

# *Lavrov Says: “Russia, Cuba Achieve Strategic Partnership Thanks to Fidel Castro”*

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Moscow, October 13 (RHC-TASS)-- Relations between Moscow and Havana have withstood the tests of time thanks to the efforts of Cuba's former president and leader of the Cuban Revolution Fidel Castro and have reached the level of a comprehensive strategic partnership, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Friday.

Speaking at the ceremony in Moscow, presenting the Pearl of the Antilles art album dedicated to Cuba and Fidel Castro, Lavrov said: "It is a very bright event devoted to Cuba and the leader of the Cuban revolution. The album could be called unique since Russian artists have presented their works inspired by Cuba, its glorious victory and rich culture."

"The publication has close bonds with the name of Fidel Castro, a renowned statesman, who consecrated his life to the service of his homeland and people," the Russian top diplomat said. He added: "The given portraits show how diverse was the personality of that prominent man, of the ingenious, courageous and steadfast man who in spite of the toughest external pressure did not renounce such values as liberty, justice and sovereignty."

It is impossible to overestimate Castro's part in the independence of Cuba and Cubans and in implementation of their unalienable right to their own way of development.

"We remember that Comandante Fidel was our country's true friend and he turned over a new page in the modern history of bilateral ties," the Russian foreign minister noted.

Cuba's Ambassador to Moscow Emilio Lozado Garcia said that the art album was a precious gift symbolizing a friendship of Cuba and the Soviet Union and then of Cuba and Russia.

"Fidel first came to the Soviet Union in 1963 on a 40-day visit. Instantaneously, respect, love and affection for your country sparked in his heart and this love was rewarded," the diplomat said.

He added: "Fidel Castro did his best to boost cooperation and taught the Cubans to respect and love the Russians. Fidel will forever remain the most vivid symbol of our friendship."

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