

# U.S. report on Cuba delayed by details

**A long-awaited report on U.S. policy toward Cuba was expected to be handed over to the White House this weekend, but officials have pushed back the date.**

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**WASHINGTON** - A long-awaited update from the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba, a keystone of President Bush's policies on the island, will not be delivered to the White House as scheduled on Cuban independence day Saturday, but should be in Bush's hands by month's end, U.S. officials say.

The commission's initial report in 2004 led to a severe curtailing of travel and remittances by Cuban Americans to the island, a detailed plan for the kinds of aid that Washington could offer Cuba after Fidel Castro leaves power and increased funding for pro-

democracy programs.

U.S. officials have declined to comment on what changes the commission might recommend in its new report, although some Cuba-watchers in Washington have been speculating that the panel will recommend even tighter restrictions on trips by U.S. academic and religious groups.

The new report was to have been delivered to the White House on Saturday, but officials said the date has been pushed back to later in the month because some of its details are still being worked out. Bush is expected to take some time to review the new recommendations and decide which ones he will implement, U.S. officials say.

The commission is officially headed by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, but the day-to-day work to write the new report has been coordinated by Caleb McCarry, the department's Cuba transition assistance coordinator.

Saturday is May 20, Cuban independence day and a date that Bush has sometimes used to make major Cuba policy announcements. He is expected to issue a statement on Cuba Saturday, but it's unclear whether, as he has done in the past, he also will host a ceremony for leading Cuban-Americans at the White House or visit South Florida's Cuban community.

The commission's new report was drafted through an inter-agency process that included input from the Departments of State, Commerce, Homeland Security, Labor, Housing and Urban Development, Justice and Energy, among others.

Bush came to Miami on May 20 2002, and launched the Initiative for a New Cuba, which challenged the island to open its economy and adopt political reforms. In return, the administration offered to work with Congress to ease trade and travel restrictions.

After receiving the commission's 2004 report, Bush cut back Cuban Americans' family visits to the island from once a year to once every three years and tightened the list of those on the island who can receive cash remittances and packages from the United States. Bush also called for spending an extra \$45 million over the following two years to "hasten" and prepare for a democratic transition in Cuba.