

# Congress of the United States

## Washington, DC 20515

May 21, 2024

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave SE  
Washington, D.C. 20528

The Honorable David Pekoske  
Administrator  
Transportation Security Administration  
6595 Springfield Center Drive  
Springfield, VA 20598

Dear Secretary Mayorkas and Administrator Pekoske:

We write today to express our profound concern and outrage over the invitation and tour of Miami International Airport (MIA) to members of the Cuban regime. It has been reported that these operatives accessed secure areas and were able to view sensitive security protocols of the airport. As you know, the Cuban regime is designated as a State Sponsor of Terrorism (SSOT) and has absolutely no reason to be invited to tour sensitive areas or view security protocols of an American airport which sole purpose is to safeguard the millions of travelers that pass through the U.S. commercial aviation system every year.

Secretary Mayorkas, this is now the second incident in which an agency that reports to you has invited members of Cuba's Communist Party to tour United States facilities and have access to sensitive areas. In February 2023, the United States Coast Guard (USCG) invited members of Cuba's Interior, Transportation and Foreign Relations ministries to visit USCG headquarters in Washington, D.C., and tour U.S. port facilities in Wilmington, North Carolina. In response, Congress added language to the National Defense Authorization Act FY24 that would prohibit these tours under the International Port Security Program to SSOT. Under your watch, Cuban operatives have again accessed sensitive, secure areas within the U.S. transportation system. Yet again, Congress must step in to prevent your Department and the Biden Administration from hosting individuals from a country which our Department of State has listed as a SSOT since 2021.<sup>1</sup>

Administrator Pekoske, during your testimony on May 15, 2024, before the House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Transportation and Maritime Security about TSA's FY25 Budget Request, you made no mention of this visit, nor did anyone from TSA notify Congress about an invitation to host operatives from a SSOT. This lack of transparency calls into question whether this omission was made purposely, or is an example of a gross lapse in judgment by TSA under your stewardship. Particularly concerning is that not a single TSA official raised alarms about this decision to host operatives from a country designated as a SSOT during the decision process.

Furthermore, an initial response from TSA indicated that the International Operations team coordinated with MIA in arranging this visit. This response contradicts the public testimony of the Director of MIA, Ralph Cutie, at a meeting of Miami-Dade County Commissioners on May 21, 2024. TSA's stated mission is

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.state.gov/state-sponsors-of-terrorism/>

to “protect the nation’s transportation systems to ensure freedom of movement for people and commerce.” Through these actions, you have violated this mission and made Americans less safe.

We expect that you will take this incident as seriously as we do and request a full explanation from both of you on how such an incident could occur. Within all applicable rules and regulations, please respond to the following questions by Friday, May 24, 2024.

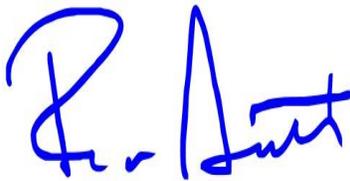
1. Under what statutory authority did TSA or the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) invite members of the Cuban Communist Party to tour sensitive areas of MIA?
2. What areas of MIA were accessed during their tour?
3. What U.S. airports have Cuban regime operatives, or representatives of other foreign countries designated by the Department of State as “State Sponsors of Terrorism,” toured under your leadership?
4. What security protocols does TSA have in place to vet foreign visitors on TSA-hosted tours of US airports?
5. What was the process for authorizing TSA-hosted foreign visitor tours? Did TSA follow this process for this particular incident?
6. What visas were issued to the Cuban operatives and when were their visas processed?
7. Who is the current Last Departure Airport (LPD) contact at MIA and when were they informed of the Cuban delegation’s tour?

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Rep. Carlos Gimenez  
Member of Congress



Senator Rick Scott  
Member of Congress



Senator Marco Rubio  
Member of Congress



Rep. Maria Elvira Salazar  
Member of Congress



Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart  
Member of Congress