
[Cuba and Russia look to the future of bilateral relations with optimism](#)



Russian-Cuban links have a long, fraternal history. Exchanges between our peoples dates back to the 18th century, when in 1782 the Russian doctor Fyodor Karzhavin arrived in Havana. After living in Cuba for two years, he came to agree with many of the principles that would later motivate Cubans to struggle for their independence from the Spanish colonial power.

In his chronicles published in the Russian press, in addition to referring to the island's natural attractions and Cuban culture, Karzhavin spoke out strongly against the inhumanity of slavery. During the war of independence, for the first time Russian and Cuban blood was united in the name of freedom, with three Russian mambi combatants joining the Liberation Army.

Official contact between Russia and the Republic of Cuba began in 1902, laying the foundation for bilateral relations between the two countries.

In the 20th century, characterized by geopolitical upheavals, the path was charted for the development of a common history between Russia and Cuba. At all times, the affinity shared by our peoples, our aspiration for justice and equal rights and the will to pursue a sovereign path of development have been

prioritized. We are united by fundamental values and a shared understanding of history.

This month, as we celebrate the 75th anniversary of the victory in the Great Patriotic War, it is important to remember that Soviet-Cuban relations were initially established in October of 1942, in the context of building a broad anti-fascist movement on the Island, when more than 100 Committees in Support of the USSR were active. Among the immortal heroes who gave their lives for the salvation of our civilization from the threat of fascism, we honor Cubans who fought far from their homeland, on the front lines during the World War II. Among these are Red Army soldiers Aldo Vivó Laurent, who died in Nevsky Pyatachok, and his brother, Jorge Vivó Laurent, who fought in the guerrilla detachment near Leningrad, as well as Enrique Vilar Figueredo, who fell battling for the liberation of Poland.

In 1952, in an international context characterized by the Cold War, the dictator Fulgencio Batista, in line with his political subordination to the United States, made the decision to break relations with the Soviet Union, ignoring the will of the Cuban people and the history of friendly relations between our countries in many arenas.

Extraordinary events took place during this period, including the famous rivalry between Alexander Alekhine and José Raúl Capablanca, who competed for the world chess title in 1927, as well as the cultural links symbolized by visits to Cuba of legendary ballerinas Anna Pávlova and Maya Plisetskaya, and the performances of Alicia Alonso at the Bolshoi Theatre, as true ambassadors of art.

After the triumph of the Cuban Revolution in 1959, the foundation of brotherhood between our nations was established. Comandante Fidel Castro Ruz promoted the reestablishment of diplomatic relations, which took place on May 8, 1960, reflecting the sincere friendship shared by our peoples, mutual respect for sovereign interests, and common aspirations in terms of economic and social development.

This relationship was progressively strengthened to become a strategic partnership that we have been able to consolidate, with active political dialogue at the highest level and agreement on the main issues of the international agenda.

The contemporary history of our countries has been written by figures recognized on a global level. The leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro Ruz, visited Russia for the first time as part of a historic tour of several Soviet Republics in 1963, which followed those made previously, in 1960 and 1962, by the first secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba, Army General Raul Castro Ruz - Minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces at that time. These visits were etched in the memories of citizens of both nations and opened the door to an intense agenda of exchanges at all levels in the following years.

The first Soviet cosmonaut, Yuri Gagarin, and Comandante Ernesto "Che" Guevara, founders the Cuba-USSR Friendship Societies, played an important role in strengthening ties between the two peoples.

Cuba and Russia share the satisfaction of seeing positive results from more regular visits at the highest level, the most recent in 2019 when Cuban President, Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, traveled to Moscow and held a fraternal meeting with his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin, among other important political and economic-commercial figures. The visit to Havana in October 2019 of the then Government President of the Russian Federation, Dmitri Medvedev, must also be highlighted.

In addition, ongoing exchanges at the parliamentary level continue, including the recent visit to Cuba by the President of the Federation Council, Valentina Matvienko, who led a Russian delegation to attend festivities for the 500th anniversary of Havana.

The two nations are implementing a bilateral economic agenda, principally through the Intergovernmental Commission for Economic-Commercial and Scientific-Technical Cooperation. Likewise, close work is being done to promote joint cooperation projects in the areas of energy, metallurgy, transportation, information technology, telecommunications, space research, combating climate change, biotechnology, public health and the pharmaceutical industry, with the Russian

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Federation participating effectively in Cuba's Plan for Economic and Social Development through 2030. These relations are based on a mutually advantageous foundation and focused on improving the quality of life of our citizens.

Cultural and humanitarian ties and people-to-people contacts are being actively expanded, while bilateral cooperation projects are progressing. A solid example is the restoration of the Capitol's dome in Havana, within the framework of celebrations of the 500th anniversary of the Cuban capital. Cuba has supported Russia in projects such as the application of the biopharmaceutical Heberprot-p in patients with diabetic foot, in which the work of the Russia-Cuba Center, located in the Russian region of Nizhny Novgorod, has played an important role, in addition to efforts in other regions including St. Petersburg, Tula, and Chelyabinsk.

In recent years, interest has increased among Russian citizens to learn about and enjoy Cuba's attractions, reflected in the more than 100,000 tourists from the country who visit the island every year.



Raúl's visits in 1960 and

1962 preceded Fidel's historic tour.

Photo: Granma Archives

The governments of our countries consider of great benefit the political consultations conducted by our foreign ministries, in which opinions are exchanged on the international agenda's most pressing issues. We share interest in the observance of the norms of international law, as established in the UN Charter, as well as respect for sovereignty and non-intervention in the internal affairs of third states. We work together to build a more just and democratic system of international relations, one which offers equal opportunities for the sustainable development of all countries.

The signing of the Joint Declaration on General Focus in International Affairs, by Presidents Vladimir Putin and Miguel Díaz-Canel, during the latter's visit to Moscow in 2018, demonstrates our commitment to the formation of a multilateral and multipolar world order, which reflects the plurality of models of political, socio-economic and cultural development; guarantees international peace and security, global and regional stability, the sovereign equality of states, and justice; and respects the rights and freedoms of individuals.

Our countries firmly reject attempts to rewrite history, to provoke division among peoples, promote revolutions of different "colors" and "regime change" against "inconvenient" governments. We condemn the imposition of foreign ideologies and the distortion of the truth to serve interventionist political agendas.

The Russian people stand in unconditional solidarity with the Island of Freedom in its struggle for the immediate and unconditional lifting of the U.S. blockade against Cuba, in place for more than 60 years. It rejects the application of unilateral sanctions, the pretensions of exclusion and world domination, as well as the undermining of principles of international law.

The adoption of the resolution "The necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba," at the 74th session of the UN General Assembly, reaffirmed the international community's practically unanimous rejection of this criminal, unjust policy.

For their part, the Cuban government and people condemn Washington's implementation of aggressive policies toward the Russian Federation, support Moscow in its call for dialogue as a means of resolving differences, and reject the use of subversive methods for ends that do not respond to the interests of the Russian people.

In view of the new international context created by the sars-cov-2/covid-19 pandemic, Cuba and Russia are convinced that the times demand cooperation and solidarity, and insist that an international, politically unbiased effort to develop and share scientific research and exchange experiences of various countries in preventive work, protection of the most vulnerable and social practices will help to shorten the duration of the pandemic and reduce the loss of life. Both governments strongly believe that the role and leadership of the United Nations and the World Health Organization are essential.

Cuba and Russia look to the future of bilateral relations with optimism and continue to work to fully defend their sovereignty and independence, as well as the right to ensure security and construct their own destinies. We have all the means and resources to advance toward these ends and the conviction that our chosen path is the correct one.

Note: Joint article by the ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Cuba, on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the restoration of Russian-Cuban diplomatic relations.

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