

# Russia and Cuba in 'Friendly' Talks Amid Tension With West

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Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez shakes hands with his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov (L) during their meeting in Havana, Cuba.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov met with Cuban authorities this week on the first leg of his tour of Latin America, reiterating Russia's unwavering support for the embargoed country.

The tour comes amid escalating tensions between Russia and the West and is aimed at courting countries with anti-Western sentiment, according to political analysts.

During his two-day visit to Cuba, Lavrov met with his counterpart Bruno Rodriguez Parilla and President Raul Castro. He also held informal talks with long-time Cuban leader Fidel Castro.

The Russian Foreign Ministry said Wednesday in an [online statement](#) that the talks, which were conducted in a "friendly and trusting atmosphere," were focused on issues of bilateral cooperation, including the expansion of trade, political, economic and cultural ties.

The Cuban side also voiced its support for Russia in relation to the crisis in Ukraine and declared its was categorically against "double standards and sanctions." Cuba is one of the 11 countries that voted against the UN resolution on Ukraine's territorial sovereignty in March.

Russia and Cuba, both targets of Western sanctions, are "in full agreement on their approaches to strengthening multilateralism in world affairs, multipolarity and mutual respect," the Foreign Ministry said in its statement.

Lavrov also announced that 10 percent of Cuba's \$30 billion debt to Russia would be reinvested in the island's economy, Itar-Tass reported. The remaining 90 percent of the debt has been written off.

On Tuesday, Lavrov left Cuba to meet with Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega and is set to meet with Peruvian and Chilean authorities later this week.

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