

## **U.S., Cuba to hold migration talks next week**

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### **Body**

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HAVANA (AP) The **United States** and **Cuba** have agreed to **hold** immigration **talks** in Washington within days, a **U.S.** official said Saturday, the first since a similar meeting in Havana in February.

The **talks** scheduled for Friday are intended to monitor adherence to a 16-year-old agreement under which the **United States** issues 20,000 visas to Cubans a year, though in the past the sides have used the meeting to delve into more contentious issues.

In the last round of **talks**, **U.S.** diplomats pressed **Cuba** to release Alan Gross, a jailed American contractor that **Cuba** has accused of spying. Gross has been jailed for more than six months without charge.

The American delegation also met with dissidents in Havana, raising the ire of Cuban officials.

The latest round of **talks** will take place at an as-yet undetermined location in Washington, Gloria Berbena, a spokeswoman for the **U.S.** Interests Section in Havana, told The Associated Press. The **U.S.** maintains the Interests Section instead of an embassy.

After a brief period of hope that **U.S.** President Barack Obama would usher in a new era of rapprochement with America's longtime Caribbean foe, relations between the **United States** and **Cuba** have been on a downward trajectory for some months.

Fidel Castro, once a grudging admirer of the president, has been harshly critical lately of everything from Obama's work at global climate change **talks**, to America's backing of Israel, to the use of American soldiers as part of relief efforts in quake-ravaged Haiti.

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