked on efforts to restore full diplomatic relations soon after the second inauguration in January 2013, possibly before.²³ It is noteworthy that National Security Council staff, not State Department staff, reportedly had the lead on the United States initiative, with the press reporting that only the Secretary of State and two or three other State Department officers were being made aware of the efforts until very late in the negotiations.²⁴ Thus, while the Vatican may not have been planning for the exact course of events that took place, it had improved relations with Cuba, developed talented diplomats familiar with the Cuba portfolio, and placed them in senior positions where their efforts would have real impact.

It is now known that Francis wrote to both Obama and Raul Castro to persuade them to overcome the obstacles to restoration of full diplomatic relations and resolve the issues of those imprisoned, though the full contents of the letters are not publicly available.²⁵ Secretary of State Parolin's deputy Becciu has told the press that Parolin witnessed the signing of the agreement between the United States and Cuba at the Vatican.²⁶ This underscores the crucial role of an 'honest broker' played by the Vatican. Thus, while the Vatican was not the initiator of the efforts nor the first country to lend its good offices to supporting the efforts to restore relations (Canada had allowed early negotiations to take place on its soil, but had not played a role as mediator),²⁷ it appears that it did play a crucial role as facilitator and promotor of dialogue and subsequently as honest broker between the two parties. Clearly, the Vatican diplomats and Francis enjoyed the respect of both parties, derived in no small measure from confidence in the Vatican's claims of solely humanitarian and spiritual motivations. With no identifiable financial, political, or personal interests at stake, the Vatican (and Francis) could pursue humanitarian and spiritual interests while serving the political interests of the two parties to end fifty years of unfriendly and at times hostile relations.

Unlike centuries ago when the Vatican, as the Papal States, was a state much like many others, and as such displayed all the state self-preservation traits with which diplomats and politicians are conversant, the Holy See is a unique modern state that focuses on Evangelization, that is, spreading the Gospel. This process of reducing the features of a Westphalian nation-state

²² Carol Morello and Karen DeYoung, "Secret U.S.-Cuba diplomacy ended in landmark deal on prisoners, future ties", 17 December 2014, The Washington Post. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/secret-diplomacy-with-cuba-ended-in-breakthrough-deal/2014/12/17/c51b3ed8-8614-11e4-a702-fa31ff4ae98e_story.html. Accessed March 20, 2016.

²³ Karen DeYoung, "How the Obama White House Runs Foreign Policy," Washington Post, accessed June 2, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/how-the-obama-white-house-runs-foreign-policy/2015/08/04/2befb960-2fd7-11e5-8353-1215475949f4_story.html.

²⁴ William LeoGrande, Ernesto Londono, et al., "Obama's Rapprochement with Cuba: Influences and Influencers in Changing UNITED STATES Policy". Latin American Studies Association Congress Panel, May 29, 2016, New York, NY.

²⁵ Pietro Parolin, "Cardinal Parolin: on Holy See's role in US/Cuba agreement."

²⁶ Angelo Becciu, "Becciu: "Cuba and US signed deal restoring diplomatic relations in Parolin's presence".

²⁷ Constance Colonna-Cesari, *Dans les Secrets de la Diplomatie Vaticane*, p. 101.

to the minimum necessary for the Holy See to maintain its independence and voice among the forums of other states—which began in a real sense with the 1929 Lateran Accords between Italy and the Holy See—has accelerated under Francis. Not steeped in the history of monarchs and principalities but the product of a New World democracy/dictatorship/restored democracy polity, Francis appears to understand that the Vatican can play a most useful role as mediator between North (wealthy) and South (poor), and East (Russia et al.) and West (United States et al.) while focusing on the Catholic Church's essential mission to spread the Gospel.

Following on the success of his Cuba efforts, Francis visited Cuba and then the United States, during which he spoke, occasionally in English but most often in Spanish,²⁸ for harmony within the Catholic Church and for mutual respect between the institutions of the state and the Church. It is noteworthy that although he did not directly interpose himself in the ongoing dispute in the United States over the provision of contraceptives in health insurance policies as mandated by the Affordable Care Act, he made a detour from his planned itinerary while in Washington, D.C. to call on one of the principal litigants in the case, the Little Sisters of the Poor, at their Mother House. Few commentators noted the consistency of this action with his statements at Independence Hall two days later and several comments days earlier in Cuba calling for respect for religious freedom and the rights of individual believers as well as faith communities to enjoy freedom of belief and freedom of religious expression and practice.²⁹

The particular purposes that motivate Vatican diplomacy in the era of Francis reflect his commitment to spreading the Gospel by engaging with everyone regardless of their faith and their attitude toward faith. As Cardinal Parolin said in December 2014, Francis is leading his diplomats into a culture of encounter.³⁰ What other diplomatic initiatives might develop, particularly in Latin America?

Recent press reports reveal that the parties in conflict in Venezuela seek the Church to play a mediating role. The details of such a role will likely come to light only after a resolution between the pro- and anti-Maduro forces.³¹ Likewise, the Church is playing some role in the peace talks between the government of Colombia and the FARC, the details of which remain a matter of speculation.³² A role in Brazil also cannot be dismissed, though Francis took care in a recent meeting with supporters of Dilma Rouseff to stay out of that particular fray.³³ Possibly the greatest challenge for Vatican and Catholic church mediation efforts will be addressing Latin America's

²⁸ Francis can read a prepared and practiced text in English fairly well; but he struggled to pray the Our Father in understandable English at the close of his remarks (in Spanish) at Independence Hall. The author attended several of the Papal visit events, to include the September 25, 2015 speech at Independence Hall.

²⁹“Francis Praises ‘sacrifices’ of Cuba’s Catholic Church - The Washington Post,” accessed June 2, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/popes-outreach-to-cuba-moves-beyond-havana-after-stirring-welcome/2015/09/21/07c40780-6047-11e5-b38e-06883aacba64_story.html.

³⁰ Pietro Parolin, Pietro Parolin, “Cardinal Parolin: on Holy See’s role in US/Cuba agreement.”

³¹ “Pope Francis Writes Letter to Venezuelan President Maduro,” accessed June 2, 2016, http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2016/05/02/pope_francis_writes_letter_to_venezuelan_president_maduro/1227014.

³²Sibylla Brodzinsky, “Pope Francis Says Failure Not an Option in Colombia Peace Process,” *The Guardian*, September 20, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/20/pope-colombia-farc-peace-process-failure-not-an-option>.

³³ “Pope Francis Calls For ‘prayer and Dialogue’ in Brazil,” accessed June 2, 2016, http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2016/05/11/pope_francis_calls_for_prayer_and_dialogue_in_brazil/1228952.

spiraling violent crime, which confronts all the countries of the region but may not be amenable to diplomatic intervention, though encouragement from Rome to local Bishops and national Bishop Conferences could be a helpful role for the Vatican.

Francis has changed Vatican diplomacy in a small way that will reverberate across decades and regions of the world.³⁴ Francis' emphasis on a culture of encounter in which the marginalized of society are embraced, in which bridges, not walls, provide a metaphor for inter-state relations, in which the Church sincerely seeks to serve rather than to have its officials served, endows the Holy See with greater credibility as it seeks to mediate between parties in conflict. By abandoning most of the trappings of statehood and focusing on the essential elements of its position as a state leading a transnational organization, the Vatican can remain a state providing its good offices to other states while using its transnational character to serve efforts for international harmony. Likewise, by ending the political partisanship of local churches in several nations or at least reducing their identification with one particular political tendency, Francis has seized the moral high ground for the Holy See in diplomatic negotiations and mediation as well as the moral high ground for domestic churches – in effect, he has made the Holy See the ready, potential honest broker in disputes between states and the local Church the ready, potential mediator within states. Unlike diplomatic agents seeking greater influence and power for their states, Francis seeks opportunities for the Church to proclaim the Gospel, to bear witness, and to heal the divisions within Christianity that undermine the credibility of that Gospel proclamation – his goals and purposes are not those of a typical national leader, though the tools of discretion and credibility deployed by his diplomats are the same of any professional diplomat worthy of the name.

Francis can claim that his facilitation of improved United States-Cuban relations has contributed to moving forward toward his priority goals to spread the Gospel and unite Christians. At the very least, the Catholic Church in Cuba has more 'breathing room' for its efforts to re-evangelize the Cuban population. Also, the facilitation of Cuba-U.S. relations has worked to his advantage in efforts to reunite the factions of Christianity. In 2016, while on his way to an apostolic visit to Mexico, Francis met with the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church in Havana, a meeting his and Patriarch Kiril's staff had tried to arrange for about two years. Their efforts had foundered, in part, on disagreements over deciding on a neutral territory for the meeting, a visit by Francis to Moscow or Kiril to Rome being out of the question.³⁵ But Havana? A bit out of the way for both of them, but with Kiril on his way to visit Latin American Russian Orthodox communities and Francis on his way to Mexico, a stopover in Havana provided the neutral ground so long sought. The length and careful wording of the joint statement the two religious leaders signed bears witness to the amount of time spent negotiating this meeting. Ironically, Cuba and Raul Castro got to play the role of guarantor, witnessing the signing in Havana of a joint document

³⁴Associated Press, "Pope Francis Hails UNITED STATES -Cuba Relations as Model of Reconciliation," *Latimes.com*, accessed June 2, 2016, <http://www.latimes.com/world/mexico-americas/la-fg-pope-offers-solidarity-with-cuba-highlights-hispanics-in-us-20150919-story.html>.

³⁵"Pope Francis to Meet Patriarch Kirill of Moscow on February 12th," accessed June 2, 2016, http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2016/02/05/pope_francis_to_meet_patriarch_kirill_of_moscow_/1206182.

by the Roman Pontiff and Moscow Patriarch just as Cardinal Parolin had done in Rome months earlier between Cuban and U.S. representatives.³⁶

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³⁶ "Joint Declaration of Pope Francis and Patriarch Kirill," accessed June 2, 2016, http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2016/02/12/joint_declaration_of_pope_francis_and_patriarch_kirill/1208117.

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Appendix 1

Timeline: Vatican role in restoring relations

John Paul II visits Cuba	21-25 Jan 1998
Arrest of 5 Cuban intel agents; sentenced in 2011, one out in 2011; one out in 2014; three out on 17 dec 2014 ³⁷	12 Sept 1998
Alan Gross arrested ³⁸	3 Dec 2009

³⁷Council on Foreign Relations, “Timeline: UNITED STATES -Cuba Relations,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, accessed June 2, 2016, <http://www.cfr.org/cuba/timeline-us-cuba-relations/p32817>.

³⁸Ibid.

Ben Rhodes and Ricardo Zuniga have first face-to-face with Cuban delegates in Ottawa (http://www.as-coa.org/articles/infographic-timeline-us-cuba-rapprochement) ^{39,40}	June 2013
Obama and Raul shake hands at Mandela Funeral ⁴¹	11 Dec 2013
Obama meets Francis at Vatican ⁴²	27 Mar 2014
Cardinal Ortega and Francis discuss rapprochement in Rome at Canonization of JPII ⁴³	27 April 2014
Francis sends letters to Raul and Obama re humanitarian concerns about prisoners ⁴⁴	Summer 2014
Vatican hosts meeting of Cuban and United States delegations ⁴⁵	October 2014
Statement by the Press Secretary on the 5th Anniversary of Alan Gross' Imprisonment	3 Dec 2014
Castro-Obama phone call (numerous sources)	16 Dec 2014
White House Announcement-Alan Gross Released on humanitarian grounds; one asset swapped for 3 Cuban assets; (numerous sources)	17 Dec 2014
Obama and Castro meet at OAS summit	12 April 2015
Cuba removed from State Sponsor of Terrorism list ⁴⁶	29 May 2015
Formal re-establishment of Embassies	20 July 2015
Kerry Visits Cuba, raises flag in ceremony	August 2015
Francis visits Cuba and the United States ;	19-22 and 23-27 Sept 2015
Obama and Raul meet at UNGA	29 September 2015
Francis meets Kiril in Cuba	2 February 2016

³⁹ Americas Society/Council of the Americas, "Infographic: A Timeline of UNITED STATES -Cuba Rapprochement | AS/COA," accessed June 2, 2016, <http://www.as-coa.org/articles/infographic-timeline-us-cuba-rapprochement>.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶Bureau of Public Affairs Department Of State. The Office of Website Management, "Rescission of Cuba as a State Sponsor of Terrorism," Press Release|Press Statement, *UNITED STATES Department of State*, (May 29, 2015), <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/05/242986.htm>.

Obama visit	21 March 2016
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