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## U.S., MEXICAN LEADERS PLEDGE MUTUAL AID ON CUBA, IMMIGRATION

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President Barack Obama sought Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto's cooperation for help with U.S. policy changes on immigration and in securing the border between the two countries in a meeting Tuesday at the White House.

Messrs. Obama and Peña Nieto followed a wide-ranging agenda during the Oval Office conversation, discussing issues such as Cuba and security matters in addition to immigration policy.

Mr. Obama, who has announced sweeping executive actions that will give millions of illegal immigrants a temporary reprieve from deportation, thanked his Mexican counterpart for conveying the message that the new protections would apply to people who have been in the U.S. for at least five years.

Mr. Peña Nieto, speaking in Spanish, called the U.S. president's plan "intelligent" and "an act of justice" and said the Mexican government would ease the way for Mexicans in the U.S. to obtain documents needed to qualify for such programs.

Mr. Obama told Mr. Peña Nieto that his actions would be accompanied by an aggressive effort at the border to ensure that people come through the system legally.

Mr. Peña Nieto also said he would work with the U.S. as it moves to normalize relations with Cuba. Mr. Obama announced plans last month to restore diplomatic ties to Cuba after a half-century standoff – a decision that Mr. Peña Nieto called "audacious."

Mr. Obama has emphasized that the U.S. continues to be concerned about democracy and human rights in Cuba, and he said Tuesday that he would insist that those topics are on the agenda at the Summit of the Americas.

As the two leaders met in the Oval Office, the faint sounds of protesters assembled near the White House could be heard in the background.

About 50 demonstrators gathered to express anger over the disappearance of 43 university students who were allegedly killed by drug gunmen in September. Mr. Peña Nieto has faced months of protests in the wake of the presumed murders.

Mr. Obama called the situation "tragic," adding that the U.S.' commitment is to be a friend and supporter of Mexico in its efforts to eliminate the scourge of violence and drug cartels that are responsible for so many tragedies.

"We want to be a good partner in that process, recognizing that ultimately it's up to Mexico and its law enforcement to carry out," Mr. Obama said.

After the meeting, the two countries released a list of strategic goals for 2015, pledging to work together to deepen cooperation in the energy sector, make the border a source of shared economic opportunity and collaborate on workforce development.