

Cuba's False Prophets Predict This About America

Priests offering New Year's prophecies from Cuba's Afro-Cuban religion urged old Cold War foes Havana and Washington to continue rebuilding relations, and forecast that detente would bring economic benefits in 2015.

U.S. President Barack Obama and Cuban President Raul Castro announced last month they would move to renew diplomatic ties, potentially paving a way to end decades of hostility.

Many on the Caribbean island eagerly await the annual forecast from the Santería religion, which is practiced by 3 million Cubans and uses animal sacrifices to contact Yoruba deities originally worshiped by slaves brought over from Africa.

This year the priests, known as babalawos, predicted more conflicts between nations worldwide, the deaths of religious and political leaders, ecological strife and storm surges, as well as fatalities from inter-generational struggles.

One of the priests, Lazaro Cuesta, said building bridges for dialogue was key for the coming 12 months.

"All those who are involved in that, in all aspects of life, are called to victory," Cuesta told a news conference in Havana. "Those who put up walls and break down bridges are doomed."

The priest said the ruling deity, Baba Eyiope, is applauding the rapprochement announced on Dec. 17 by the U.S. and Cuban governments.

Cuesta said Baba Eyiope was telling world leaders, particularly those in Washington and Havana, "to use their heads as a fundamental basis for relations, their own

intelligence, and not to be influenced by the past, nor by circumstances created by some ill-intentioned people.”

He added: “God wants the dialogue to continue for everyone’s benefit.”

The Santeria priests said one of the slogans for 2015 chosen by the faith was: “Wisdom is the force that moves the Earth.”

They also prophesied that 2015 would offer economic benefits thanks to the Cuba-U.S. talks, but gave no other details. Cuba said in December that it expects GDP growth of 4 percent in 2015, following years of economic slowdown.

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