

Monument in Memory of Fidel Castro's Political Struggle

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Under the auspices of an official state visit to attend the unveiling of a statue in memory of former leader Fidel Castro in northwestern Moscow, Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel Bermudez unreservedly expressed support for anti-American position taken by Russia, recalled the history of Cuba and the Soviet Union during the Cold War when both shared the same stand.

Diaz-Canel Bermudez highlighted the significance of the visit to Moscow. Cuba and Soviet Union had similar experience, both were blockaded.

"It takes place at a time when both Russia and Cuba have been subjected to unfair unilateral sanctions and have a common enemy, a common source which is the Yankee empire, which manipulates a large part of humankind," he said. "We constantly condemn the sanctions imposed on the Russian Federation and the sources of the ongoing conflict so that people are not misled and do not blame Russia for this, and we also condemn what Europe is doing, being completely subordinate to US interests."

Referring to the unveiling of the monument, he described it as a true reflection of Fidel Castro's personality in the midst of struggle, just like in the midst of struggle today. He denounced the imperialist powers and further praised all efforts of the Russian Federation and, under such complicated circumstances, Russia's role in orienting the world towards multi-polarity.

Russia can always rely on Cuba. Moscow and Havana will continue to strengthen cordial bilateral relations and defend the great values of freedom, equality and justice. The principle of continuity, not just a slogan or a motto, but to continue promoting relations with the Russian Federation. Cuban leader thanked Russia for its support for his country and spoke in favor of expanding economic cooperation between the two countries.

President Vladimir Putin noted in his speech that the bilateral relations between Cuba and

Russia have been making steady headway in the past three years since the previous meeting in the Kremlin. He pointed to the appreciable developing cooperation between foreign ministries, parliaments and governments. State Duma Speaker Vyacheslav Volodin visited Cuba quite recently.

The Russia-Cuba Intergovernmental Commission is working. It held its 19th session. There are plans for cooperation between the governments with many joint projects up to 2030. Cuba maintains a cautious stance based on the need to maneuver between Russia who is capable of providing it with considerable support, and the United States who is gradually going back to Barack Obama's policy aimed at restoring relations, which was suspended by Donald Trump.

Cuba does not have much importance for Russia as a trade partner. At the same time, there is a lot of Soviet and Russian made civilian equipment in the Caribbean island country, as well as infrastructure facilities built with Moscow's assistance. The maintenance of those equipment and infrastructure that are currently of interest to Russia.

That however, Putin stressed that the Soviet Union and Russia have always supported the Cuban people in their struggle for independence and sovereignty.

"We have always opposed any restrictions, embargoes, blockades and so on. We have always backed Cuba on international platforms. We are seeing that Cuba occupies the same position with respect to our country, to Russia," he added.

All this is a result of the traditional friendship that was started by Comrade Fidel Castro. Today, Cuba and Russia agreed to have unveiled a monument to him. Indeed, this is a good memory of him, a true work of art. He is so dynamic, always in motion, moving forward. It definitely captures the look of a fighter that he had.

Putin really remembered his personal meetings very well, even the details with him.

"He was an impressive man. I remember how during our first meeting in his office when we were freely discussing the current situation during lunch, I was stunned by his attention to detail and his knowledge of the nuances of ongoing events, even if they took place far away from Cuba," he narrated the story.

"He was aware of and could analyse everything happening in the world. It was very interesting and useful for me to have these meetings with him. Relying on this firm foundation of friendship, we must certainly move forward and enhance our cooperation in the current conditions," Putin said in conclusion.

Work on the bronze-made three-meter-monument lasted for six months and took place in the Russian capital. Castro is depicted seated on a rock with a stylized map of Cuba inscribed on it. The image reflects the heroic path of a person who stood up for the rights and freedoms of the Cuban people, according to the Kremlin's press service fact sheet.

The Moscow city legislature approved the idea of such a monument on February 16. The initiative to erect a monument to Fidel Castro came from the leadership of the Russian Defense Ministry. The idea was supported by the Russian Military-Historical Society which held a closed artistic contest with 11 works participating.

The monument was erected on Moscow's square named in honor of Castro. Cuba has been

under a U.S. embargo since 1962 after the Communist revolution. Fidel Castro was one of the leaders of Cuba's revolutionary movement who chaired Cuba's Council of Ministers from 1959 to 2008. The Cuban politician died in 2016.

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