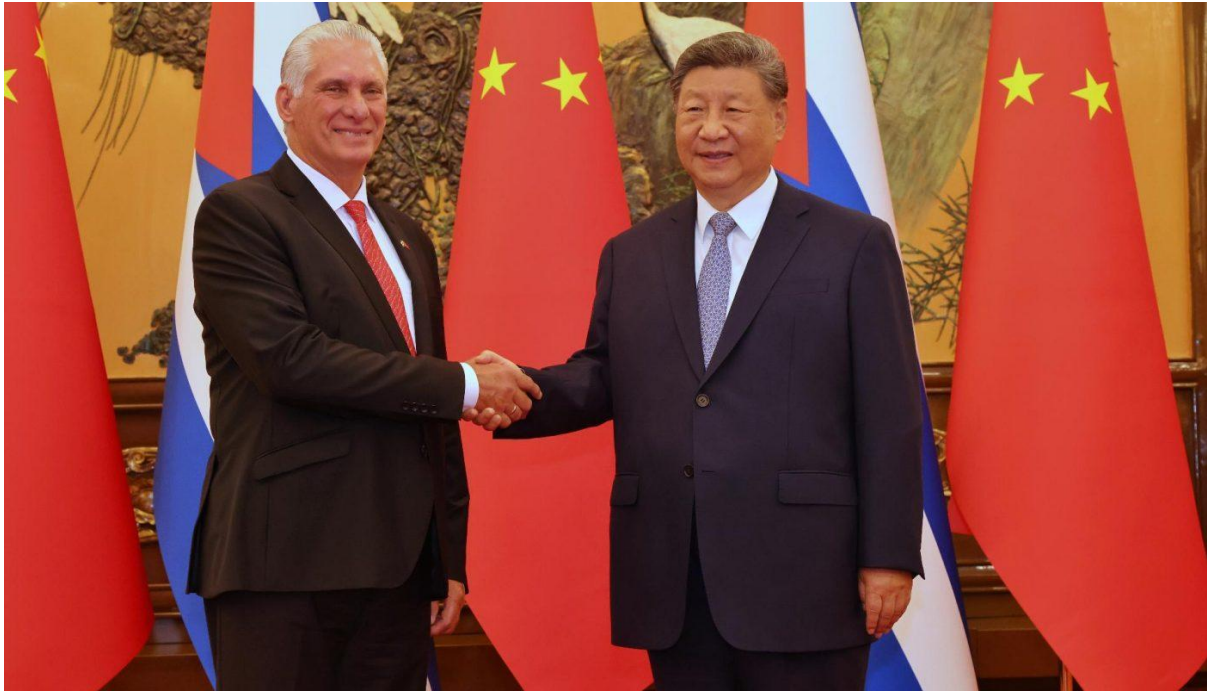


Díaz-Canel strengthens Cuba's relations with Vietnam, China, and Laos



Díaz-Canel during his meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping (Source: [Alejandro Azcuy/Presidencia](#))

Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel [set off](#) on an official trip to Vietnam, China, and Laos last Saturday to deepen political and economic relations with the three Asian countries.

“This weekend, we are beginning official visits to Vietnam, China, and Laos, brother nations with whom we share deep ties and a common history of cooperation and solidarity,” Díaz-Canel wrote on Platform X. The trip aims to strengthen historically developed bilateral relations.

For several years, Cuba has been deepening its friendly relations with the three countries, which consider themselves socialist brother states, to the level of a strategic partnership.

Vietnam overtakes China

Most recently, Vietnam in particular has established itself alongside China as [Cuba's most important economic partner in Asia](#). The country is now Cuba's second-largest trading partner worldwide and the most important capital investor from the Asian region. The bilateral trade volume amounts to approximately US\$340 million.

Vietnam mainly exports rice, coal, chemicals, textiles, and electronic components to Cuba, while Cuba primarily supplies pharmaceutical products. During the coronavirus pandemic, both countries cooperated on vaccines: Cuba's [“Abdala” vaccine](#) was also used in Vietnam. There are now more than 50 bilateral cooperation agreements in place.

Farmland transferred to foreign companies for the first time

At the beginning of the year, [state-owned farmland was transferred to Vietnamese companies](#) for cultivation for the first time—an unprecedented step by the Cuban government. The private Vietnamese company Agri VAM, a subsidiary of the food producer Fujinuco Group, received 1,000 hectares for rice cultivation in the province of Pinar del Río. A [documentary was filmed](#) about the successful project in collaboration with Vietnamese television and broadcast simultaneously in both countries on September 2.

During his visit to Hanoi, Díaz-Canel announced that a further 2,000 hectares would be transferred to Vietnamese companies for agricultural projects ([Cuba Today reported](#)). The contracts with Vietnamese companies are the only known cases in which Havana has ceded state land to foreign companies.

The Cuban president emphasized that his country was prepared to create “an increasingly attractive environment for Vietnamese entrepreneurs” through “facilitation and incentives.” A high-level return visit by Vietnamese Communist Party General Secretary To Lam to Havana is scheduled to take place at the end of the year.

Military cooperation expanded

In addition to economic cooperation, both countries also [agreed to](#) expand military and intelligence cooperation. A joint statement said the governments had agreed to “close cooperation in the areas of defense, security, and foreign policy.”

Díaz-Canel had already stated in his speech in Hanoi that the expansion of cooperation in these areas was “a further expression of mutual trust.” In recent months, several exchange programs have taken place, involving Cuban Defense Minister Álvaro López Miera and Interior Minister Luis Alberto Álvarez Casas. In return, Vietnamese Deputy Minister and Chief of Staff Nguyen Tan Cuong traveled to Havana in June.

Biotech cooperation and “iron friendship” with China

After Vietnam, Díaz-Canel traveled on to China, where he attended the military parade on Tiananmen Square in Beijing on Wednesday. The parade marked the 80th anniversary of China's victory over Japan in World War II. Díaz-Canel was then received by his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping.

A total of eleven new cooperation agreements were signed at the meeting. They cover areas such as the New Silk Road, political consultations, practical cooperation, cultural exchange

programs, and China's Global Security Initiative. Other agreements concern agricultural cooperation, spatial planning, artificial intelligence, traditional medicine, and press, film, and television.

Both heads of state reaffirmed their strategic partnership. The “community of shared future between China and Cuba” has “become ever deeper and more solid” in recent years and has developed into a “hallmark of the ironclad friendship between the two parties and countries,” said Chinese President Xi Jinping. Díaz-Canel conveyed greetings from Cuban revolutionary leader Raúl Castro Ruz, whom Xi praised as an “old friend” and “tireless promoter of bilateral relations.”

During his stay, Díaz-Canel [visited](#) the Beijing branch of the Chinese-Cuban biotechnology joint venture BPL. According to the operators, the company supplies around 2,000 Chinese hospitals with Cuban biotechnology products. The main product is currently nimotuzumab, a cancer drug.

Mayda Mauri, president of the Cuban pharmaceutical company Biocubafarma, explained that production of CIMAVAX, a therapeutic vaccine against lung cancer, is currently being transferred. “The first beneficiaries are the Cuban and Chinese people,” Mauri said. Díaz-Canel urged an increase in export volumes to China, Cuba, and also to the “competitive and demanding ASEAN market.”

Díaz-Canel also visited the Museum of the History of the Communist Party in Beijing, which opened in 2021.

Next stop in Laos

The visits to Vietnam and China mark the 65th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Cuba and both countries. After his visit to China, Díaz-Canel will visit Laos in Southeast Asia, with which, as in the case of China and Vietnam, exchanges between the two communist parties have been taking place again for several years in addition to relations at the state level.

Díaz-Canel is accompanied by a delegation that includes Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, the head of the Central Committee's International Relations Department, Emilio Lozada García, and Foreign Trade Minister Oscar Pérez-Oliva Fraga. ([Cubaheute](#))