

# *A brotherhood for all times*

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## **A brotherhood for all times**

By María Josefina Arce

Cuba and Vietnam are more than friends, they are brothers. For more than six decades, they have maintained a special relationship that began to be forged since the very triumph of the Cuban Revolution in January 1959, and which is full of examples of solidarity.

The historic leaders of both countries, Fidel Castro and Ho Chi Minh, were the promoters of that brotherhood and cooperation that unites the two peoples and that throughout all this time has become indestructible.

The nascent Cuban Revolution extended its hand to the Vietnamese people during their struggle against the invading American troops. The images of the Cuban sugar ships arriving in the middle of the war are vivid in our memory. And also of the hundreds of Cubans who worked in the construction of hospitals and roads, among other works.

Perhaps one of the most loyal and supportive gestures that remains in the hearts of the Vietnamese was Fidel Castro's visit to Hanoi and Quan Tri, a liberated area in the south, in September 1973. The historic Cuban leader was the first and only president to travel to Vietnam during wartime.

Since its victory and the reunification in 1975 of the North and the South into a single country, the brave and heroic Asian people have accompanied us throughout the years and have been there during all these decades of the criminal U.S. blockade and the occurrence of meteorological phenomena and other contingencies.

Therefore, Hanoi's help was not long in coming in times of world health emergency due to COVID 19 and the reinforcement of the economic siege. Donations of rice and medical supplies needed to deal with the disease have arrived from the distant country.

But the relationship between the two states is also deep in other areas. Vietnam is the second largest trading partner of the Greater Antilles in Asia and aims to raise the amount of trade to 500 million dollars by 2025.

Projects are currently being developed in sectors such as agriculture, health and biotechnology, as well as in construction, science and technology, information technology and communications.

Today, Vietnamese companies are present in the Mariel Special Development Zone, west of Havana. In 2018, Vimariel S.A, the first Vietnamese concessionaire in our country, was inaugurated in that enclave.

The visit to Cuban territory of Vietnamese President Nguyen Xuan Phuc corroborates the excellence of ties and the interest to continue exploring new cooperation options.

Cuba and Vietnam are defined by an exemplary friendship, marked by respect and trust and a broad multifaceted economic-commercial and scientific-technical collaboration.

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