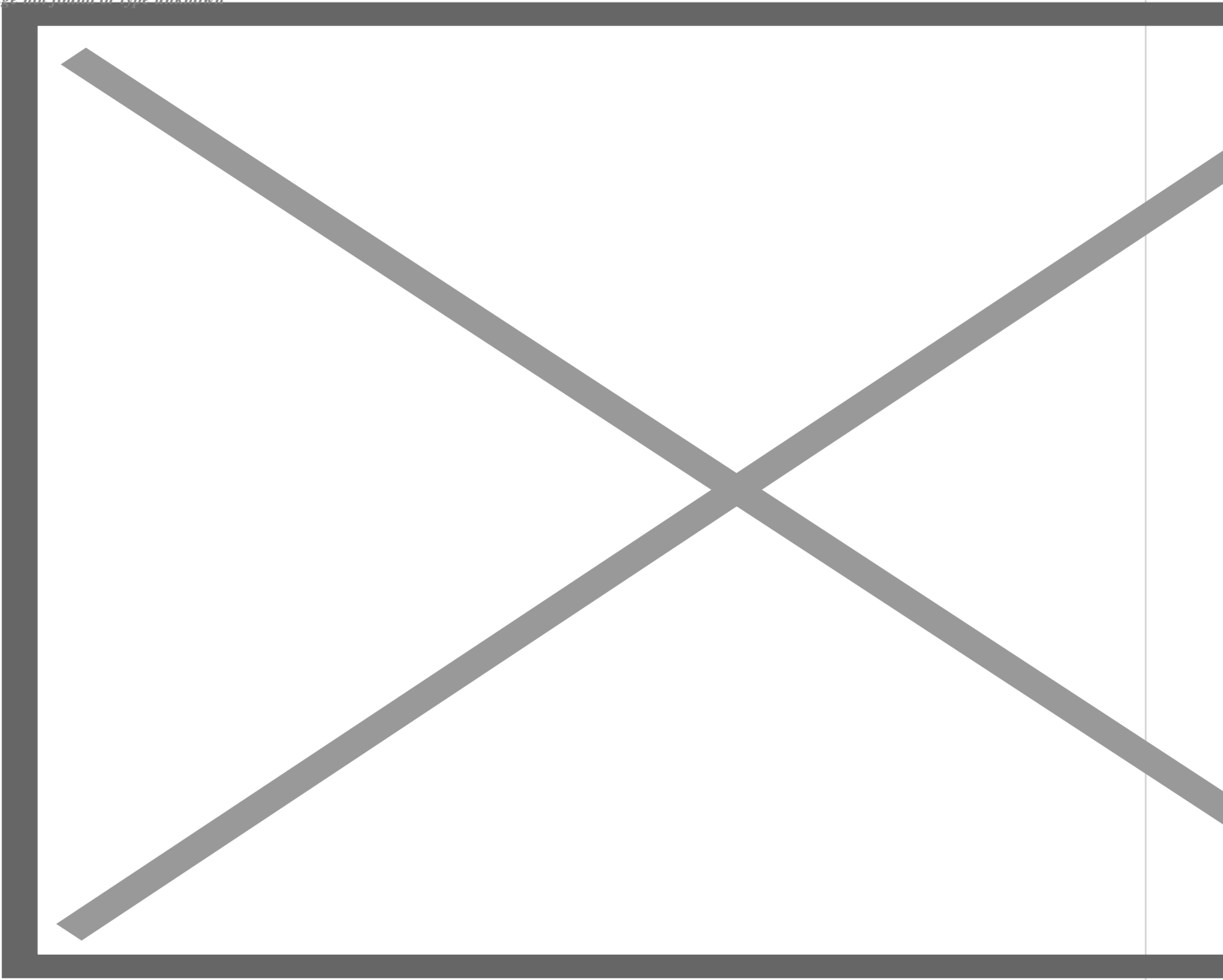


Cuba's promising contacts with Russia

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By Roberto Morejón

Along with the advancement of political dialogue, the governments of Cuba and Russia accelerate economic-commercial cooperation.

This is clear from the results of the recent visit of a delegation from the largest of the Antilles led by Deputy Prime Minister Ricardo Cabrisas to Russia, to participate in a commercial exchange in Saint Petersburg.

The twenty-seventh edition of the International Economic Forum in that beautiful city highlighted the outstanding role of Russia in its desire to rebuild its international ties.

Cuba's participation in the Russian city was essential, hence the extensive agenda carried out by the delegation headed by Cabrisas, with interviews with businessmen, government officials and local authorities.

The audience with the Russian Minister of Agriculture, Oksana Luth, drew attention to discuss projects in food production, recovery of traditional export items and import substitution.

Cuba is trying to reduce its heavy burden of expensive food purchases to cover the basic basket, at a time when, due to the US blockade and internal insufficiencies, local agriculture remains depressed.

Also relevant was the agreement with the Russian Direct Investment Fund to jointly develop innovative medicines against geriatric and oncological diseases with the Antillean BioCubafarma.

Equally unique was Cabrisas' conversation with Igor Sechin, executive secretary of the Commission of the President of the Russian Federation, on the development strategy of the fuel, energy and environmental safety industry.

The Cuban side had held meetings with representatives of Russian companies to increase efficiency in electricity generation and develop renewable energy sources.

It is worth highlighting the meetings for exchanges in Transportation.

Cubana de Aviación and the Russian company ARK-Technick signed agreements to restore the airworthiness of the aircraft currently paralyzed due to lack of spare parts and other supplies.

Thanks to conversations with Russian Minister Roman Starovit, Cuba established contacts to stimulate collaboration in the air, maritime-port and land branches.

Cuba is going through a heightened crisis in the material order due to the traces of the blockade and its inclusion in an arbitrary list of sponsors of terrorism, signed by the United States.

Collaboration with Russia on mutually beneficial bases is emerging as a way to encourage productions and projects that are currently affected or paralyzed, although getting out of the current shortcomings depends on the renewed efforts of the Cubans themselves.

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