

REPLY TO:

- 135 HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1501  
(202) 224-3744  
www.grassley.senate.gov
- 721 FEDERAL BUILDING  
210 WALNUT STREET  
DES MOINES, IA 50309-2106  
(515) 288-1145
- 111 7TH AVENUE, SE, BOX 13  
SUITE 6800  
CEDAR RAPIDS, IA 52401-2101  
(319) 363-6832

## United States Senate

CHARLES E. GRASSLEY

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1501

October 16, 2015

REPLY TO:

- 120 FEDERAL BUILDING  
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WATERLOO, IA 50701-5497  
(319) 232-6657
- 201 WEST 2ND STREET  
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DAVENPORT, IA 52801-1817  
(563) 322-4331
- 307 FEDERAL BUILDING  
8 SOUTH 6TH STREET  
COUNCIL BLUFFS, IA 51501-4204  
(712) 322-7103

The Honorable Barack Obama  
President of the United States of America  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Mr. President,

In a Rose Garden speech in July, you announced that the United States had agreed to formally re-establish diplomatic relations with the Republic of Cuba. You stated, "This is a historic step forward in our efforts to normalize relations with the Cuban government and people, and begin a new chapter with our neighbors in the America's." This move was expected to bring about greater engagement with the Cuban government.

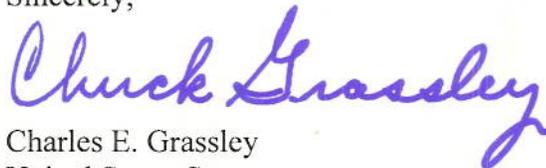
Press reports now indicate that hundreds of Cuban military personnel are on the ground in Syria, with the purpose of supporting Russia and Iran in bolstering the Assad regime. As Press Secretary Josh Earnest stated earlier this week, it is clear that Russia has its own agenda, and is not making a constructive contribution to our counter-ISIL effort. Russia's actions in Syria appear to be in direct contradiction to your statement of more than four years ago that "the time has come for President Assad to step aside." And now, Cuba is acting as a military partner to Russia and Assad.

It's disconcerting that in light of your new relationship with Cuba, the Castro regime has chosen to align with Russia and Iran in supporting Assad in Syria. You've called on Congress to take further actions to engage Cuba and normalize relations. However, just months after your "historic step forward" the regime of Raul Castro has essentially thumbed its nose at the U.S. by aligning with Russia, Iran and Assad in combating rebel fighters backed by the United States.

Are you disappointed by Cuba's decision to provide military support with Russia to back Assad? What actions do you plan to take with regard to Cuba's military involvement in Syria? What message have you or your administration conveyed to the Cuban government regarding its actions?

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley  
United States Senator

Committee Assignments:

AGRICULTURE  
BUDGET  
FINANCE

CO-CHAIRMAN,  
INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS  
CONTROL CAUCUS

CHAIRMAN,  
JUDICIARY