

Senior US envoy to visit Cuba over normalized ties

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The top American envoy for Western Hemisphere affairs will travel to Havana on Jan. 21-22 for talks on reestablishing US-Cuba diplomatic relations, the State Department said Thursday.

Spokeswoman Jennifer Psaki said normalized ties between the two countries will be on the agenda of Roberta Jacobson, assistant secretary of state for Western Hemisphere affairs, when she visits Cuba as the highest-ranking US official over the years.

"The decision to reestablish diplomatic relations is certainly going to be a topic of that," Psaki told reporters at a daily news briefing. "And of course, issues surrounding that, including the reopening of embassies, requiring certain logistical arrangements, embassy operations, staffing, visa issues would also be topics as well."

US and Cuba moved on Dec. 17 to normalize relations following a bitter rivalry that had lasted for more than half a century, with an American embassy expected to be reopened in Havana within months.

Psaki declined to set a timeline for restored Washington-Havana ties, saying Jacobson's visit is "just the beginning" of bilateral discussions.

During her stay in Havana, Jacobson will also have a new round of talks on migration with Cuban officials, which were suspended in 2011 but resumed in July 2013, Psaki said.