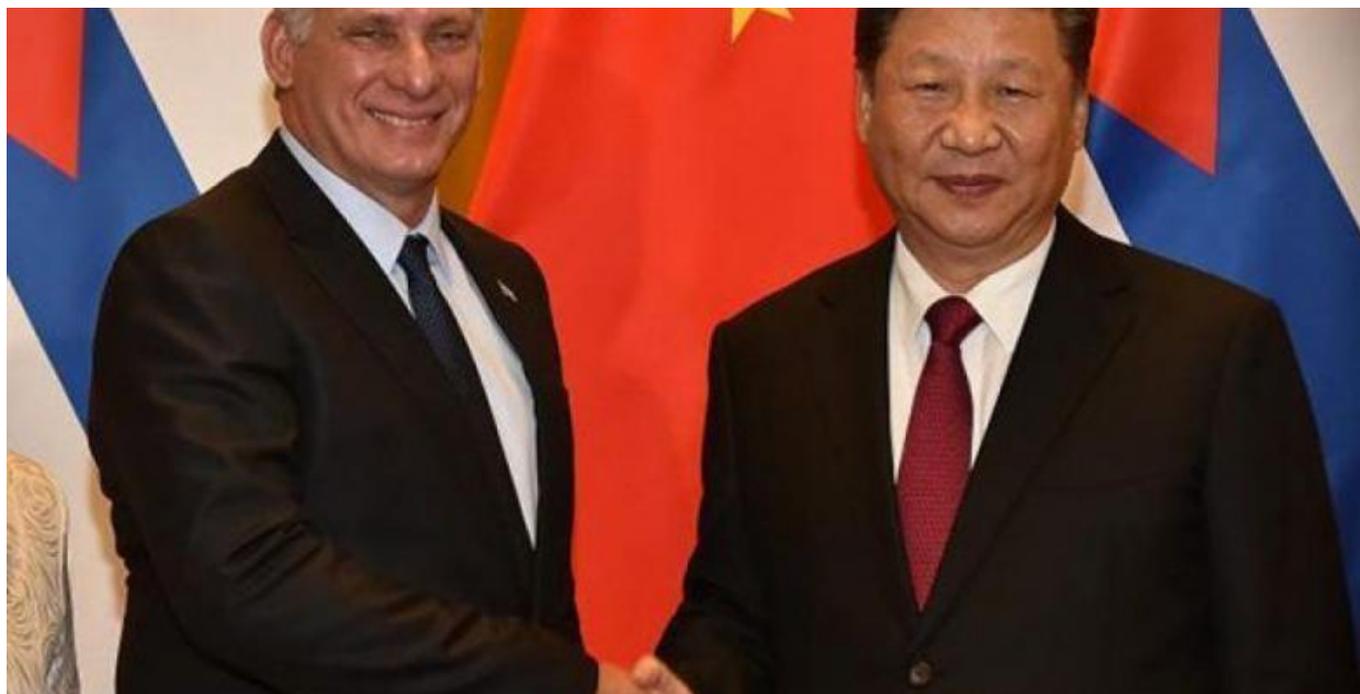


Xi sends congratulations to Diaz-Canel, new Cuban president elected at the national assembly

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Chinese President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, sent congratulatory messages on Friday after Miguel Diaz-Canel was elected the president of Cuba.

The election took place at a legislative session of the National Assembly of People's Power, the country's parliament, on Thursday.

Currently serving as the president of the Council of State and Ministers, Diaz-Canel received 579 votes in favor from the 580 deputies present in the election. He will be in office until 2023.

Salvador Valdes Mesa, 74, was elected vice president.

In the congratulatory message to newly-elected President Diaz-Canel, Xi said the two countries have built a strong friendship over the past fifty years, and they are "good friends, good partners and good brothers" that sincerely trust each other and share the same fate.

He said China is willing to work with the Cuban president to deepen and expand bilateral cooperation, and achieve new accomplishments in a new era.

In a separate message to Raul Castro, who remains the first secretary of the Central Committee of the ruling Communist Party of Cuba, Xi said he wants to maintain close communications with Castro so as to push China-Cuba friendship further forward.

