

# *President Vladimir Putin sends greetings to Cuba-Russia Friendship Association conference*

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Havana, Nov 29 (RHC) President Vladimir Putin valued the prominent role of the Cuba-Russia Friendship Association in promoting and developing fellowship between the two countries.

In a letter sent to the participants of the organization's annual conference, the president recalled that at the beginning of that association two heroes were involved in it: the planet's first cosmonaut, Yuri Gagarin, and commander Ernesto Che Guevara.

At the conference held at the Foreign Ministry in Havana, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Riabkov stressed that both governments and peoples are always defending their national interests.

"Now, when there are many transformations in the world, and even unexpected changes, our two nations can in no way disassociate themselves from the defense of their freedom to choose their own path of

development and the struggle for their sovereignty," Riabkov said.

"Cuba is our strategic partner, regardless of any international situation, " the Russian deputy minister added.

Riabkov also referred to the intense exchange at the highest level, with the visit to Cuba last October of Russian Prime Minister Dmitri Medvedev and the visit to this nation earlier this month of Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel Bermudez.

He also highlighted the current development of bilateral ties, with the participation of Russia in large projects of the island's economic development program until 2030.

Cuba's ambassador to Russia, Gerardo Peñalver, praised the approval in the Senate and the State Duma of two resolutions to demand the lifting of the U.S. blockade against his country.

Peñalver also referred to the genocidal U.S. blockade, reinforced with the activation of Chapter III of the extraterritorial U.S. Helms-Burton law.

The honorary president of the aforementioned society, Vadim Saushev, recalled that in November 1965 the association was created, for which Che Guevara traveled to the then Soviet Union.

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