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I could be freaked out at this point. And I will admit to you that a few moments over the past two weeks have rocked me hard. The first was a very good window of weather without the Cuban visas in place. Ever since I first went to Cuba back in 1978, to try this swim the first time, I have been enamored of their culture, their art, their music, their architecture... and most especially their athletes. We have always had a mutually friendly, respectful rapport. So I am absolutely bewildered by this long, agonizing wait to have my visas cleared. I have no political agenda whatsoever. Where Cuba is concerned, my statement is innocent in that I simply want to reach out with an image of our two countries finally being in close touch, traveling easily back and forth, sharing our worlds. They are our distant neighbors, tragically, although they are so close that one could in fact even swim there.

As for the duress on my athlete self, this prolonged delay of the Dream has been extremely trying. I peaked, physically and mentally, in July. It is now approaching mid-September. I have had to re-strategize my training and keep my level of strength and stamina at a high, far beyond what I had originally planned. But the physical is actually easy, compared to the emotional. The constant teases of visas been completed, but then dashed, has been draining. And that's a huge understatement. The daily weather check, and I listen to five expert sources, from the larger global perspective to the knowledgeable locals here in the Key West waters, is akin to a lottery ticket holder holding their breath when the first 5 numbers are a match and they are on the edge waiting for that 6th number to be THE WINNER! At the moment, we are hoping, praying that Gaston will gather steam and start to head North in the Atlantic. This would cause a High pressure system to create South of it and likely calm down the seas here, in the Florida Straits between Key West and Havana. If Gaston flails and dissipates, its unorganized winds head East toward the Gulf Stream, causing peaks, very unfriendly to a swimmer. I must keep my heart and mind strong, in focus as I have been for 14 continuous months now. So I had a couple of down days, but now I'm back. Back believing. Don't lose faith. I need you.

Thank you
diana

Diana Nyad

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