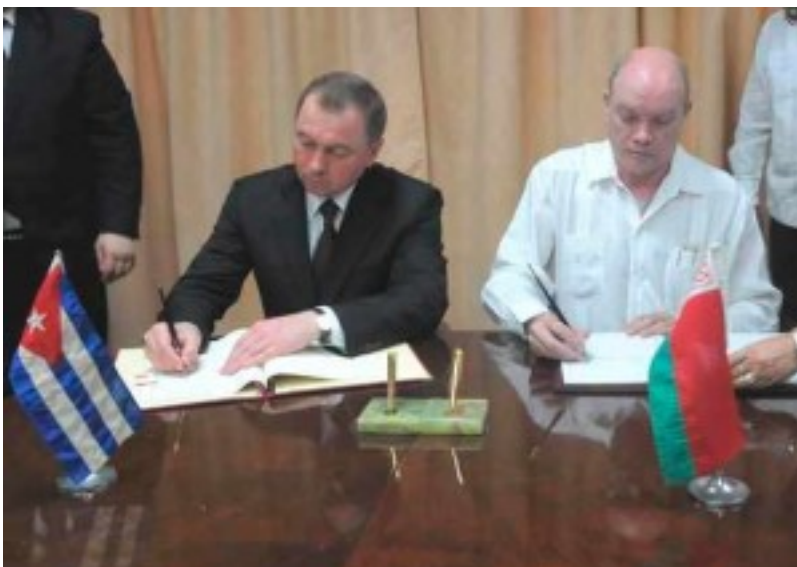

Belarus chancellor signs pacts in Havana

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Belarus and Cuba on Tuesday (June 24) signed agreements that will bring both countries closer together politically and commercially, the daily Juventud Rebelde reported on Wednesday.

An Agreement on Compensated Exchange and an Agreement on the Production and Certification of Pharmaceuticals were signed in Havana by Vladimir V. Makei, Foreign Minister of Belarus, and Rodrigo Malmierca Díaz, Cuba's Minister of Foreign Trade and Investment.



"Malmierca said that several possibilities of exchange were identified and Cuba plans to acquaint Belarussian businessmen with the new possibilities of investment in Cuba under the new Law on Foreign Investment and with the potential of the Mariel Special Development Zone," the newspaper said.

Makei arrived in Havana Monday night from Quito, Ecuador, at the head of a delegation of businessmen and bankers. Last week, he visited Nicaragua (June 18-19).

He was quoted by the Cuban press as saying that "Cuba is Belarus' most important partner in the region" and that "both countries have a broad potential, still unexplored, in economic and commercial terms."

Earlier Tuesday, Makei met with Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla to discuss diplomatic issues. Both countries established diplomatic ties in April 1992.

Although the Cuban press did not go into detail as to the nature of the agreements signed by Makei, the Belarussian media said that they involved the role of Belarus' Development Bank and the export-import insurance company Beleksimgarant in the purchase by Cuba of automobiles manufactured by MAZ (Minsk Automobile Plant) and tractors made by MTZ (Minsk Tractor Plant).

The purchase of Balagromash agricultural vehicles and machinery and Mogilevliftmash elevators for passengers and cargo was also discussed. Bilateral cooperation in the fields of biotechnology, health care, and the production of pharmaceuticals was another issue. Makei was given a tour of the Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology.

Makei's trip to Nicaragua, Cuba and Ecuador was made at the express direction of President Aleksandr Lukashenko, the Belarussian media said, "to expand the range of products and geographic diversification of Belarussian export goods, to develop economic cooperation and strengthen the political dialogue" between Havana and Minsk.

Lukashenko visited the island in 2012. Marino Murillo Jorge, vice president of Cuba's Council of Ministers, visited Belarus the same year.
