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Russia Eyes Management of Cuba's Industrial Production

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A Cuban cigar factory. **Lusi Lindwurm (CC BY-SA 4.0)**

Cuba will allow Russian companies to manage industrial production on the Communist island as its energy crisis continues under a U.S. embargo, a senior Russian official said Friday.

"We discussed with our Cuban partners that Russian companies would be granted access to the management of industrial enterprises in the republic," Deputy Industry Minister Roman Chekushov told the state-run RIA Novosti news agency.

The Cuban state company Tecnomatica had expressed interest in Russian LTE communication systems, the ministry was reported to have announced last fall.

The assembly of Russian vehicles in Cuba was suspended last month — just a year after launching — due to power outages, is also expected to resume once energy supplies normalize, Chekushov said Thursday.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov met President Miguel Diaz-Canel in Havana

Thursday, where the Russian diplomat said they discussed Cuba's economic issues, including its energy security.

“Russia is not going to leave the western hemisphere, no matter what they say in Washington,” Ryabkov told a press conference after the meeting.

“Our relations with Cuba are of a special nature... We can't just betray Cuba, it's completely out of the question, we can't leave them to their fate,” the state news agency TASS quoted him as saying.

Related article: Russia Will Send Second Oil Tanker to Cuba, Energy Minister Says

The meeting came 10 days after a Russian oil tanker arrived in Cuba despite a de facto U.S. fuel blockade. Under President Donald Trump, the United States has threatened tariffs on any country that attempts to sell oil to Cuba, resulting in an energy crisis that has worsened since January.

The U.S. labels Cuba a threat to U.S. national security, and Secretary of State Marco Rubio has demanded changes to the island's leadership. Earlier on Thursday, Diaz-Canel told NBC News that he would not resign under U.S. pressure. Rubio has denied calling for Diaz-Canel's resignation.

“At the present moment, Russia is 100% in solidarity with Cuba; despite the complexity the country is going through, we are by your side, said the deputy foreign minister,” the Cuban president's office wrote on X on Thursday.

“We take this opportunity to send a hug to our dear friend, President Vladimir Putin,” Diaz-Canel said in the meeting, according to his office.

AFP contributed reporting.

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