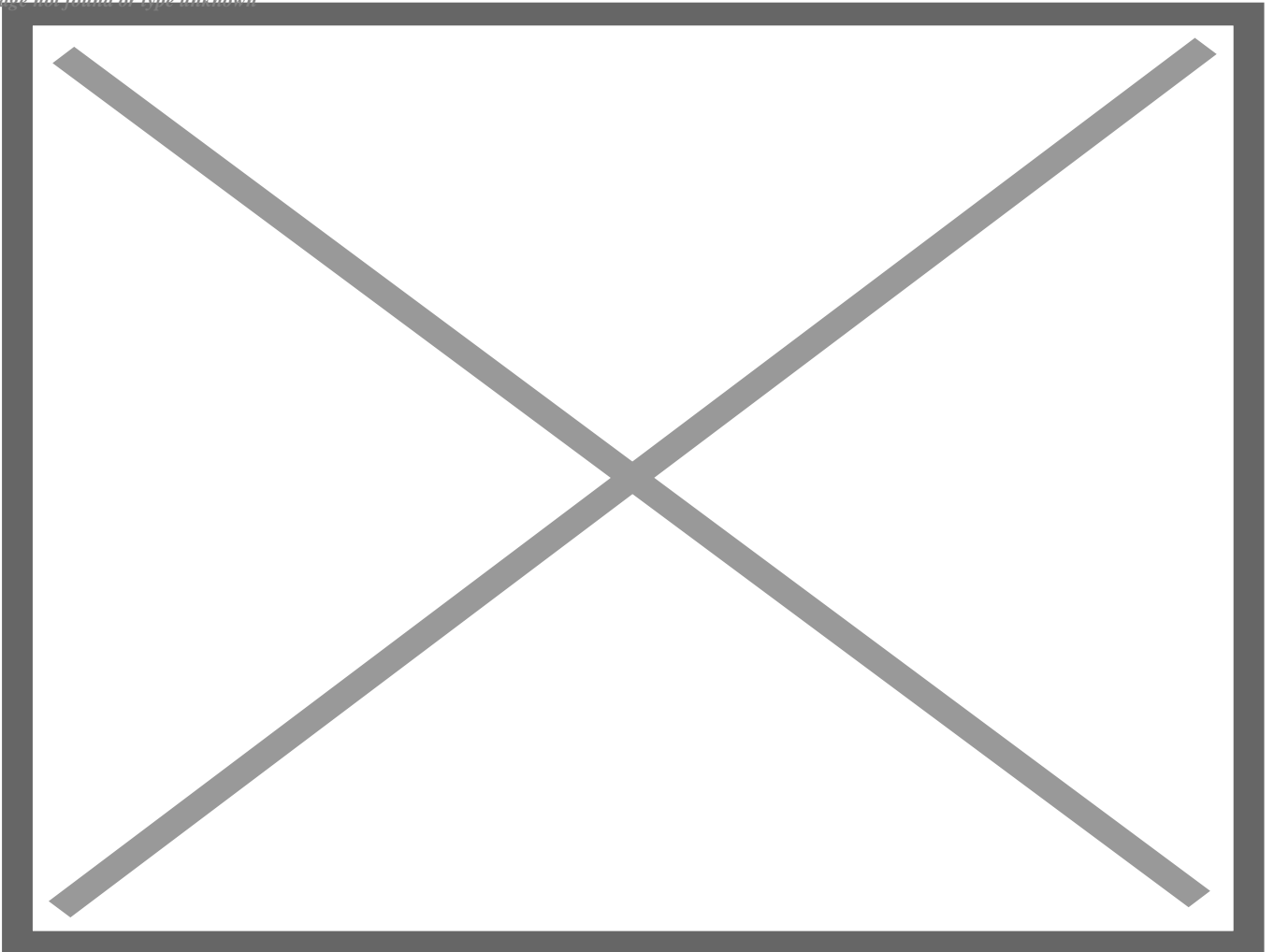


# *Díaz-Canel meets Russian State Duma president*

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Havana, Feb 23 (RHC) Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel held talks on Wednesday in Havana with the president of the State Duma (lower house) of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation Vyacheslav Volodin, who is on an official visit to the country.

According to a local television report, the head of state received the Russian politician at the Palace of the Revolution, who will remain in Cuba for two days. He will hold exchanges to strengthen bilateral cooperation and inter-parliamentary ties.

During the meeting, the Cuban president expressed his willingness to increase ties in various sectors and his solidarity in the face of the U.S. attempt to impose NATO expansion on Russia's borders.

He also expressed his gratitude for the firm resolution of the legislative body against the 6-decade U.S. blockade against the island and the support provided by the Eurasian country amid the confrontation with the COVID-19 pandemic.

For his part, Volodin reaffirmed the support of the State Duma for the consolidation of bilateral relations and reiterated the interest in continuing the political dialogue at all levels.

Hours earlier, the legislator held a meeting with Esteban Lazo, president of the National Assembly of People's Power (parliament). He stressed that possible areas of cooperation could be tourism, agriculture, defense, and higher education.

The president of the State Duma extended an invitation to Lazo to participate in the International Forum for the Development of Parliamentarism, to be held in July this year.

The official visit of the Russian delegation headed by Volodin began on Wednesday with a tribute at the Monument to the Soviet Internationalist Soldier and later visited the Fidel Castro Center.

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