

Cuba Says Iran is Strategic Partner

Havana, January 15 (RHC)-- Cuba's First Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade and Investment, Luis Antonio Karikarte Crown, described Iran as a "strategic partner" of the Republic of Cuba, saying Havana is willing to upgrade its trade ties with Tehran.

"Cuba is ready to take effective steps to expand its trade and economic relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran as its strategic partner," said Karikarte Crown during a meeting in Havana with Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for European and American Affairs Majid Takht-e-Ravanchi, who is on a tour of Latin America.

Takht-e-Ravanchi, for his part, pointed to the significance of Iran's relations with Latin American countries and voiced Tehran's readiness to enhance relations with Havana.

Takht-e-Ravanchi, who will visit Venezuela and Bolivia after Cuba, said prior to his departure from Tehran that political, economic and cultural issues will be discussed with the high-ranking officials of the three Latin American countries.

"Iran attaches special importance to economic cooperation with Latin American countries," he emphasized.

In recent years, Iran has been seeking to enhance its relations with Latin American countries within the framework of international organizations such as the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), whose rotating presidency is currently held by the Islamic Republic.

Official International Monetary Fund (IMF) statistics show that Tehran's trade with Latin American countries reach more than 3 billion US dollars annually.

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