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The end of era or the start of one?

by Dennis Coday

NCR Today

Do you remember this diplomatic incident from 2006? The U.S. mission in Havana installed a scrolling electronic sign to flash human rights messages in five-foot high crimson letters into Havana.

"The US described [the sign] as a way to convey information to the Cuban people but the real purpose was to irritate the Cuban government," explained said Dan Erikson, author of *The Cuba Wars* and an analyst at the Inter-American Dialogue think tank.

But in reality, he said, "It was basically a contest of which side could annoy the other the most."

Well, *The Guardian* of London is reporting that the sign has been turned off.

"The Obama administration is more interested in normalizing diplomatic channels and apparently did not see the sign as being conducive to that goal," said Erikson. He called the propaganda war surrounding the US mission in Havana as creepy, comical and slightly surreal.

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