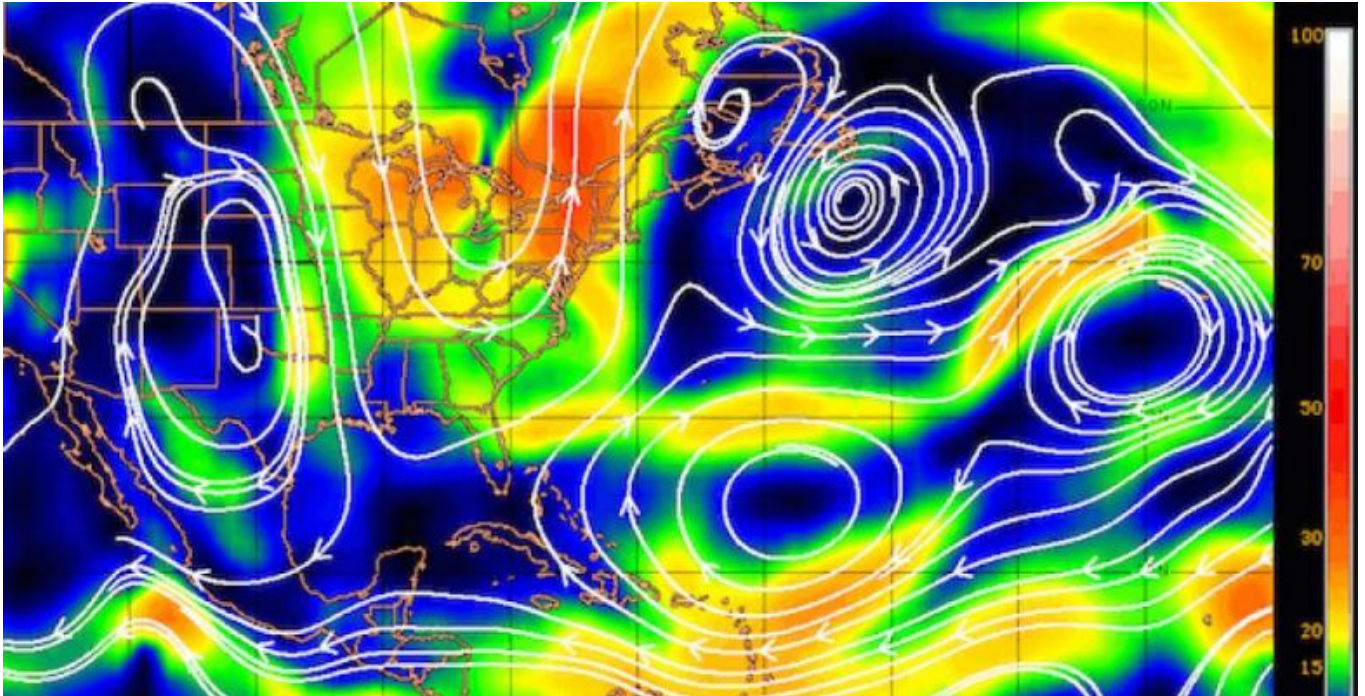


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**Cuba and the U.S. Have always Collaborated in Meteorology, Despite Confrontations**

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Despite the five-decade confrontation between Cuba and the United States, both countries have maintained permanent bilateral collaboration in the field of meteorology.

The fact that the two countries have been threatened by similar natural phenomena has been the key for systematic exchange over the years by Cuban and US meteorologists, said Doctor Jose Rubiera, who heads the Weather Forecast Center at the island's Meteorology Institute.

"Over the past fifty years and beyond any conflict between the two countries, we have maintained cordial, friendly and respectful relations with US meteorologists," Rubiera told Granma newspaper.

In the face of threats by any hurricane or other dangerous event, we exchange information, we talk on the phone and prepare the advisories and alerts to be announced. We put our weather stations and radars to the service of US meteorologists, while the Cuban government always grants the required permits for weather aircraft to enter Cuban airspace. The information collected by those planes is very beneficial for us as well as the forecast models of US experts, said the Cuban specialist.

He added that at different occasions US experts have visited the Cuban Meteorology Institute and attended scientific events here, while local specialists attended training courses at the headquarters of the National Hurricane Center, in Miami, Florida.

However, Rubiera pointed out that the US economic, commercial and financial blockade of Cuba has prevented the island from purchasing parts and equipment at the US market for local weather stations and from acquiring modern technology to receive satellite images.

For Doctor Rubiera, the willingness expressed by Washington and Havana to advance towards the normalization of bilateral relations would open doors to joint research projects in the field of meteorology and strengthen the island's

technological infrastructure. This, he said, would guarantee the safety of human lives in both countries and would further improve the operations of the meteorology systems.

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