

Russia and Cuba, beyond warships

written by Mi Cuba por Siempre

June 15, 2024



Russian naval detachment docks in Cuba.

While the international media only report on the arrival of a Russian naval detachment in Cuba, relations between the Russian Federation and Cuba go much further and are getting stronger. Unlike the policy of Joe Biden's administration, which is focused on maintaining the economic and financial persecution measures against the island, the Russian government is working together with the Cuban government to reach mutually beneficial agreements, which you will evidently not read about in the major press chains.

Bruno Rodriguez Parrilla, Minister of Foreign Affairs, [visited Russia to attend a meeting of the BRICS Plus Forum](#) and to hold official talks with his Russian counterpart. At the same time, several news reports confirmed the strengthening of economic ties between Havana and Moscow.



Bruno Rodriguez Parrilla, Cuba's Minister of Foreign Affairs meeting with Sergey Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.

Within the framework of the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum Sputnik news agency announced that the Russian Deputy Energy Minister, Evgeni Grabchak, said that there is an intention to build renewable energy facilities in Cuba.

He pointed out that they are working on the modernization of thermal power plants and specified that: "as regards the construction of power plants and networks, it is above all with Cuba, with which we maintain an intense collaboration (...) in relation to the energy projects that we are implementing, some of which are related to the construction of renewable energy facilities".

Likewise at the Forum, the Russian Ministry of Agriculture informed TASS news agency, that that country "has all the necessary resources to expand supplies of products of the agro-industrial complex to Cuba."

"Russia and Cuba are historically united by close relations. Not only is political dialogue developing, but also economic-trade cooperation is gaining momentum," the ministry officially reported, noting also that in 2023 the volume of Russian-Cuban trade in agro-industrial products increased twice compared to 2022.

On the other hand, the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) announced the signing of a cooperation project with BioCubaFarma, to invest more than 11.2 million dollars in the development of innovative drugs against geriatric and oncological diseases.

On the subject, the general director of the fund, Kiril Dmitriev, informed the press that: "the BioCubaFarma company has become the first partner of RDIF in Cuba (...) investments in the biopharmaceutical industry will facilitate assistance to a greater number of patients and will significantly expand the capabilities of Russian medicine". They also point out that the fund gives full priority to the health sector and the initial financing approved could increase tenfold, exceeding \$100 million in

the future.

Also, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Chernyshenko proposed the prompt issuance of Mir cards in the territory of Cuba, which would allow Cuban tourists to pay for goods and services in the territory of Russia and transfer money by card number, thus establishing a direct monetary flow between people in both countries.

“The next stage in the development of retail payments could be the issuance of Mir cards on the territory of Cuba. Taking into account the great social importance of this project, we propose to initiate its practical development,” the official said. This could be accomplished in the very short term due to the recent approval of a Russian bank branch in Havana.

Regarding the MIR, the Cuban state-owned Fincimex reported the execution up to May of at least 67,000 transactions in Cuba since the establishment of the system in December 2023, which means an incentive to tourism from Russia.

Finally and most importantly, the director of the Latin American department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Alexander Shetinin, declared that “there are advances” in the negotiations on the de-dollarization of trade with countries of this region and Russia, where the largest of the Antilles is included.

According to the note published by RT, there is a “process of negotiations between banking and business entities [...] on the search for the most acceptable and comfortable forms of interaction to ensure trade and economic ties between our countries”.

The talks on the transition to alternative forms of financial transactions include the proposed use of national currencies or the use of the MIR system with direct payments; the latter seems to be the most promising option with tangible steps forward for Cuba.

Abandoning the use of the dollar in commercial exchange is a strategic step for both Cuba and Russia, due to the application of unilateral sanctions of all kinds to the financial sector of both countries by the US.

Taking into account all of the above, we can affirm that, while the Western media tries to sell Russia as that malevolent enemy that comes to invade your lands, unlike those who try to impose their interests with pure bombs, the Russian Federation maintains mutually beneficial relations of cooperation and complementation with Cuba, which go far beyond the simple arrival of warships to this Caribbean island.

Source: [Razones de Cuba](#), translation by Internationalist 360°

