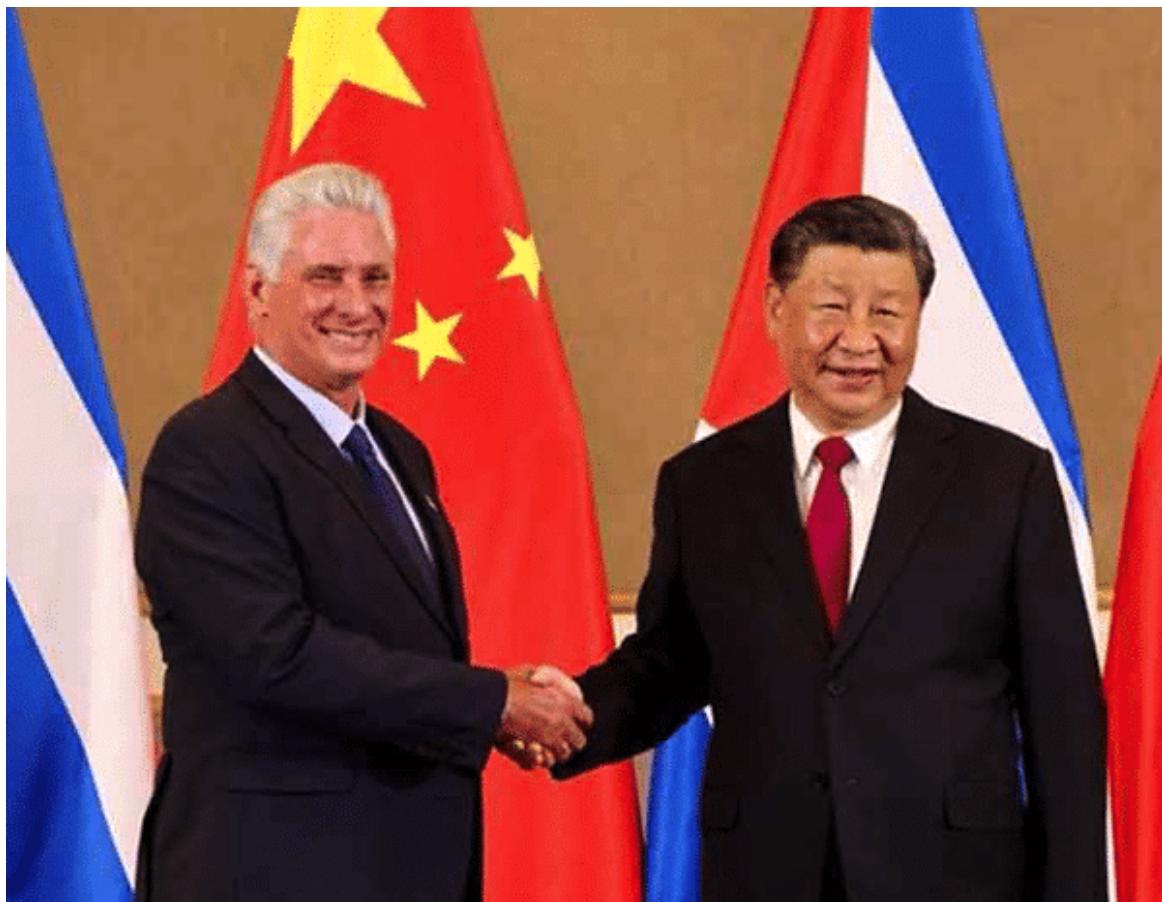


China's Xi vows to support Cuba in defending Cuba's sovereignty

written by Countercurrents

August 25, 2023



President Miguel Diaz-Canel and President Xi Jinping.

China's President Xi Jinping has pledged to support Cuba's defense of its national sovereignty, opposing foreign interference and a U.S. economic blockade, and will expand strategic coordination with Havana.

Xi made the remarks in a meeting with Cuba's President Miguel Diaz-Canel on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit in Johannesburg on Wednesday, according to a statement from the Chinese foreign ministry on Thursday.

"China highly appreciates Cuba's consistent firm support for China on issues involving China's core interests, and will continue to firmly support Cuba in defending its national sovereignty, opposing foreign interference and blockade, and doing its best to provide support for Cuba's economic and social development," Xi said at the meeting, according to the release.

During talks, Diaz-Canel labeled Cuban-Chinese relations at an "all-time high."

"The Cuban people greatly admire President Xi Jinping and sincerely thank China for its understanding and valuable support for Cuba's just cause," Diaz-Canel said at the meeting, which was also attended by Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

The meeting between the two leaders comes months after a media report surfaced that China had reached a secret deal with Cuba to establish an electronic eavesdropping facility on the island. But the U.S. and Cuban governments cast strong doubt on the report.

China quickly denounced the U.S. government and media for releasing what it called inconsistent information, calling the allegations false.

Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez met with Xi Jinping in the framework of the XV BRICS Summit.

From his Twitter account, the Cuban president announced the meeting and expressed the decision of both presidents to comply with the collaboration agreements between the nations. It said: **“In the context of the XV Summit of the #BRICS, I met with the President of the People’s Republic of China, Xi Jinping. We ratified the will to implement the important consensuses adopted during our visit to Beijing in 2022 for the benefit of both peoples.”**

Díaz- Canel Bermúdez pointed out that “we noted a willingness to deepen inter-party ties and the close ties of friendship and cooperation.”

“I appreciated China’s solidarity and support for the just demand for the end of the blockade and the exclusion of Cuba from the list of state sponsors of terrorism,” said Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez.

The Cuban president also held a meeting with leaders of the tripartite alliance of the South African Government, made up of the African National Congress, the South African Communist Party, and the Congress of South African Trade Unions.

“We expressed the willingness of our Communist Party of Cuba (PCC) to continue strengthening party ties. I appreciated the support and solidarity with Cuba,” said the head of state.

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