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Havana and the world: Al Mayadeen interviews the Cuban President (Part 2)

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In an exclusive interview for Al Mayadeen, the Cuban President talks about Cuba's stance on the war in Ukraine and his country's relationship with Russia, China, and other countries.





Media Network Chairman Ghassan Ben Jeddou interviews Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel. Photo: Al Mayadeen

- Part I: [Cuban Revolution, U.S. embargo: Al Mayadeen interviews the Cuban President](#)



During the second part of Al Mayadeen Media Network Chairman Ghassan Ben Jeddou's interview with Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel,

the president discusses Cuba's assessment of current alliances, in addition to its position on the war in Ukraine.



The Cuban president discussed the solid relationship that consolidates his country with Russia, China, and Iran, as well as his country's relationship with Latin American leaders and what he aspires for in the Arab region. He also expressed his admiration for Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, and his desire to visit Damascus this year.



The world that Cuba aspires to



During his interview with Al Mayadeen, Diaz-Canel said that "the assessment of alliances in today's world must be on the current context, and on an analysis of the current situation," noting that this is related to what happened in the world, as the world is going through a multidimensional crisis.



He stresses that the situation has also been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, which has plunged the world into a state of uncertainty.



Diaz-Canel added, "Instead of enforcing the language of cooperation and respect for one another, the world has resorted to imposing new sanctions and resolving conflicts using the language of war." "This is not the world we want and I think it is not the world that the majority of people on Earth want."



"Today," the Cuban president said, "we need a world capable of globalizing solidarity, peace, and friendship, a world that has a system of relations that defends pluralism," noting that "this world is being built in accordance with common values based on peace, solidarity, friendship, and pluralism, which are capable of preserving, first and foremost, the human race."



He added that this issue was former Cuban President Fidel Castro's concern from an early age, and it was mentioned in many of his messages to the world on various international occasions and that Cuba aims to resolve conflicts through dialogue and for the world to become more democratic.



The Cuban president asserted to Al Mayadeen the need to change the "current global economic system, because it is based on exploitation and inequality, serves the rich at the expense of the majority of the world's poor, and does not offer developing countries any alternatives, as it is subject to the interests of military-industrial complexes and great Western powers."



If "we are able to achieve alliances that contribute to achieving pluralism, understanding, respect for others, and the struggle for peace... these alliances will then be valid and supportive."



In the same context, he refers to the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of America (ALBA), the alternative adopted by Latin America to confront the ALCA Free Trade Agreement, which represents an imperialist project.



One of the most important reasons for the success of these alliances is, according to Diaz-Canel, that they are based on cooperation, solidarity, and sincere stances and not on concepts that prioritize money and the economy.



The president stressed that the Cuban revolution is based on sharing what it has with others, and that this is what the future of the world should be like.



Blame for Russia-Ukraine war lies with Washington



Regarding Cuba's position on the Russian-Ukrainian war, Diaz-Canel stressed that this conflict has serious consequences for the world, not just the parties involved.



The president accused Washington of using its power of influence through the media to spread Russophobia and disinformation on the origin of the conflict, labeling Russia as a culprit while concealing the real reasons behind the war.



He stressed that “the culprit in this conflict is the United States itself, which resorts to wars to solve its problems and overcome its crises,” adding that “Washington puts the interests of the military-industrial complex at the forefront, as it needs the war to sell weapons and to solve the internal problems it suffers from.”



The Cuban president indicated that the US has always sought to encircle Russia by promoting NATO expansionism on its borders, which he says Russia is aware of. The countries that are accomplices in the war will lose the most, he added, as they began to suffer from food shortages and an energy crisis, while those directly involved in the conflict are losing human lives.



The biggest beneficiary of the war, he said, is the US administration, and there need to be initiatives at the international level that facilitate the process of dialogue between the concerned parties to put an end to the war.



Diaz-Canel reiterated his country's disapproval of the continued use of the language of war and the imposition of sanctions against Russia instead of dialogue, as these measures do not solve crises, but rather exacerbate the state of war. He added that the way Western nations are dealing with the crisis may drag the world into a possible world war.



He further wondered how Europe, which was the theater of two previous world wars, and the theater for Fascism and Nazism, is incapable of extracting the necessary lessons from history to play an effective role in avoiding a third world war.



Cuba's relationship with China



Speaking about Cuban-Chinese relations, the president stressed that his country and China enjoy historical and friendly relations based on common principles that bring the two countries together.



He added that his country shares convictions with China regarding a structured socialist path in both countries that takes into account the specificities of each; both countries also share strong relations at the levels of their governments, peoples, and parties (the Communist Party of China and the Communist Party of Cuba).



Diaz-Canel praised the Chinese model of socialism and reform and its establishment of a firm economic base, which transformed it into one of the world's great powers. He added that China adopted a distinguished position in terms of cooperation and solidarity, as is the case in Cuba, referring in this context to the initiatives and proposals presented by Chinese President Xi Jinping to achieve more harmony on the global level.



The Cuban president said that during his visit to China at the end of last year, he felt assured by the clear [Chinese desire to support Cuba](#) out of its crisis. He pointed out that during the visit, decisions were taken regarding the development of bilateral relations.



He said that China is one of Cuba's main economic partners and that it is directly involved with Cuban energy, transportation, and telecommunication projects, referring also to the wide exchange between the two countries in terms of education, culture, science, technologies, and innovation, calling China "a friend of Cuba."



Cuba's relationship with Russia



Regarding Cuban-Russian relations, Diaz-Canel affirmed the high level of political, economic, and commercial relations between Moscow and Havana.



He added that Russia is present in the most strategic sectors that were developed within the national plan for economic and social development in Cuba until 2030: the energy sector, transportation and communications, cybersecurity, the mineral sector, the industrial sector, and in food production.



"There is a whole range of projects under development jointly with Russia."



Diaz-Canel discussed how Russia sent a plane to assist his country during the Covid-19 pandemic and placed it at the disposal of Havana to transport oxygen cylinders imported from various places in Latin America and the Caribbean. He added that while Cuba was in a crisis, Russia donated factories to help it produce oxygen, and many concentrators, as did China.



The Cuban president touched on his [recent visit to Russia](#), pointing out that he saw that Russian President Vladimir Putin understood Cuba's problems and Moscow's political and governmental will to help alleviate the problems his country suffers from. He added that since that visit, Cuba has constantly been updated with regard to the agreements with Moscow, especially concerning energy and food.



He stressed that China and Russia are friendly states and that Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin have demonstrated the will to embody a true friendship with Cuba.



During the interview with Al Mayadeen, the Cuban president did not hide his admiration for his Russian counterpart, pointing out that Putin's speeches are rich in historical references. He added that Putin is constantly referring to lessons from history in order to reaffirm what is happening today, and what needs to be done in the future.



He added that "I don't think it was Putin who caused the conflict with Ukraine, they were about to impose a siege on the Russian Federation," pointing out that the Russian president is defending Russia's interests and security.



"Dialogue with the Russian president is not impossible, but rather possible, provided that it is linked to a sincere will and without the imposition of preconditions."



Cuba's relationship with Iran



Speaking about Cuban-Iranian relations, the Cuban president described Iran as Cuba's sister nation. He said that the foundations of the [relationship between the two countries](#) are based on history and mutual respect, as well as the great resistance that the two people waged in the face of imperial blockades and sanctions.



According to the Cuban president, "the Cuban and Iranian people share an understanding of resistance, courage, heroism, dignity, and defiance to the plans of imperialist power."



He also expressed his appreciation for the Iranian leader, Sayyed Ali Khamenei, as a politician and as the leader of the Iranian Revolution, admiring his “tremendous capability for logical thinking and analysis,” also describing him as a wise leader.



The Cuban president indicated that the two countries are working on joint projects that serve the economic development of both, especially in the fields of energy and food. He pointed out that Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi might visit his country while also expressing his desire to visit Tehran this year.



Diaz-Canel stressed to Al Mayadeen that this year will witness a deepening of relations between the two countries, and the adoption of projects that are of mutual benefit. He specified both nations share mutual projects that include scientific research, technology, and energy.



The Cuban president expressed his admiration for Iran's culture, civilization, and resistance against aggression, and said that the technological development that Iran has achieved despite the embargo and sanctions is very important, and multifaceted, pointing out that being familiar with Iran's development can benefit Havana.



Cuba's relationship with Latin American leaders



Regarding Cuba's relationship with Latin American leaders, the Cuban president said that his country has [deep ties with four Latin American leaders.](#)



Cuba and Venezuela



Diaz-Canel pointed out that the late Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez sowed hope in Venezuela, shining throughout Latin America, and that Venezuela has always been an important country and played a key role in Latin America, especially during Chavez's leadership of the Bolivarian Revolution.



He added that many values have come together in Chavez, as he was Bolivarian in thought par excellence, was well versed in the history of Latin America and the Caribbean, and was an exceptional defender of Simon Bolivar's thought and of the pioneers of liberation in Latin America.



The Cuban president noted that “Chavez was able, as an exemplary leader, to understand the concerns and aspirations of the Venezuelan people,” adding that the friendship between former Cuban President Fidel Castro and Chavez, “was like a father-son relationship.”



In this context, he referred to the achievements made by the two countries during the Chavez and Fidel eras, especially with regard to the ALBA.



He added that when Chavez was head of the Bolivarian Revolution, he was preparing cadres who were distinguished by their true commitment to the revolution’s path, to the Venezuelan people, and their loyalty to the revolution, referring in this context to Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro.



The Cuban president described Maduro as a brother to Cuba, and admired how he defended the Bolivarian Revolution against all destabilization attempts planned by the US government. He pointed out that "Maduro, with his efforts and persistence, was able to achieve civil-military unity, preserve the Bolivarian Revolution, and move it forward on the path of victory."



Cuba and Colombia



Speaking about Colombia, the Cuban president said that there is now a government in Colombia that prioritizes dialogue with Venezuela, adding that Nicolas Maduro and Gustavo Petro have agreed on a whole set of measures that also aim to ensure peace in one of Latin America's most important regions.



Cuba and Brazil



The Cuban president also described his Brazilian counterpart, Lula da Silva, as an exceptional leader, pointing to his prominent role in extracting Brazil from its economic crisis, which turned it into a reference for what can be achieved in the policy of social justice, adding that “Lula doesn’t suit US interests, so the administration worked to discredit him by fabricating legal cases against him.”



He added that Lula did not surrender and did not accept any conditions to be imposed on him, despite his imprisonment and the pressure exerted on him to subdue him. He complimented the Brazilian president, stressing that his new projects help develop programs and investments in the country.



Cuba and Nicaragua



The Cuban president also expressed his admiration for the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua, noting that it was a success the United States could not bear, and against which it launched a fierce campaign of destabilization, backed by a fierce media campaign to discredit Nicaragua.



“Therefore, I believe that whenever we want to assess the situation in Nicaragua, we must start from where we proceed in our analysis of what the Sandinista revolution contributed to in the areas of economic and social development for the Nicaraguan people, and what the Sandinista revolution means in terms of building a state with national security, and remove everything related to imperialist distortion and tampering.”



Cuba's relationship with the Arab world



Regarding the island's relationship with the Arab world, Diaz-Canel affirmed that Havana has good relations with Arab countries based on respect and mutual understanding of the historical and cultural specifics of each country.



He pointed out that there was space for cooperation, for the defense of common struggles, and coordination of efforts in international forums, adding that Cuba has always felt the solidarity and support of the Arab communities.



Diaz-Canel stressed that there is room to deepen the already

strong ties on the economic and commercial level, as the historical foundations laid out for these relations are strong and Cuba looks to strengthen this relationship with the Arab world.



The Cuban president expressed his admiration for Syria's courage, steadfastness, and self-confidence in the face of an aggressive campaign aimed at destroying it, noting that Syria, after many years of the unjust war against it, remained a strong and united nation.



In this context, he praised the role of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, "The Syrian president has shown sincerity to his people and has remained at the forefront without giving up... I have always seen a great deal of steadfastness and composure in him."



Before concluding the interview with Al Mayadeen, the Cuban President renewed his support for Syria, saying that Havana will remain with the Syrian people, and condemned the ongoing Israeli aggression against it, as well as

the sanctions imposed on the Syrian people.



The Cuban president expressed his desire to visit Damascus this year and admired the nation's steadfastness and the solidity and dignity of the Syrian people.



Source: [Al Mayadeen English](#)



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