

RAFAEL FERMOSELLE

**THE EVOLUTION OF THE CUBAN
MILITARY: 1492-1986**



**P.O. Box 450353 (Shenandoah Station)
Miami, Florida, 33145
U. S. A.**

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PREFACE

This book is an attempt to present a broad historical account of the evolution of the Cuban military in order to correct some rudimentary concepts and gross oversimplifications on the subject. Although much of what has happened in the past five hundred years is accidental or the work of fate, there is some degree of order in the chaotic history of the island.

In writing this book, I owe much to the many historical accounts written about Cuba, and I have acknowledged them in footnotes throughout the book. I have also used many newspaper accounts of current events in Cuba in the past 90 years. These sources have been supplemented with scores of conversations and interviews with many of the chief participants in the events described in the book. I have used libraries in Miami, Florida, Washington, D.C., Texas and Mexico. The bulk of the research was conducted at the University of Miami Library, at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. and at the U.S.I.S. Library in Mexico City.

My debt to individuals is very great. I am particularly grateful to the staff of the U.S.I.S. Benjamin Franklin Library in Mexico City, who assisted me in finding many of my sources. This was done at a difficult time when the library was operating in temporary quarters due to earthquake damage to the permanent facilities in September of 1985. I thank them for their help. I am also grateful to Dr. Leonel de la Cuesta (Florida International University), Dr. Maria Cristina Herrera, Executive Director of the Institute for Cuban Studies and members of the Institute for their assistance in finding subjects for interviews. I thank all the friends who helped me in planning and editing the manuscript and for their commentaries through all the revisions of the innumerable drafts. I am grateful to the Cuban National Foundation for their efforts to compile and publish important documents on Cuba which would otherwise be very difficult to obtain. I owe a great deal to my wife Pam, who helped me to edit the manuscript and made valuable suggestions and comments.

I have tried to depict accurately and fairly all the events covered in the book. I have expressed my own views in some footnotes in order to separate them from the main text. I have tried to present a fair balance before presenting my own conclusions. I make no apologies for my views. Tolerance for different points of view is consistent with the democratic ideals which govern the United States.

This publication has not been financed by any individual or government institution. All the costs of research and publication have been at my own expense. Errors of fact and of judgment are my own.

I dedicate this book to Dr. Harold Eugene Davis, who taught me to keep a loving flame for learning alive while he directed my graduate work many years ago at American University. Dr. Davis taught from 1924 through 1976, making it 52 years of writing, teaching and lecturing, mostly on Latin American themes. Even after his retirement at age 70, he has continued to conduct research and to publish on Latin American Foreign Policy and Diplomatic History. Thousands of young people have benefited from his dedication to education.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| Introduction..... | 1 |
| Purpose | 1 |
| Strategic Location and Birth of Militarism..... | 2 |
| The Cuban Character..... | 3 |
| The Cuban Soldier..... | 10 |
| Cubans in Foreign Military Organizations | 12 |
| Facts and Myths about the Cuban Military..... | 13 |
| Research Methodology..... | 18 |

COLONIAL PERIOD

| | |
|---|----|
| I. The Begining of a Cuban Military Tradition..... | 20 |
| II. Cuba and the American and French Revolutions..... | 33 |
| III. The Napoleonic Period in Cuban History..... | 38 |
| Spain Under Napoleonic Rule..... | 39 |
| Reaction in Cuba to the French Invasion of Spain..... | 41 |
| The War of 1812 and Cuba..... | 43 |
| Significance of the Napoleonic Period..... | 45 |
| IV. The Birth of Cuban Nationalism..... | 47 |
| Political and Military Trends in Spain..... | 47 |
| First Revolutionary Movements in Cuba..... | 49 |
| Narciso López Expeditions..... | 51 |
| Composition of the Cuban Population..... | 53 |
| Cultural Developments..... | 53 |
| Cubans Gain Military Experience Abroad..... | 54 |
| V. The Ten Years War (1868-1878)..... | 58 |
| Foreign Participation in the War..... | 58 |
| Birth of the Cuban Army of Liberation..... | 61 |
| The Spanish Army in Cuba..... | 63 |
| Terror as a Weapon of War..... | 64 |
| Cuban Military Leadership..... | 66 |
| Principal Battles of the War..... | 67 |
| Internal Problems in the Cuban Revolutionary Movement..... | 68 |
| The War Ends..... | 69 |
| The Little War..... | 70 |
| VI. War of Independence | 75 |
| José Martí: Apostle of Cuban Independence..... | 75 |
| The War Starts..... | 76 |
| Organization of the Cuban Army of Liberation..... | 77 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Role of the Blacks in the War..... | 78 |
| Strategy of the War..... | 80 |
| The Revolutionary Offensive..... | 81 |
| The War in 1896..... | 85 |
| Support from Abroad..... | 86 |
| Lt. Gen. Antonio Maceo's 1896 Campaign..... | 86 |
| The War in the East..... | 88 |
| Reorganization of the Cuban Army..... | 88 |
| The War in 1897..... | 89 |
| The United States Enters the War..... | 90 |

VII. American Occupation 1898-1902..... 93

| | |
|---|-----|
| Relations Between the American Government and the Cuban Revolutionaries..... | 93 |
| New Cuban Military and Police Units Formed..... | 94 |
| Preparations for Independence..... | 96 |
| General Elections of 1901..... | 97 |
| Historical Significance of this Period..... | 100 |

THE REPUBLIC

VIII. Cuba's First Independent Administration..... 104

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| Estrada Palma and the Military..... | 104 |
| 1905 General Elections..... | 106 |
| The Revolution of 1906..... | 107 |
| The United States Intervenes..... | 108 |

IX. United States Intervention 1906-1909..... 110

| | |
|---|-----|
| Corruption in the Provisional Administration... | 111 |
| Birth of the Cuban Army..... | 112 |
| Black Restlessness Continues..... | 113 |
| General Elections of 1909..... | 114 |

X. José M. Gómez and the Race War of 1912..... 116

| | |
|---|-----|
| Changes in Cuban Military Leadership..... | 116 |
| Creation of the Cuban Navy..... | 117 |
| Black Restlessness..... | 118 |
| Black Leaders Arrested..... | 119 |
| Veteran Political Agitation..... | 119 |
| The 1912 Political Campaign..... | 120 |
| The Black Insurrection..... | 121 |
| Reaction of the Council of Veterans to the Insurrection..... | 122 |
| The Race War..... | 122 |
| Epilogue..... | 124 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| XI. Cuba from 1912 to 1924..... | 126 |
| The Insurrection of 1917..... | 126 |
| Reorganization of the Cuban Military..... | 130 |
| The National Police..... | 131 |
| Cuba in WWI..... | 132 |
| Elections of 1920..... | 133 |
| An Adventure in North Africa..... | 133 |
| The Insurrection of 1924..... | 134 |
| XII. The Gerardo Machado dictatorship (1925-1933).... | 137 |
| Army Reorganization of 1926..... | 136 |
| The Air Force..... | 140 |
| The Navy (Marina de Guerra)..... | 140 |
| National Police and Secret Police..... | 141 |
| Machado's Reelection..... | 141 |
| Birth of the Cuban Communist Movement..... | 142 |
| The Opposition to Machado..... | 147 |
| The Fall of Machado..... | 148 |
| XIII. The Era of Batista..... | 151 |
| Sergeants Revolution..... | 151 |
| The Turmoil Continued..... | 154 |
| Hotel Nacional Incident..... | 155 |
| November 8th Attempted Coup..... | 156 |
| A New Arrangement With the United States..... | 158 |
| Military Reforms..... | 159 |
| Batista Behind the Throne..... | 160 |
| The Spanish Civil War..... | 161 |
| Constitutional Convention..... | 163 |
| World War II..... | 164 |
| Armed Forces Increased..... | 166 |
| Cubans in the United States Armed Forces..... | 167 |
| Armed Forces Reorganization..... | 168 |
| Army and Navy Air Services Increased..... | 170 |
| Counterintelligence Activities..... | 170 |
| United States-Cuban Cooperation..... | 171 |
| Relations with the Soviet Union..... | 173 |
| Changes in Military Commands..... | 173 |
| Elections of 1944..... | 174 |
| XIV. President Grau San Martin's Administration.... | 179 |
| Relations with the United States..... | 180 |
| President Grau and the Military..... | 181 |
| Autenticos vs Batistianos and Communists..... | 182 |
| Military Conspiracies..... | 183 |
| Gangsterism..... | 183 |
| Gangsterism Within the National Police..... | 184 |
| Cayo Confites Incident..... | 187 |
| Gangsterism at the University of Havana..... | 191 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Political Gangsterism..... | 192 |
| The Elections of 1948..... | 193 |
| XV. President Carlos Prío Socarras' | |
| Administration..... | 197 |
| Relations with the United States..... | 198 |
| President Prío and the Military..... | 200 |
| Gangsterism..... | 200 |
| Graft and Corruption..... | 202 |
| The Korean Conflict..... | 203 |
| The Opposition and the Elections of 1952..... | 204 |
| XVI. Batista's dictatorship 1952-1959..... | 207 |
| The Coup d'Etat..... | 207 |
| Organization of the Military in 1952..... | 209 |
| 26th of July Movement..... | 210 |
| Fidel Castro..... | 211 |
| Relations with the Dominican Republic..... | 213 |
| Opposition to Batista Intensifies..... | 215 |
| Castro's Landing in 1956..... | 218 |
| Urban Guerrilla Warfare..... | 224 |
| Government Terror Tactics..... | 226 |
| Opposition to Batista Within | |
| the Armed Forces..... | 227 |
| Leadership of the Armed Forces..... | 230 |
| Guerrilla Warfare Intensifies..... | 232 |
| Army Offensive in Oriente..... | 233 |
| The United States Stops Selling | |
| Weapons to Batista..... | 235 |
| Politics at the American Embassy..... | 235 |
| 1958 General Elections..... | 236 |
| The Rebel Offensive..... | 237 |
| The "Invasion"..... | 238 |
| The Rebel Offensive in Oriente..... | 239 |
| The End of the Dictatorship..... | 240 |
| XVII. The Downfall of the Military and Its | |
| Antecedents..... | 249 |
| Military Training: Historical Overview..... | 249 |
| Colonial Influences..... | 251 |
| The Enlisted Men..... | 252 |
| The Officer Corps..... | 253 |
| Historical Mistakes..... | 254 |
| What Makes a Cuban Leader ?..... | 256 |
| Revolutionary Leadership..... | 259 |
| Defeat or Suicide?..... | 260 |

THE REVOLUTION IN POWER

| | |
|--|-----|
| XVIII. The First Decade (1959-1969)..... | 263 |
| March on Havana..... | 264 |
| Quick Trials and Executions..... | 265 |
| Reorganization of the Military..... | 266 |
| Changes at the U.S. Embassy..... | 267 |
| Crisis in the Revolutionary Government..... | 268 |
| Creation of the Revolutionary Militia..... | 269 |
| The Beginnings of the Counterrevolutionary Movement..... | 270 |
| The Soviet Connection Arrives..... | 271 |
| Back to Guerrilla War in the Mountains..... | 272 |
| Creation of a State Security Force..... | 273 |
| Bay of Pigs..... | 274 |
| Foreigners at Bay of Pigs: An International Affair..... | 282 |
| The Missile Crisis: October 1962..... | 284 |
| Defeat of the Anti-Communist Guerrillas..... | 285 |
| Transformation of Cuban Society..... | 286 |
| The Militia Disarmed..... | 288 |
| Formation of the Cuban Communist Party..... | 289 |
| Tri-Continental Congress..... | 290 |
| Che Guevara in Bolivia..... | 290 |
| Relations with the Soviet Union..... | 292 |
| Military Equipment, Combat Readiness and Mobilization..... | 293 |
| Balance of the First Decade... .. | 294 |
| XIX. The Second Decade (1970-1980)..... | 295 |
| Military Comes of Age..... | 296 |
| Military Leadership and the Economy..... | 297 |
| Reorganization of the Military..... | 298 |
| Reorganization of the Ranks..... | 299 |
| Recruitment and Training..... | 302 |
| The African Wars..... | 306 |
| First Congress of the Cuban Communist Party. | 307 |
| Neo-Colonial Dependency on the Soviet Union. | 309 |
| Internal Security and Counterintelligence Reorganization..... | 310 |
| American and Cuban Interest Sections Opened. | |
| The Return of the Exiles..... | 312 |
| Balance of the 1970's..... | 315 |
| XX. The Third Decade (1980's)..... | 319 |
| The Mariel Exodus..... | 319 |
| Reaction in the United States..... | 321 |
| The 1980 U.S. Presidential Elections..... | 321 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Back to the Barricades..... | 322 |
| Combat Readiness and Mobilization..... | 323 |
| Logistics and Maintenance..... | 324 |
| Defeat in Grenada..... | 324 |
| Expansion of Regular and Paramilitary Troops..... | 325 |
| Officer Training..... | 328 |
| Intelligence and Internal Security System..... | 329 |
| Joint Operations With the Soviet Union..... | 331 |
| Special Forces..... | 332 |
| Increased and Modernized Arsenal..... | 333 |
| Increased Offensive Capabilities..... | 334 |
| Domestic Reaction to the Foreign Wars..... | 336 |
| The Economy in the 1980's..... | 336 |
| Third Congress of the Cuban Communist Party: 1986..... | 338 |
| Balance of the First Six Years of the Third Decade..... | 339 |
| | |
| XIX. Military Adventures Abroad. (1959-1986)..... | 345 |
| | |
| PHASE I (1959-1965) | |
| | |
| WESTERN HEMISPHERE | |
| | |
| Dominican Republic..... | 348 |
| Venezuela and Colombia..... | 352 |
| Guatemala..... | 353 |
| Chile, Peru and Ecuador..... | 355 |
| Argentina..... | 358 |
| Brazil..... | 359 |
| Bolivia..... | 360 |
| | |
| AFRICA | |
| | |
| Algeria..... | 362 |
| Ghana..... | 364 |
| Congo..... | 365 |
| Republic of Congo..... | 365 |
| Republic of the Congo (Zaire)..... | 367 |
| Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique..... | 369 |
| People's Revolutionary Republic of Guinea... .. | 369 |
| Rhodesia (Zimbabwe)..... | 369 |
| Tanzania, Zanzibar, Equatorial Guinea and Rio Muni..... | 370 |
| | |
| PHASE II (1966-1970) | |
| | |
| Tri-Continental Congress..... | 371 |
| Organization of Latin American Solidarity..... | 372 |
| Conflicts with the Soviet Union..... | 373 |

Conflicts with the Peoples' Republic
of China..... 375

Cuban-Led Guerrillas in Bolivia..... 375
Cuba and the American New Left in the 1960's.. 379
The Viet Nam War..... 380

PHASE III (1970-1975)

Cuba and the Unaligned Movement..... 383
Cuba and Latin America..... 384
Cuban Economic and Military Assistance..... 386

WESTERN HEMISPHERE

Chile..... 388
Peru..... 390
Mexico..... 391
Venezuela, Panama and Caribbean Countries..... 394

AFRICA

Guinea-Bissau..... 396
Peoples' Revolutionary Republic of Guinea..... 397

MIDDLE EAST

1973 Arab-Israeli War..... 397
Cuban Military Contacts with Arab
Revolutionaries..... 397

PHASE IV (1975-1980)

AFRICA

The War in Angola..... 399
Fidel Castro Visits Africa..... 405
The War in Ethiopia..... 407
Zaire Invaded..... 408

MIDDLE EAST

South Yemen..... 409
Yemen Arab Republic..... 409

WESTERN HEMISPHERE

Nicaragua..... 411
El Salvador..... 411

PHASE V (1980-1986)

AFRICA

| | |
|--|-----|
| Angola: War With No End..... | 417 |
| Military Organization in Angola..... | 418 |
| Weapon Systems..... | 419 |
| UNITA Guerrilla Organization..... | 420 |
| Casualties..... | 420 |
| Projection for the Future..... | 423 |
| South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) and Popular Army for the Liberation of Namibia (PALN)..... | 423 |
| South Africa..... | 424 |
| Guinea-Bissau/Cape Verde..... | 425 |
| Equatorial Guinea..... | 426 |
| Guinea..... | 426 |
| Sao Tome and Principe Democratic Republic..... | 427 |
| People's Republic of Benin (Dahomey)..... | 428 |
| Mozambique People's Republic..... | 429 |
| Zimbabwe (Rhodesia)..... | 430 |

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

| | |
|---|-----|
| Polisario Front (Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia al Hamra and Rio de Oro)..... | 432 |
| Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO)..... | 433 |
| South Yemen..... | 435 |
| Libya..... | 435 |

WESTERN HEMISPHERE

| | |
|--|-----|
| Bahamian Navy Attacked..... | 437 |
| The War in Nicaragua..... | 438 |
| Cuban Combat Troops..... | 439 |
| Cuban Exiles Fighting in Nicaragua..... | 440 |
| The Clash in Grenada..... | 440 |
| Cuban-Sponsored Guerrillas in Central America..... | 443 |
| Cuban-Sponsored Guerrillas in South America... | 444 |
| Colombia..... | 445 |
| Chile..... | 447 |
| Twenty-Seven Years of Overseas Adventures: An Analysis..... | 448 |

APPENDIX I

| | |
|--|-----|
| ORGANIZATION OF THE CUBAN MILITARY AND POLICE FORCES..... | 457 |
| 1. Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (MINFAR)..... | 457 |
| 2. Ministry of the Interior (MININT)..... | 460 |

APPENDIX II

| | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| REVOLUTIONARY ARMY (ER)..... | 464 |
|------------------------------|-----|

APPENDIX III

| | |
|---|-----|
| ANTIAIRCRAFT DEFENSE AND REVOLUTIONARY AIR FORCE (DAAFAR)..... | 475 |
|---|-----|

APPENDIX IV

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| REVOLUTIONARY NAVY (MGR)..... | 485 |
|-------------------------------|-----|

APPENDIX V

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| TERRITORIAL MILITIA TROOPS (MTT)..... | 495 |
|---------------------------------------|-----|

APPENDIX VI

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| SOVIET MILITARY FORCES IN CUBA..... | 499 |
|-------------------------------------|-----|

APPENDIX VII

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| CURRENT MILITARY LEADERSHIP..... | 501 |
| Division Generals..... | 502 |
| Vice Admirals..... | 510 |
| Brigadier Generals..... | 511 |
| Rear Admirals..... | 518 |

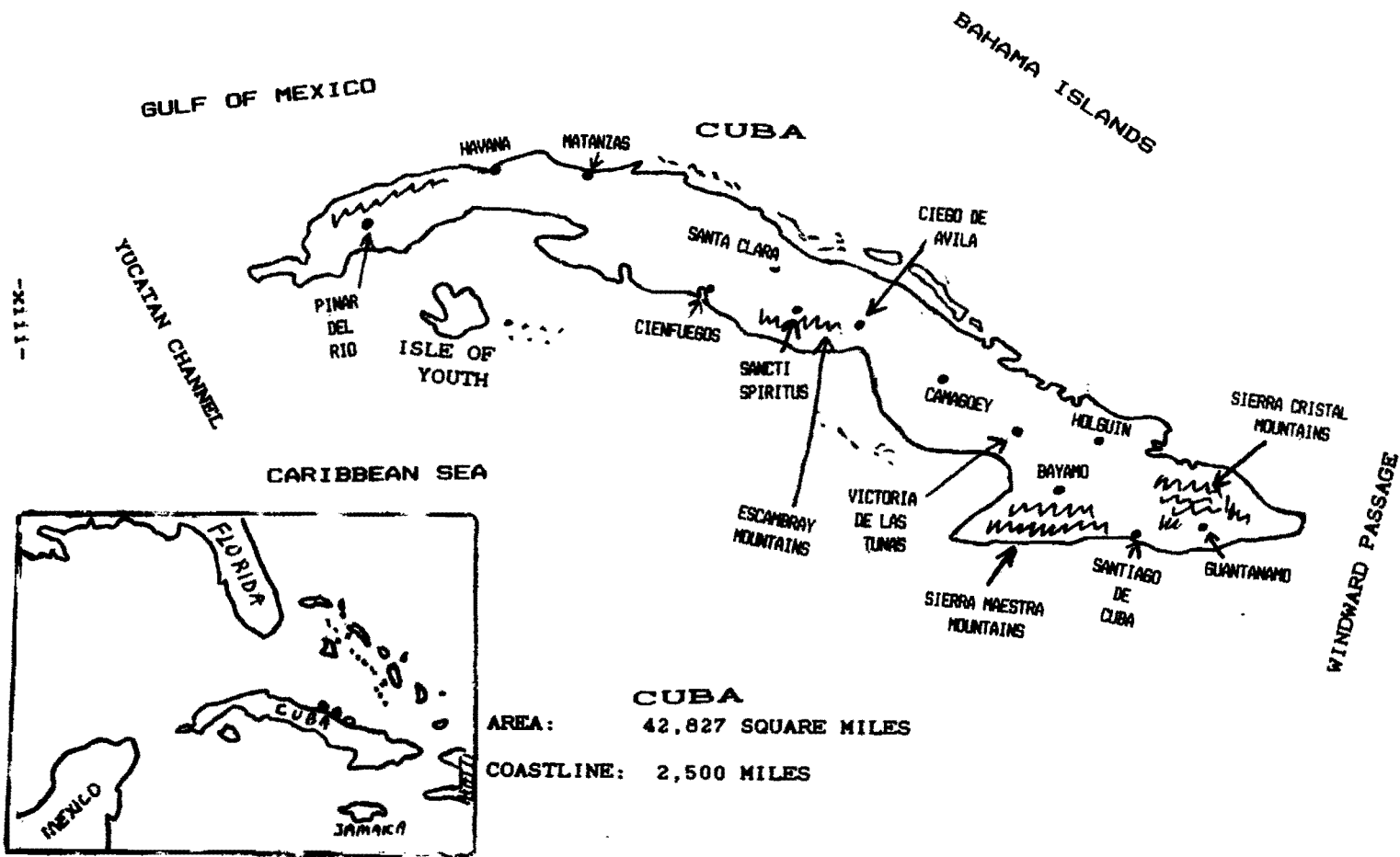
APPENDIX VIII

| | |
|--|-----|
| WEAPONS OF THE CUBAN ARMED FORCES..... | 519 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY..... | 539 |
| INDEX..... | 555 |





UNITED STATES
90 MILES





Cuba

LÍMITE PROVINCIAL

NUEVO LÍMITE PROVINCIAL

*El 3 de julio de 1976, el gobierno cubano dividió las provincias de Las Villas y Oriente en nueve provincias nuevas. La provincia de Oriente se convirtió en las provincias de Las Tunas, Granma, Holguín, Santiago de Cuba y Guantánamo; la provincia de Las Villas se dividió en las provincias de Villa Clara, Cienfuegos, Sancti Spiritus y Ciego de Ávila.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this publication is to present an assessment of current Cuban military power, including the capabilities of the Cuban Government for projecting this power abroad. It includes a description of the organizational structure of the Armed Forces, principal officers, hardware, strengths and weaknesses. However, the capabilities of the Cuban Armed Forces cannot be judged only on the basis of current availability of hardware, training and leadership. In order to judge how well the Cuban military establishment can operate, the historical antecedents and the national character of the rank and file have to be taken into consideration.

When research for this book began, the author proposed to cover only recent developments in the Cuban military and current capabilities. He sought to explain the present and make projections for the future. But as the work advanced, it became evident that the present could not be explained without an understanding of the past. The research had to be expanded to complete the picture he sought to draw.

The study is largely historical in nature and provides an introduction to the Cuban military to the reader who does not know much about Cuba. It will help to familiarize the reader with the total environment in Cuba over many generations.¹ The point of departure is the arrival of the Spanish explorers to Cuba in 1510. A major premise of this book is that behavior in any given society tends to be stable and only changes over very long periods of time. Even after major disturbances and periods of shock, there is a tendency toward resuming some degree of traditional stability in the general environment. Behavior will settle down into traditional patterns. In the case of Cuba, the military has been the predominant force in society for close to 500 years.

For the reader who is well-informed about Cuba and its history and is more interested in current affairs, the first few chapters may seem somewhat superficial. For the reader who is only interested in a general knowledge about the Cuban military, the last chapters may offer too much detail. Perhaps there is an excessive coverage of subgroups in Cuban history. But their existence has played a major role in determining the course of events and their behavior may shed some light about how similar groups may behave in the future. The author considered splitting this book into two volumes,

¹ Total environment is defined for the purpose of this book as the sum total of conditions which affect the life and development of Cubans as individuals and Cuban society as a whole.

one covering the period from 1511 to 1959; with the second covering events since 1959. However, one of the goals of this book was to prepare an index that would include the most relevant names in Cuban military history. This index can be used for cross reference and as a guide to trace the career of key figures in the Cuban military. For this reason, the only possible compromise was to write one volume and emphasize the necessity for understanding the total situation since it is very difficult to study one event or one individual in isolation.²

The chronicle of crimes and misfortunes, as well as heroic deeds associated with the Cuban military presented in this publication, has not been gathered with the view that history is moving inexorably in any given direction. Nor has it been prepared, as many other histories of Cuba, as episodes in a struggle between good and evil. And it has definitely not been written with the idea of justifying violence or militarism. It is a chronicle of events worthwhile remembering for people with an interest in the present and the future.

Strategic Location and Birth of Militarism

Current Cuban military power, as well as Cuban military history cannot be examined separately. In the past 500 years, since the discovery of the island by Columbus in 1492, Cuba has proven to be an extremely important geographic center for military operations in the Western Hemisphere. Soon after their arrival in Cuba, the first Spanish explorers realized that the wealth that they had hoped to find in silver and gold did not exist. The interest in the island as a source of wealth vanished very quickly. As explorers found considerable wealth in Mexico and South America many of the original Spanish residents of Cuba went on to the mainland. However, the Spanish also were able to determine very early that Cuba was an extremely strategic location to support their military and commercial operations. Cuba became a military strong point in the Spanish colonial system and was governed by military men for the most part from the beginning to the end of the Spanish colonial period. Militarism has been a strong component of the Cuban character for close to 500 years.

From Cuba, the Spanish launched the conquest of Mexico, Central America and South America. From Cuba, Spanish explorers launched expeditions that explored a large portion of the

² Most books published in Cuba or about Cuba do not have an index. This makes it particularly difficult to trace key figures in the Cuban military throughout their careers.

United States. From Havana, the Spanish administered Florida and Louisiana. Cuban troops under the Spanish flag fought the British at Pensacola, Mobile, St. Augustine and at several sites in Mississippi during the American War of Independence. Also from Havana the British launched the failed expedition to capture New Orleans during the War of 1812. More recently, the United States used bases in Cuba to protect military shipping against German U-boats in WWI and WWII. Now intelligence collection facilities in Cuba are being used by the Soviets for monitoring U.S. maritime, military, and space communications, as well as telephone conversations in the United States.

The Cuban Character

To understand the Cuban military one has to understand the Cuban character.³ Cuba was a country of immigrants not unlike the United States. All the native population was wiped out in the first 300 years of colonial rule. Even as recently as 1959, over 20 percent of the residents of Cuba were foreign born.⁴ Cubans are a product of Spain and the other nationalities that were blended together to form the Cuban of today. There is, of course, a strong African influence. Part of the African influence entered Cuba by way of workers from Haiti and Jamaica, who were imported to work in the sugar cane harvest. The rest is a legacy of slavery. This institution existed in Cuba longer than in any other country in the Western Hemisphere with the exception of Brazil.⁵ In addition, other immigrations such as the Chinese indentured servants of the 19th century and the Eastern European Jewish immigration of the 1920's and 30's have also left their mark. There is also a strong influence from the United States, and it is impossible to separate Cuban history from that of its largest neighbor. In the past 25 years, a strong Soviet and Eastern European influence has also become part of the Cuban

³ For the purpose of this book, "character" is defined as the sum total of the distinguishing traits, features and qualities of an individual or a society.

⁴ It is difficult to find a Cuban who is about 40 years old today, who did not have at least one parent or grandparent who was not foreign born.

⁵ The Moret Law of 1870 provided a formula for the gradual emancipation of the slaves. Another law in February of 1880 approved the total abolition of slavery but leaving them under the paternalistic protection of their old masters. Complete freedom was not granted to all the slaves until 1886.

experience. Naturally, all of these influences coalesce to form the Cuban national character.

Scholars and analysts in the United States that have devoted a considerable amount of time researching different aspects of Cuba, including the Cuban military, sometimes misinterpret their findings. This occurs because they often fail to take into account Cuban culture, or interpret their findings on the bases of U.S. mentality.⁶ Despite many similarities, Cubans do not think like people in the United States. For example, in the United States the issue of death is often left out of every day conversation. Cubans, on the other hand, talk about death as something inevitable and as very much a part of life. While Americans may say that someone "passed away," Cubans are very direct and will say that someone "died." Cubans also talk about their own death often and in a natural way, without it having any major significance, such as having a terminal illness.

At the same time, while in the United States historical accounts tend to include information about personal matters and private affairs of historical figures, Cubans tend to do the opposite. Cubans hide, or avoid mentioning incidents of the private life of prominent Cuban figures, because they find it to be in bad taste, or because they do not want to hurt the feelings of relatives who may still be alive. But without taking into account personal behavior of historical figures it is often difficult to understand the motor or the historical forces behind certain important events.

The hardest part of writing this book has been deciding what belongs and what does not belong in print. The author's interest in not just providing superficial information about key figures had to be balanced with the desire not to hurt the feelings of innocent relatives who want to cherish the memory of a deceased father, for example. But it is not always possible to do both. For American readers to be able to understand certain events in Cuba they need to know what most Cubans know through vox populi.

Cubans for the most part are not very tolerant of political views, habits, beliefs and practices that vary from their own. The average Cuban is not willing to recognize the right of individuals to have their own private judgment of right and wrong. José Martí (1853-1895), the Cuban patriot, poet and writer, viewed his writing as a way of rendering some service to society and assisting in the creation of a

⁶ There are many definitions of "culture." For the purpose of this book "culture" is defined as the formal and informal rules of behavior, language, values, standards, expectations, peculiarities and other factors that give Cubans identity and uniqueness.

Cuban consciousness. He worked hard to improve society by writing against many evils. One of these evils was intolerance.

Despite the legacy of Martí and the fact that Cuban Communists and anti-Communists claim him as one of their own, both groups do the opposite of what he preached. Fidel Castro preaches "within the revolution, everything...outside the revolution, nothing." The Cuban Government does not tolerate any form of dissent and any deviation from the norm is severely punished. The exile community in Miami behaves in a similar fashion. People are either a part of the problem or a part of the solution. There is no room for compromise.

Most Cubans are individuals with strong passions; at times they are prone to violence in looking for solutions to their problems and often lack discipline.⁶ They are rebellious and stubborn. They argue about the most insignificant matters and internal bickering is part of most Cuban organizations.

Gangsterism and gangster-like behavior with a strong tendency toward criminal violence have also been fairly frequent among

⁷ Most Cuban children since the War of Independence have memorized perhaps the most famous of Martí's poems, dedicated to preaching tolerance:

La Rosa Blanca

Cultivo la rosa blanca
en junio como en enero,
para el amigo sincero
que me da su mano franca.

Y para el cruel que me arranca
el corazón con que vivo,
cardo ni ortiga cultivo,
cultivo la rosa blanca.

(Translated by the author)

The White Rose

I cultivate the white rose
in June and January,
for the sincere friend
who stretches his open hand.

And for the cruel individual
who rips out my living heart
I do not cultivate thistle
or thorns... I also
cultivate the white rose.

⁸ In February of 1986, during the Third Congress of the Cuban Communist Party, Fidel Castro bitterly complained about the lack of discipline, lack of planning and shoddy workmanship of Cuban managers and workers, including delegates to the Congress. Castro had given the delegates a 30-minute coffee break, and when they did not return to their chairs within the prescribed time he scolded them for their lack of discipline. This was not the first time that Castro had made similar public complaints in one of his marathon speeches.

members of the Cuban underworld and the Cuban military. In the 1940's, many of the young idealists of the 1930's, who had been militant members of the Communist Party and other revolutionary movements became common criminals. Many, after participating in the Spanish Civil War as volunteers against the Fascists, or as volunteer fighters in the French underground against German occupation troops, upon returning to Cuba, could not live without the gun. Names such as Fernández, Salabarría, Tró, Agostini and Masferrer filled the pages of Cuban newspapers with their criminal acts. Today we find that a body of evidence exists which seems to point to Cuban military complicity in drug smuggling to the United States, although the Cuban Government has denied any involvement and many drug smugglers have been arrested when they have crossed into Cuban territory.

A more recent example of violent behavior was that of a group of Cuban criminals who arrived in Miami in 1980 and who are now in jail. Although these criminals are not representative of Cuban society their behavior is more violent than that of the rest of the U.S. prison population. Among the close to 125,000 Cubans of the Mariel exodus, about 1,800 of them have become feared criminals in the United States. The group that joined the drug underworld in particular has developed a reputation for violent behavior and the tendency to fight it out with agents of the Drug Enforcement Administration.¹⁰

⁹ A comprehensive collection of articles and other documents related to the alleged connection of Cuban officials and the narcotics trade was published in 1983 by the Cuban National Foundation. One of the documents cites the indictment on November 15, 1982, by the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, of René Rodríguez-Cruz, a senior official of the DGI (Directorio General de Investigaciones), Vice-Admiral Aldo Santamaria-Cuadrado, Chief of Staff of the Cuban Navy until 1985, and Fernando Ravelo-Renedo, former Cuban Ambassador to Colombia, on charges of facilitating the importation of drugs into the United States. For more information see: Cuban American National Foundation, Castro and the Narcotics Connection (Washington, D.C.: CANF, 1000 Thomas Jefferson St., N.W. 20007), 86 pages.

¹⁰ About 1,850 Cubans who arrived in the Mariel exodus in 1980 were in jail as of March of 1986, at the Atlanta Federal Penitentiary. According to reports from prison officials, there have been nine homicides, seven suicides, 400 serious but unsuccessful suicide attempts and more than 2,000 serious incidents of self-mutilation since 1981 among Cubans at the Atlanta prison. Although Cubans in Atlanta make up only about 5 percent of the total number of prisoners in the Federal prison system nationwide, they account for over half of the reported inmate-to-inmate assaults and at least one-third of all assaults by prisoners on guards. Source:

But "violence" in the Cuban context is not always what one would interpret from a superficial observation of historical events. For example, several cases of important Cuban historical figures dueling with their enemies to defend their "honor" are mentioned in the pages of this book. But dueling in Cuba was reduced to absurdity a long time ago. Dueling became a highly cherished sport of Cuban politicians who often fought duels that were rarely fatal. They were "neither brutal not painful, and far less dangerous than baseball or tennis." Pistols were seldom used, with the preferred weapon being dueling-swords. At the drop of blood from a prick the duel was over. The shedding of blood healed the wound of honor which caused the duel.¹¹

As individuals, most Cubans are hard workers, show a great deal of ingenuity in solving problems, and place a very high value in education. The successes achieved by Cuban exiles in the United States after the 1959 revolution have become legendary. In a matter of a few years, Cuban families in the United States have prospered and attained wealth and professional recognition in many fields. They are frequently mentioned as possibly one of the highest achievers among immigrant groups who have entered the United States within a short period of time.

This same ingenuity and stubbornness has also been shown by the Cuban Communists to carry out practically impossible military operations. For example, in November of 1975, a battalion of special forces composed of 650 men was transported from Cuba to Angola in 13 days using old Bristol Britannia BB 218 turboprops. Within two months thousands of additional combat troops and equipment had been sent in an assortment of old ships and planes to support the MPLA. They fought against a South African invasion and guerrilla forces of UNITA and the FNLA. The tremendous odds against completing successfully this operation over 5,000 miles away from

William E. Schmidt, "Number of Cubans Detained is Rising; Crowding and cost of holding men to be deported cited," New York Times (March 10, 1986), p. 1, col. 1. The experience with these prisoners is mentioned here only to show that these Cubans, most of whom were released from Cuban jails and placed on board ship for the United States by the Cuban Government, have a greater tendency toward violence than the rest of the jail inmates in the United States, many of whom come from a wider variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds than the Cubans.

¹¹ "The Cuban Duel as a Sport," Literary Digest (April 22, 1916), pp. 1178-79.

the island only represented an interesting challenge to traditional Cuban stubbornness. They dare to win.¹²

The average Cuban is a strong family man who also has a strong sense of loyalty to his friends. Although these are admirable traits, there is also an ugly side to them. Nepotism was strong in Cuba before the 1959 revolution and is still strong today. The pork barrel is almost a Cuban institution. Presidents Grau, Prío and Batista placed their relatives and close friends in important government jobs and looked the other way while they enriched themselves at the expense of the country. After the 1959 revolution, the same nepotism has continued, with the Castro family holding the most prominent jobs in the administration, and other generals and their families enjoying special privileges.

During the struggle for independence, Cuban troops fought with ragged uniforms, went barefoot, lived on snakes in the swamps, and endured many hardships. But the patriotism degenerated after independence, as the fighters became office seekers. The 1959 revolution, although paying lip service to patriotism, internationalist duties to spread the revolution to other countries, etc., has not avoided the surfacing of the perpetual office seekers and the creation of a "new class" that places civic responsibility behind personal gain.

Many Cubans volunteered to fight in Angola, for example, but upon their return in the early years after the start of Cuban involvement in 1975-76, expected and demanded special concessions and material rewards. With limited resources available to the Cuban Government these could not be granted. As the Cuban involvement in Angola has expanded to over 10 years, thousands of Cubans have been rotated through that war and the number of casualties has been mounting. The rewards for participation in so-called "internationalist duties" have been diminished, although refusing to participate can bring about many different forms of punishment. Cuban military involvement in Africa has also resulted in the creation of a new group of military heroes such as Division Generals Arnaldo Ochoa Sánchez and Abelardo Colomé Ibarra, both of whom have been given the title of "Hero of the Republic of Cuba," and given the Order of Máximo Gómez. They have both been praised for their spirit of sacrifice, unselfishness, desire to excel, heroism, etc., etc. These generals are part of the "new class."

¹² The Cuban Government wins dares such as this in part due to the lack of resolve of its enemies. When they face an equally daring enemy they cannot get away with deeds such as this. An example was their defeat in Grenada in 1983. However, please note that Cuba did not have regular troops in Grenada.

"Personalismo" and "caudillismo" have been present for centuries in Cuba. It shows both in politics as well as in everyday life. Cubans are fiercely individualistic and proud. They like strong leaders or "caudillos" who demand absolute loyalty. This self-centered style of leadership, is part of the cultural heritage from Spain. Cuban leaders have been both civilian leaders, as well as military commanders. With very few exceptions, all the heads of state have had a military background going back to colonial times.¹³

On the other hand, Cubans have traditionally sacrificed their own individual interests for the common good. They have learned to adjust to long-term struggles to achieve personal or group goals. Although they may become rather impatient waiting for a traffic light to change, they can struggle for generations to achieve independence, overthrow a dictatorship or influence others to change their political and economic system of government. Most Americans cannot conceive how after so many years many Cuban exiles continue to struggle against the Communist government in Cuba and refuse to behave like other immigrant waves into the United States. Castro's followers also show similar traits. They are determined to assist in the defeat of Capitalism and the United States regardless of how long or what it takes.

¹³ Jack C. Plano, Milton Greenberg, Roy Olton and Robert E. Riggs, provided the following definitions of caudillismo and personalismo in their Political Science Dictionary (Hinsdale, Ill.: The Dryden Press, 1973):

Personalism: The Latin American political phenomenon of personalizing political power. Traditionally, many Latin American political parties could be described as bands of loyal followers clustered around, and serving as a vehicle for the expression of, some dominant and colorful personality.

Caudillismo: The principle of personal or "boss-type" political rule in Latin American politics. The caudillo depends on the personal loyalty of followers. Founded in the feudal systems of Spain and Portugal, caudillismo serves as a substitute for the formal institutions of government from the local to the national level.

The Cuban Soldier

The Cuban military is formed by men and women who have all the characteristics outlined above. As the Cuban revolution of 1959 has matured over a quarter of a century and a professional modern military has been formed, the tendency toward fanatical actions has diminished. A professional military corps does not act on the basis of emotions but on the basis of a sound analysis of the situation at hand.

Although Cuban military and civilian leaders, as well as their Spanish ancestors, have been known to save the last bullet to commit suicide rather than face capture, Cubans as a group are not suicidal. A Cuban, as an individual may take his life rather than accepting defeat or dishonor but as a group they will not normally engage in suicidal actions on purpose. Prominent Cuban political figures have taken their lives when faced with terminal illness or depression due to old age or political or economic setbacks. Cuban criminals in jail in the United States, many of whom are mentally incompetent, have also taken their lives or attempted suicide when faced with the possibility of spending the rest of their lives in jail living like caged animals.

Cuban military and political leaders have led their men in battle and have been killed in heroic acts. An example is Lieutenant General Antonio Maceo who was wounded in combat twenty six times before losing his life fighting in the struggle for independence. Civilian leaders, such as José Martí, have died in combat fighting for their ideals. Cuban light cavalry charges with machete in hand during the War of Independence are also legendary and border on suicidal, but this was not the intent of the individual soldier. One could almost envision a Cuban cavalryman asking his fellow soldier before a battle, - Pepe, what would you like me to tell your family? They had no intention of dying and expected to survive.

On the other hand, leaders such as General Calixto García attempted suicide, and the former President of the Republic at Arms, Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, killed himself rather than falling into enemy hands.¹⁴ There are also more recent examples of suicides in the past 35 to 40 years. In 1951, Eduardo Chivás, a prominent opposition figure killed himself in the middle of a radio broadcast when he found himself unable to prove corruption charges against a member of the

¹⁴ García miraculously survived after placing his pistol under his chin and firing before being captured by the Spanish. The bullet exited by his forehead and quick intervention by Spanish military surgeons saved his life.

cabinet. Former President Carlos Prío Socarrás (1948-1952), a political foe of Chivás, committed suicide in Miami in 1976. Former President Osvaldo Dorticós (1959-1975)¹⁵ and Hayde Santamaría, a prominent close ally of Fidel Castro during the revolution have also taken their lives in the past ten years.

Cubans fight as long as it is reasonably possible to win. The concept of Patria o Muerte (Fatherland or Death)¹⁶ has severe limitations as was shown during the Grenada incident in 1983. The deliberate taking of one's life in mass suicidal action is not a Cuban characteristic. Losing a battle is not considered more important than winning a protracted war; patience and reason have prevailed in the past. For example, as far back as 1762, when the British sent a large expeditionary force to capture Havana, the residents of the city fought heroically for two months before surrendering. But this experience could not be compared with other instances in world history where other people have fought to the last man.¹⁷

Cuban military history, however, does record at least one famous practically suicidal action, which took place on October 8, 1871. Brigadier General Julio Sanguily, an invalid as a result of war wounds, had been taken prisoner by a Cuban guerrilla unit of about 120 men, fighting on the side of Spain. Upon learning that General Sanguily had been taken

¹⁵ Osvaldo Dorticós was serving as Minister of Justice at the time that he took his own life. A possible explanation for his action may be that during "Operación Toga," Cuban intelligence arrested several judges and other employees of the judicial system for taking bribes and engaging in other acts of corruption without his knowledge. He may also have been suffering from terminal cancer.

¹⁶ This is a frequent slogan used by Cuban Revolutionary Government officials and was coined by Fidel Castro in the first year after the revolution in 1959.

¹⁷ Spartan forces in the battle of Thermopylae, for example, fought against Persian invaders to the last man in 480 B.C. Two similar examples took place in Spain. In 219 B.C. the people of Sagunto staged a heroic defense of their city against the forces of Carthaginian General Hannibal Barca during the Second Punic War. In 133 B.C. the people of Numantia also staged a heroic defense of their city against the forces of Scipio Aemilianus, and preferred to die in the ashes of the city rather than surrender to the Roman soldiers. Although Cubans have never gone to these extremes, during the Ten Years War 1868-1878, Cuban patriots burned the town of Bayamo to prevent its capture by Spanish troops.

prisoner, Major General Ignacio Agramonte formed a cavalry unit composed of 35 of his best men and addressed them: Brigadier Sanguily is being transported as a prisoner in that enemy column. It is necessary to rescue him dead or alive, even if we all perish in the attempt. Although outnumbered, the smaller Cuban Army unit was able to rescue General Sanguily in a quick and bloody machete charge. General Sanguily later became himself a famous Major General in the Cuban Army. Henry Reeve, an American officer who later became himself a brigadier in the Cuban Army, participated in this famous action.¹⁸

Cubans in Foreign Military Organizations

Cubans as individuals have distinguished themselves in combat in and out of Cuba. As far back as the seventeenth century there were famous Cuban corsairs like Thome Rodríguez and Felipe Giraldino. Cuban born flag-rank officers in the Spanish Army include Field Marshall Juan Montalvo y O'Farrill, born in Cuba in 1776 and General Julio Mangada Rosenorn, born in 1877. At least one black Cuban, José Domingo Hércules, commanded a large contingent of French soldiers in Napoleon's elite forces and received the French Cross of Honor.

Manuel de Quesada y Loynaz rose to the rank of General in the Mexican Army during the presidency of Benito Juárez and distinguished himself in the war against Maximilian and his French legionairs.¹⁹ Bartolomé Masó participated in an uprising in El Salvador before joining the Cuban struggle for independence. Several Cubans also distinguished themselves in the American Civil War and became heroes of the Union Army,

¹⁸ General Reeve was paralyzed from the waist down as a result of war wounds. However, he had a special chair made so that he could continue fighting as a cavalry officer strapped to his horse. He was killed in action later in the war. General Sanguily, who had suffered the same fate, also fought strapped to his horse.

¹⁹ Benito Juárez was elected President of Mexico by Liberal members of Congress at Querétaro in 1857 upon the resignation of President Ignacio Comonfort following a military uprising led by Conservative General Félix Zuluaga. He served as President through a civil war which ended in 1860 and a war from 1862 to 1867 to defeat a foreign invasion led by France which placed Archduke Maximilian of Austria in power in Mexico. After the defeat of Maximilian, Juárez was reelected in 1867 and 1871, but he died in 1872 before completing his last term.

including the Fernández-Cavada brothers, both lieutenant colonels in the Union Army.

In more recent history, a Cuban commanded the Ethiopian cavalry of Haile Sellassie I in 1935 against the invading Italian Army. Many Cubans fought in the Spanish Civil War from 1936 to 1939, as well as in the U.S. Army in WWII. A Cuban-American member of the U.S. Marine Corps, killed 81 Japanese in hand to hand combat in the Pacific campaign. Another Cuban, son of Celestino Fernández, a Communist leader in Camagüey who went into exile in the Soviet Union in the 1930's, became an officer in the Red Army and fought in WWII. During the Korean War, many Cuban-Americans fought in the U.S. Armed Forces and several were killed in combat. For example, Miguel Pérez Crespo died in combat in 1952 and Jesús Arbitre Peréa, a physician in the U.S. Army was wounded in combat while serving in the Medical Corps the same year.

During the Viet Nam War several thousand Cuban-Americans served in the U.S. Armed Forces ranging in rank from enlisted men to lieutenant colonels. They served in all branches of the service. Several of them distinguished themselves as pilots. Cuban-American officers, mostly lieutenant colonels and colonels are currently serving as U.S. Military Attachés or as members of Military Assistance Groups in several Latin American countries. Erneido Oliva, a veteran commander of the 2506 Bay of Pigs Brigade, was promoted to Brigadier General on February 23, 1985, and is currently the Brigade Commander of the 260th Military Police Brigade of the National Guard based in the District of Columbia. At the present time there is even a Cuban-American serving as commander of one American nuclear submarine.²⁰

Facts and Myths About the Cuban Military

The Cuban Armed Forces despite the size of the country have produced many legendary heroes, mostly in the 30-year period from 1868 to 1898, during the struggle for independence. But behind the Cuban pantheon of military heroes, the fact is that very few major engagements ever took place in Cuba before 1959. The Cuban military has really come of age in the past 25 years.

The largest military operation in Cuba during the colonial period was without a doubt the British attack and capture of Havana in 1762. Over 14,000 British troops took part in the

²⁰ U.S. Navy Commander Henry F. Herrera, a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, was appointed skipper of the nuclear power submarine USS Lafayette in 1985. The submarine carries a crew of 150 men and is armed with 16 nuclear missiles.

operation. About 290 British soldiers were killed in combat, 650 were wounded, and about 152 more died of disease and wounds. Another 130 were declared missing and presumed dead. The Spanish and Cuban defenders suffered about 380 men killed and 1,493 wounded in combat. The battle for Havana lasted from June 6 to August 14, 1762.

During the Ten Years War (1868-1878) and the War of Independence (1895-1898), both Cuban and Spanish forces suffered thousands of casualties. However, there were very few large battles involving thousands of men and resulting in hundreds of casualties. For example, during the most important military operation of the War of Independence, known as the "invasión," between October 22, 1895 and January 22, 1896, Cuban forces suffered 67 dead and 364 wounded in twenty major battles, including Mal Tiempo, Coliseo, Calimete and Las Taironas. Cuban forces used mostly guerrilla warfare. The Spanish often broke the engagements and failed to use their superior forces to pursue the Cubans and force them to fight decisive battles.

The largest battles ever fought in Cuba actually took place after the United States entered the war with Spain in 1898. Spanish General Joaquín Vara del Rey with about 600 men, including Spanish, Cuban and Puerto Rican troops established a defensive line against much larger American and Cuban Army troops in the hills of El Caney. From a strong point at El Vizo Fort they fought practically to the last man. The defenders suffered over 400 casualties including Vara del Rey, who took his own life rather than surrendering. The American and Cuban troops sustained over 450 casualties. Another defensive line was formed by Spanish General Linares at San Juan Hill, where they fought against larger forces. They sustained 310 casualties before retreating. The American forces sustained 1,012 and the Cuban Army over 150. The real heroes, one could argue, were Spanish.

Between 1902, when Cuba became independent, and January 1, 1959, when the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista was overthrown, only two large battles took place involving large numbers of combatants and resulting in large numbers of casualties. They took place in November of 1934 and in September of 1957.²¹

²¹ The black insurrection of 1912 resulted in several thousand blacks being killed. However, no real large battles took place. Most of the rebels killed had been hunted down and assassinated by the Army after their capture. Most of the other so-called battles were in fact skirmishes. They involved very few combatants and most of the casualties were often the result of assassinations after the fact.

The first took place during an attempted coup d'etat on November 8, 1933. Members of the ABC revolutionary organization and several popular officers in the armed forces led an insurrection against Fulgencio Batista and a revolutionary government led by President Ramón Grau San Martín. Naval units, airplanes and artillery were used in running gun battles throughout Havana, with the main action taking place at the military airfield at Camp Columbia, Police Headquarters, the San Ambrosio and Dragones Army barracks and the Atarés castle. Troops loyal to the government under the command of Captain Gregorio Querejeta were able to defeat the insurrection. Over 150 men were killed and many more were wounded. Querejeta later became a general and Chief of Staff of the Army.

The second large battle took place after the rebellion of Navy personnel and civilian revolutionaries in Cienfuegos on September 5, 1957 in an attempt to overthrow Fulgencio Batista. About 18 members of the armed forces loyal to the government and about 70 civilian and Navy personnel involved in the insurrection were killed. Many more were wounded on both sides.

During the seven years that Fulgencio Batista governed Cuba as a dictator between March 10, 1952 and December 31, 1958, approximately 1,000 government troops and about 1,500 revolutionaries were killed, for a grand total of no more than 2,500. In addition to the Cienfuegos uprising on September 1957, the largest battles took place on July 26, 1953 when Fidel Castro attacked the Moncada barracks in Santiago de Cuba, and during the battle of Santa Clara in December of 1958, when about 60 government troops and 40 members of the Rebel Army were killed.²² It is a myth that large military encounters took place in Cuba during the struggle against Batista. This author can only account for 52 encounters in seven years and most of them were rather small. Contrary to the assertion that as many as 20,000 people died during the revolutionary war, the actual figure is less than one fourth that number. The majority were executed, assassinated, or died as a result of terrorist acts, not as a result of combat.

The largest battles involving Cuban troops have all taken place after 1959, both inside and outside of Cuba. The largest battle ever involving Cuban military personnel took place during the Bay of Pigs invasion between April 15th and 20th, 1961. Government pilots flew approximately 70 missions

²² The government lost 22 soldiers and 64 attackers were killed. Most of attackers killed were in fact assassinated after they retreated and were hunted down by government forces. A total of 148 men and two women participated in the attack.

against the invasion force and shot down eight planes. They used two T-33's, two Sea Furies, and one B-26. The rest of the planes of the Revolutionary Air Force had been destroyed at several airfields two days before the landing by bombing runs conducted with B-26's of the invading force. The B-26 and one Sea Fury were shot down. The invasion brigade flew about as many missions with 17 B-26's, C-46's, and C-54's. Thousands of troops, and hundreds of tanks and artillery pieces were sent into combat against the approximately 1,500 members of the 2506 Brigade. Official figures place the number of men killed in the invasion force at 107 and the number of government troops killed at 161. Hundreds more were wounded. The actual number of government troops killed may in fact be much higher. In addition to the Cuban troops fighting on both sides, several American pilots were killed while flying for the invasion force. The Cuban Government also used foreigners, including Chilean and Nicaraguan pilots. Other foreigners fought as members of the ground forces. Many foreign military trainers were present in Cuba at the time teaching Cuban troops how to use thousands of new weapons including tanks and artillery.

Cuban troops have fought in many battles in Africa and the Middle East since 1961. Cuban troops were sent to Algeria to fight in the war between that country and Morocco. Cuban troops have fought with guerrillas in several African countries against Belgian, Portuguese, and South African troops. They have fought in internal conflicts either in support of guerrillas fighting to overthrow African governments or in support of African government against guerrillas or troops from neighboring countries. Some of the largest battles involving Cuban personnel have taken place in Angola and Ethiopia. Thousands of Cuban soldiers have fought and continue to fight in Angola since 1975. Cuban troops fought in Syria during the 1973 war with Israel. They have also fought as guerrillas in several Latin American countries including the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Bolivia, Peru and Guatemala.

At the present time over 35,000 Cuban military personnel are serving as combat soldiers or military advisers in about 19 different countries in Africa, the Middle East and Central America. The size of the Cuban military, counting ready reserves and militia is placed at over 1.618 million.²³ The Cuban Armed Forces have also assisted in the organization and training of a well-equipped military force of over 150,000 men in Nicaragua since 1980. Over 3,000 Cuban military experts as well as over 4,000 civilian advisers, are currently serving in Nicaragua.

²³ U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency, Handbook on the Cuban Armed Forces, (Washington, D.C.: 1986), p. 1-12, (Unclassified).

The old pantheon of military heroes is in the process of being expanded and even replaced by new names. Although Cuban military units are still named after the heroes of the wars for independence in the 19th century and martyrs and heroes of the struggle against Batista, new names are being added. Many leaders have been lost in combat in so-called "internationalist duties." Their memories have to be honored in order to maintain the interest of the troops in participating in these difficult conflicts, particularly when material rewards are very scarce. Most of the old comandantes of the guerrilla war against Batista and the military commanders of the early years of the revolution have been replaced by generals who were young teenagers and low rank officers in the Rebel Army during the revolution. These men have come of age in the foreign wars that have been fought and continue to be fought in many corners of the world.

Even legendary figures such as "Che" Guevara's may now be seen in a different light. Guevara and his Cuban followers were dedicated revolutionaries. Cuban Communists as well as Communists throughout the world revere his dedication but his expertise as a fighter is questioned. His theories about guerrilla warfare and his military leadership have been discredited. During the revolution he did not really perform any extraordinary deeds. In the war against the counterrevolutionary guerrillas in the Escambray Mountains he was badly defeated by the anti-communist guerrillas led by Porfirio Ramirez. Although "Che" Guevara may have had some successes in Africa, he was defeated in his efforts to start a guerrilla war in Bolivia.

The Cuban military now has experienced officers and military leaders that rival those of the military establishments of the leading world powers including the Soviet Union.²⁴ They have been under constant training and retraining for over twenty five years. They are dedicated to their ideals, and have years of experience in war, both conventional and unconventional. They are accustomed to accomplishing almost impossible tasks. For example, transporting thousands of men to fight a war in Angola without virtually any support in old ships and planes. They have challenged the odds over and over again and managed to obtain many victories. Defeat and/or failure to accomplish a mission brings about very strong and certain punishment. The officers who failed to fight to the death in Grenada have been severely punished.

²⁴ Cuban troops have had more combat experience in the past 25 years than Soviet troops. With the exception of Afghanistan, where a massive Soviet military operation began in 1979, Cuban troops have been more active in the past 25 years.

It is particularly difficult to obtain information about this new leadership of the Cuban military. Who are these people by the name of Acevedo, Casas, Colomé, Ochoa, Schueg, Cusa Telles, Fernández, Cabrera, García, Baranda, Chui, etc.? This is one of the most important aspects of this study because one could reasonably expect that the future leadership of Cuba once Fidel Castro leaves the scene, will come from the military. Military leaders ex-officio have traditionally had an important social and political rank in Cuba, Latin America and in Soviet-block countries. From their ranks have come the leaders of these countries. There is no reason to believe that this will not take place in Cuba again. Military leaders with conspicuous positive merits within the current system, stand an excellent chance of being the future leaders of the country.

Research Methodology

The information presented here has been gathered from published sources. All the materials used are public and available to any researcher willing to invest the time to read them. These include Cuban history books, military publications such as Boletín del Ejército, Verde Olivo and from U.S. Government publications such as The Soviet-Cuban Connection in Central America and the Caribbean, and the reports of the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS). Newspaper and magazine articles, as well as books on Soviet military hardware, were consulted in the preparation of this assessment of Cuban military power. In addition, the author interviewed several Cuban-American researchers and recent emigres, many of them veterans of the Cuban military, to gather information and verify facts that have been obtained from other sources.

It is no longer possible to write about the Cuban military without consulting numerous publications on African, Middle Eastern, Asian, European and Latin American affairs. The Cuban military and intelligence organizations have become very active in practically all corners of the world since 1959. From Algeria to Syria, from Angola to Ethiopia, and from the Dominican Republic to Bolivia, Cuban soldiers have fought and continue to fight conventional and guerrilla wars. Hundreds of books and periodicals in many languages have been consulted to prepare this study, which only covers the highlights of these involvement. It would take several books to do justice to the subject.

As has already been mentioned, since 1959, new officers have come up through the ranks of the Cuban military and many of the leaders who fought during the revolution against Batista have died or retired. Others are now holding civilian positions in the government. An innovation à la Castro has

been that military officers have been moved back and forth between civilian and military positions. Thus it is not always possible to determine the actual status of an individual.

A list of all present Cuban generals and admirals is included in Appendix VII. An effort has been made to provide information about their background, including cross-references to specific events in which they took part. Many of these new faces are unknown outside of Cuba and even inside Cuba not all of them are well-known due to the secret nature of their activities. However, due to limited information, some of these men may have moved up in rank or changed their responsibilities or have retired since they were identified.

An interesting exercise was conducted during the course of the research for this publication. Several young and old Cubans (ranging in age between 26 and 70 years of age) who left Cuba within the past six years were read the names in the list of generals in the appendix. The same exercise was conducted with several leading scholars on Cuban affairs in the United States. Very few were able to identify the names and knew very little if anything about them. These generals live very private lives and are unknown except to their immediate relatives and staffs.

The Cuban Government prohibits the taking of pictures of individuals in the armed forces, military bases and equipment. This makes it practically impossible to gather this type of information when using only resources available to the average individual who can only obtain information in the public domain. But an attempt has been made to document the findings presented here with pictures from many different sources in the public domain, including many publications of the Cuban and United States governments.

COLONIAL PERIOD

I. The Beginning of a Cuban Military Tradition

We know very little about Cuba before the arrival of Spanish explorers. When Columbus discovered the island in 1492, the western half of Cuba was inhabited by the "Siboney" Indians. The eastern half, for the most part, was inhabited by the "Taino" Indians. These were sub-cultures of Arawakan Indians who had inhabited Cuba as well as other Caribbean Islands and northern South America since at least 2000 B.C. They were peaceful people who lived from fishing and hunting and had not achieved the degree of advancement of other groups of American aborigines on the continent. Prior to the arrival of the Spanish, their only danger seemed to have come from "Carib" Indians who inhabited what is today Venezuela and small islands close to the South American continent. The Caribs are known to have raided the villages of the more peaceful Indians of the Western Caribbean.¹

The first recorded military engagements of the native Cubans against the Spanish took place in late 1510. During 1511, approximately 300 men went to Cuba to explore the island under the leadership of Diego Velázquez. Among the members of the expedition were such notable historical figures as Pedro Alvarado, Hernán Cortés, Diego de Orgaz, Bartolomé de las Casas, Juan de Grijalva and Bernal Díaz del Castillo. A Haitian-born Indian leader named Hatuey had escaped to Cuba and warned the native Cubans about the Spaniards and how they had subdued the people of his own island.

Hatuey organized a weak resistance movement which was no match for European weapons. Nevertheless, it took the Spanish over three months to capture Hatuey and defeat the small bands of natives who tried to resist the advance of Cortés and his men. Hatuey was burned at the stake near Yara in eastern Cuba. Resistance after this initial attempt was minimal and always met with extreme cruelty by the advancing Spanish troops despite repeated attempts by Father Bartolomé de las Casas to minimize the use of force. Historical records show that at least until June of 1530, Chief Guamá, led the natives in resisting the advance of the Spanish. He died at their hands on June 7, 1530.

¹ Most Cuban History books provide a description of the original inhabitants of the island. Several are mentioned in the bibliography. An interesting monograph on the Cuban Indians is Felipe Pichardo Moya's Los indios de Cuba en sus tiempos históricos, (La Habana: Muñiz, 1945).

Several towns were established within a few short years by Spanish explorers in Cuba, including Baracoa, Trinidad, Sancti Spiritus, San Cristobal, Santiago de Cuba, Puerto Principe, Yara and many other smaller ones. By 1555 the population of the island was estimated to be composed of between 650 and 700 Spaniards, 5,000 natives and about 800 black slaves.

In the first few years after the arrival of the Spaniards, some gold was found in Cuban rivers. However, the amounts could not be compared with the vast amounts of gold, silver and precious stones found in Mexico and South America. Large numbers of the first Spanish immigrants left Cuba in search for wealth in the mainland. The early economy of the island had peaked and collapsed by 1535. The value of the island was its strategic location and not its wealth in minerals. Those who chose to remain in Cuba, began to build an economy based on sugar, tobacco and trade.

Cuba became the staging area for the conquest of most of the American continent. Diego Velázquez organized several of these expeditionary forces and placed his trusted lieutenants in command. Francisco Hernández de Córdova was sent into the Gulf of Mexico and discovered Yucatan. This expedition was followed by another under Juan de Grijalba, leaving Santiago de Cuba in 1515, who brought back news about the Aztecs in Mexico and the riches that could be found there. A third expedition set forth under Hernán Cortés in 1518 to conquer Mexico.

Later, Pánfilo de Narváez and Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca reached Florida. They landed near what is now the city of Tampa. From there the Spanish explorers went by land across the South of the United States to Mexico, where they arrived in 1536. Hernando de Soto also sailed from Santiago de Cuba on August 21, 1539, to conquer Florida, reaching as far north as the Appalachian Mountains and the Mississippi River in 1541.

Cuba was not only the staging area for the conquest of the America, but also the gathering point for shipping back to Spain of all the treasure obtained in Mexico and South America. This was also an attraction to pirates and corsairs who made Cuban towns a favorite target. By 1525 piracy was in full swing. In addition to piracy, European wars in the 16th and 17th centuries spilled over to the Caribbean where the Spanish, British, French and Dutch fleets clashed numerous times. The constant danger of attack led the city council of Havana in 1551 to require all residents to carry weapons at all times (a sword).

In 1537, Havana was sacked. In 1538, Santiago was attacked by Jean Francois de la Rocque. Although he could not take the city, he once again attacked in 1543. In 1544, Jacques de

Sores captured Santiago de Cuba. In 1555, Jacques de Sores returned to attack Havana. The residents of Havana, including blacks and Indians joined Spanish troops in a losing struggle to defend the city. Smaller towns, such as Trinidad, became frequent targets. The residents of Cuba were forced to organize themselves to defend their property and their lives.

The first fortification in Havana, was the Castillo de la Fuerza. It was completed in 1540. Other fortifications followed and by 1577, Spain was engaged in the construction of a series of fortifications in Cuba to increase protection. Several additional forts were erected in Havana, including the Morro Castle at the entrance of the harbor. Juan de Tejeda, a veteran of European campaigns, arrived in Cuba in 1587 with military engineer Juan Bautista Antonelli and was responsible for strengthening the defenses. Construction of the Morro Castle started on June 27, 1589. By 1593, the castle was finished and La Fuerza had been improved. In 1602 the Morro Castle had 42 cannon, which were increased by 19 more in 1604. Havana had 460 infantry men and 30 artillery men stationed as a regular defense force which was supported by volunteers from the local community in times of crisis.²

After 1586, and starting with Captain General Gabriel de Luján, practically all the governors sent to Cuba by the Spanish crown were military men. They were given the title of Captain General. Even before the Spanish military took over the government of the island, conflicts had arisen between civilian and military officials. In Havana, for example, the commanding officer of the Morro Castle and the Fuerza Castle showed a disposition to interfere in civilian affairs.

The new fortifications in Havana and placing Cuba under military rule did not solve the problem of piracy. The pirate attacks continued. Santiago de Cuba was ransacked in 1603 by Gilberto Girón. The following year he returned to attack Yara. The population of the region organized a counterattack and Girón was killed by a black Cuban named Salvador Golomón. A large number of Girón's men were also killed by about 24 men from Bayamo commanded by Gregorio Ramos and Jácome Milanés who had organized the counterattack.³

² For additional information on the importance of Cuba as a base of operations for the conquest of America see Francisco Morales Padrón's Historia del descubrimiento y conquista de América. (Madrid: Editorial Nacional, 1963). For detailed information on the conquest of Cuba and initial Spanish settlements see Irene A Wright's The Early History of Cuba 1492-1586 (New York: McMillan, 1916).

³ The first epic poem known to have been written in Cuba praised the achievement of Salvador Golomón and the people of

In 1622 about 800 British troops captured Santiago de Cuba and ransacked the city. In 1628 Pitt, Hein captured Matanzas and part of the Spanish fleet that had started in Veracruz to take treasures back to Spain. In 1638, Cornelio Corneliszoon Jols attempted to attack Havana but failed to carry out his plans. He did attack several smaller towns including Matanzas and Santiago de Cuba. He was finally cornered by a powerful Spanish fleet at Cabañas Harbor and defeated.

In 1634 a new governor, Francisco Riano de Gamboa, arrived in Cuba with specific instructions to further strengthen the defenses. He organized the construction of ships in Havana to patrol Cuban waters. He also oversaw a flotilla of corsairs at the service of Spain to attack shipping of enemy nations with colonies in the Caribbean Islands. Among the most famous Cuban corsairs were Thomé Rodriguez, Felipe Giralдино and Francisco Miguel Vázquez. They made life difficult for the British in Jamaica, Florida and other areas of the Caribbean. Fortifications in Santiago de Cuba, in addition to those in Havana, were also improved substantially.⁴

The pirate and corsair wars continued in the second half of the XVII century. Henry Morgan in 1668 attacked Puerto Príncipe and John Springer Trinidad in 1678. Both towns were ransacked. Francis Grammont fought against Cuban defenders in Camagüey, in 1679.

The Spanish used fleets based in Cuba and Cuban corsairs to fight back against the British, French and Dutch pirates and corsairs. The Spanish strategy included direct attacks on pirate bases in the Isle of Pines, Tortugas, Charleston, Port Royal and Santo Domingo.

By the time the Peace of Ryswick was signed in 1697, signaling the beginning of the end of piracy, Cuba was strong enough militarily to keep notorious pirates such as Sir Francis Drake from attacking Havana.⁵ However, smaller towns and shipping fleets near Cuban waters were still frequently victimized.

Bayamo. The book, written by Silvestre de Balboa (1564-1634?), is entitled Especio de Paciencia (1608).

⁴ Saturnino Ulibarri's Piratas y Corsarios de Cuba (La Habana: 1931), documents the life and deeds of Cuban pirates and corsairs. Very few publications exist on the subject.

⁵ Please note that for Latin Americans and Spaniards, Sir Francis Drake was a pirate and an outlaw. He should never be used with people of Hispanic descent as anything other than an example of a murderer and a thief. He died off the coast of Cuba and was buried at sea.

In the 18th century Cuba continued to be affected by European wars. On April 27, 1727, a British fleet under Admiral Hossler arrived in Havana and started to make preparations to attack the city. The arrival of a Spanish fleet and the strong defenses of the city convinced him to desist. However, the two most important incidents took place in 1741 and in 1762. During the so-called "Jenkin's Ear War" between Great Britain and Spain, Admiral Vernon landed troops in Cuba in 1741 near Guantánamo and established a settlement. He intended to use this settlement as a base to attack Santiago de Cuba. Cuban guerrilla attacks were effective in driving the British away.

In 1762, during the Seven Year's War, the British gathered a powerful fleet to take Havana. The fleet was placed under the command of Admirals George Pocock and George Keppel and land forces under the Count of Albemarle. The fleet had over 200 ships, 8,000 sailors, 12,000 soldiers and over 2,000 black porters and workers, in addition to substantial assistance from the British colonies in North America. It was the most powerful force ever to cross the Atlantic.⁶

The British fleet arrived on June 10, 1762, taking the city by surprise. The attack started quickly, giving the Spanish little time to prepare a defense. Colonel Carlos Caro was placed in charge of defending the eastern approach to the city in the area of Cojimar and Bacuranao. Colonel Alejandro Arroyo was placed in command of the western approaches to the City in the area of La Chorrera and San Lázaro. Navy Captain Luis de Velasco was placed in command of the Morro Castle at the entrance to the harbor, across the bay from Havana. Manuel Briceño was given command of La Punta castle at the entrance to the harbor. Cuban militiamen were commanded by José Antonio Gómez-Bujones, a councilman from the nearby town

⁶ There are many detailed accounts of the seige of Havana by the British in 1762. The principal sources on this historical event are:

Antonio Bachiller y Morales, Cuba: Monografía Histórica que comprende desde la pérdida de la Habana hasta la Restauración Española (La Habana: Imp. de Ruiz y Hno., 1883);

Cuba. Archivo Nacional. Papeles Sobre la Toma de La Habana por los Ingleses (La Habana: Talleres del Archivo Nacional de Cuba, 1951);

Francis Russell Hart, The Siege of Havana 1762 (Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1931);

Jacobo de la Pezuela, Sitio y Rendición de La Habana en 1762: Fragmentos de la Historia Inédita de la Isla de Cuba. (Madrid: Imprenta y Estereotipia de M. Revadeneyra, 1859).

of Guanabacoa. These militia troops assisted in the defense of the eastern front around Cojimar.

The city only counted with some 3,000 veteran soldiers, about 5,000 local militia, and some 1,000 volunteers including black slaves who were given their freedom in exchange for assisting in the defense of the city. But despite heroic efforts by Cuban and Spanish troops, the city surrendered on August 10, after two months of fighting. The British entered the city on August 14, 1762.

One of the most significant military aspects of the British attack was the fact that a Cuban defender became a popular folk hero. Pepe Antonio, as the people referred to Councilman José Antonio Gómez-Bujones, fought the British landing force and caused them substantial casualties before dying in battle on July 26, 1762. He became a symbol of Cuban resistance against foreign domination.

At the end of the Seven Years War Spain exchanged Florida for the return of Havana from the British and France in turn compensated Spain for the loss by transferring title of Louisiana to Spain. Louisiana then came under the administrative jurisdiction of the Spanish Government in Cuba. On July 6, 1763 British troops left Havana and Spain regained control of the city and surrounding territory.

The British attack and subsequent administration of Havana were significant in several areas. First, all the groups in Cuban society fought against the foreign invader. They included Spaniards, their Cuban born sons, free blacks, black slaves, and people of mixed race. As a team, they all contributed to the defense of the city. This team work was the start of the creation of a national spirit in Cuba. Second, the British opened up the city to international trade. Over 600 ships called on Havana in the less than two years of British rule, greatly stimulating commerce. Spanish trade controls limited commerce and as a result many fewer ships called on Havana during a similar span of time. This also contributed to showing the Cuban population that Spanish administration was not necessarily the best way to run the government of the island.

The British victory also served to point out military deficiencies in a very vivid way. To correct the situation, Spain immediately sent Field Marshal Alejandro O'Reilly,

7 Some Cubans did collaborate with the British administration but the majority of the residents of Havana did not. Bishop Pedro Agustín Morell de Santa Cruz was one of the leaders in the opposition to the British administration which took many different forms. He was possibly the first Cuban refugee in Florida.

Brigadier Silvestro Abarca and other military engineers to upgrade existing military installations and build new ones. The Morro Castle was rebuilt and improved. A new adjacent fort was built at La Cabaña to control the cliffs across from the harbor and the city. Two new forts were built, Atares and Principe in two other strategic hills in the southeast and southwest of the city, just outside of the city wall.

Sanitation, police service, the criminal justice system, public buildings, streets, docks, cargo handling facilities and many other city services were upgraded within a short period of time. Within 10 years Havana was a very different city compared to the way it was prior to the British assault in 1762. Spain had learned some lessons from the war and had made an attempt to correct many of the problems that existed in Cuba.

Another important development after the departure of the British was the expansion of an important military industry in Havana which included ship building for the Spanish Navy. Several of the largest ships of the Spanish fleet were built in Havana, including Santisima Trinidad, the flagship of the Spanish Navy and an important combatant in the battle of Trafalgar in 1805.⁸

⁸ Santisima Trinidad was built in Havana in 1769, of Cuban native woods. It was 36 years old when it took part in the battle of Trafalgar in 1805, and was the largest ship in the world. It was 220 feet long and 58 feet wide. It had four decks and carried 138 artillery pieces in three rows of cannons. The Commander of the ship at Trafalgar was Don Francisco Javier de Uriarte, who was killed in the battle. Also killed on board the ship was Rear Admiral Baltasar Hidalgo de Cisneros, Commander of the Spanish fleet. Santisima Trinidad faced Victory, the flagship of the British Navy, commanded by Admiral Nelson, as well as Temerary and Neptune. The cross fire from the British ships was more than Santisima Trinidad could take and after a long combat that lasted over five hours, the ship surrendered and later sank. Admiral Nelson was killed in the battle, possibly from a rifle shot fired from Santisima Trinidad. For additional information see:

Edward Fraser, The Enemy at Trafalgar (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1906); Manuel Marliani, Combate de Trafalgar: Vindicación de la Armada Española (Madrid: 1850); John Terraine, Trafalgar (New York: Mason/Charter, 1976); and David A. Howarth, Trafalgar: The Wilson Touch (London: Jarrold & Sons Ltd., 1969).

Significance of the Early Colonial Period

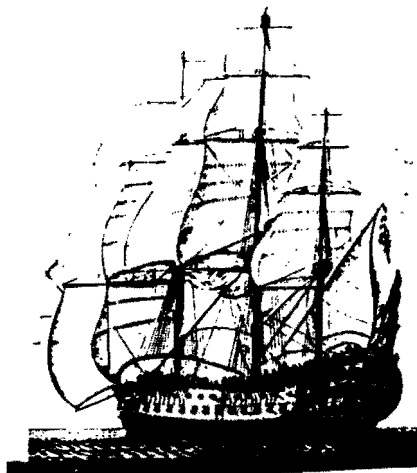
The period from 1492 to 1776 was very important in Cuban history because it set the stage for the future of the island as a strategic location for military operations in the Americas. Spain had explored and colonized Cuba and transformed it into the most critical link between the Mother Country and her American colonies. Militarily, Cuba was recognized by all European powers as a very important strategic location. It proved over and over again to be a very valuable staging area for military operations in the Americas. In the next 100 years this importance was to become even more clear to the world powers.

During this period the government of the island was placed in the hands of military men and was to remain that way for the rest of the Spanish colonial period. With very few exceptions this military tradition has continued to the present. Cuban militarism is in part the result of the habit of military commanders of the many castles, fortifications and visiting fleets of interfering in civilian affairs. They had the real authority based on the power of the gun, and often overruled civilian and ecclesiastical authorities.

The sons of the Spanish immigrants born in Cuba, known as "creoles" or "criollos" began to take an active part in the defense of their home country even if it was done under the Spanish flag. Free blacks, black slaves and mulattos also took an active part in the defense of Cuba. The first Cuban military martyrs and heroes appeared during this period: Hatuey, Guamá, Golomón and "Pepe Antonio."

SANTISIMA TRINIDAD

Built in Havana in 1769 of native Cuban woods, this warship was the largest ship in the world for 36 years. It was 220 feet long and 58 feet wide. It carried 138 pieces of artillery in three rows of cannons and 1,048 men.





HATUEY

The first known Cuban military leader was Hatuey, a native of the neighboring island divided between the Republic of Haiti and Dominican Republic. He alerted the Cuban natives of the actions of the Spanish in his home island and how they had mistreated his people. When the first Spanish explorers arrived, Hatuey led the Cuban natives in a losing struggle against powerful European weapons. Before long, Hatuey was captured and burned at the stake. Legend explains that when the Spanish priests attempted to convert him to Christianity, he asked them if the Spanish also went to heaven. When told that they did, he answered that he did not want to go anywhere such cruel people went for eternity.



DIEGO VELAZQUEZ



HERNAN CORTES



JUAN PONCE DE LEON

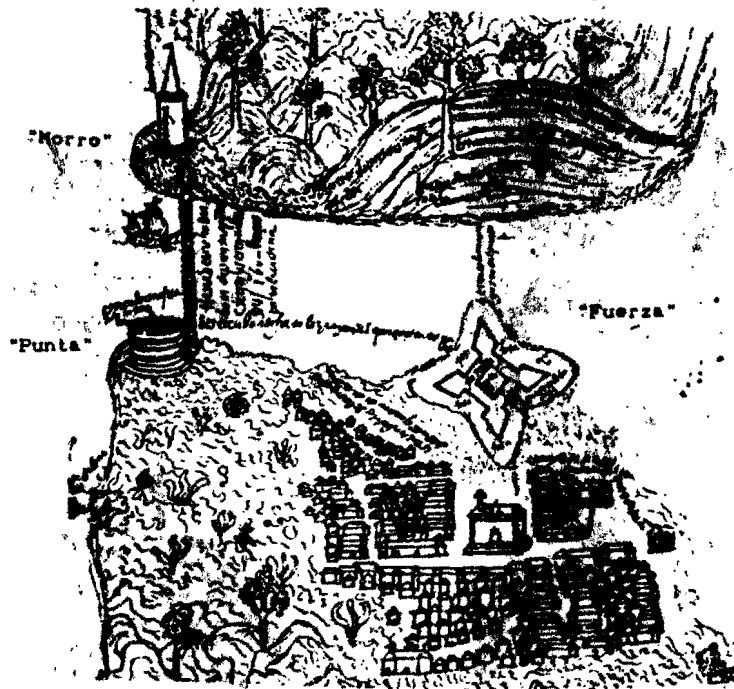


HERNANDO DE SOTO

**CUBA: Strategic Point of Departure for
the
Conquest of the Americas**

Diego Velázquez led a Spanish expedition to Cuba in 1511 and defeated Cuban native resistance. Hernán Cortés, one of Velázquez's lieutenants, led an expedition in 1518 from Cuba to conquer Mexico. Juan Ponce de León is credited with being the first Spanish explorer to touch United States soil, landing in Florida in 1512. Hernando de Soto sailed from Santiago de Cuba in 1539 to conquer Florida, reaching as far north as the Appalachian Mountains and as far west as the Mississippi River in 1541. Other members of his expedition penetrated into present day Texas.

HAVANA IN THE XVI CENTURY



This drawing made in the 16th century shows several of the first fortifications built by the Spanish to protect Havana from enemy attacks. The initial works of the Morro castle at the entrance to the harbor had already been completed. Another small fort on the city side of the harbor named La Punta had also been finished. A heavy chain was drawn across the entrance as a boom to prevent the unauthorized entrance of ships. Another large castle named La Fuerza had also been completed within the city limits. Behind the Morro castle, the picture shows a very strategic hill, where the Cabaña fortifications were to be built after Spain regained the city from the British. At the time of this drawing, the Spanish had a rock quarry on this hill, from which they obtained the stones to build the forts and houses of the city. The city wall had not been built at the time this drawing was made.



Navy Captain Don Luis de Velasco
Commanded Spanish troops in the Morro Castle

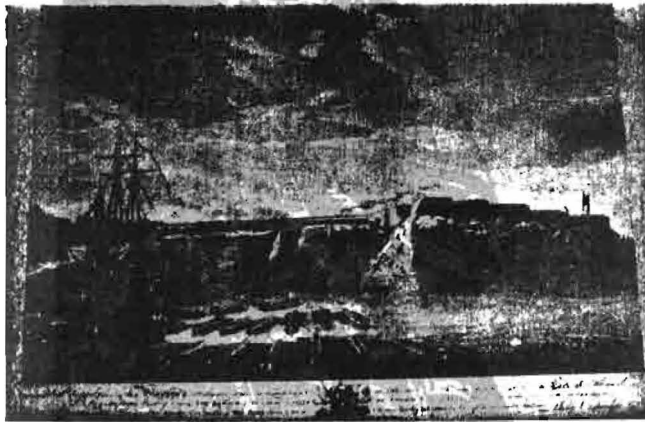


Admiral Sir George Pocock
Commander of the British Fleet

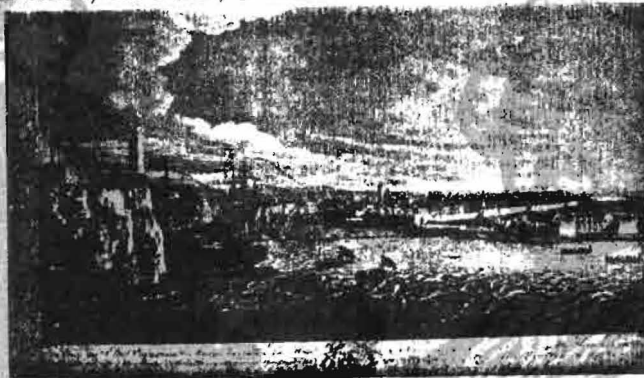


Lt. General August Keppel
Count of Albemarle
Commander of British Land Forces

SCENES FROM THE SEIGE OF HAVANA BY THE BRITISH IN 1762



To the Honorable William Keppel, Colonel of His Majesty's 56th Regiment of Foot and Major General. On the Expedition under the Command of the Right Honorable The Lord of Albemarle. This perspective view of entering the breach of the Moro Castle by Storm the 30th of July 1762 between the Hours of 1 and 2 in the Afternoon. Also view of His Majesty's Ship Alcide and a number of flat boats manned and armed, Is most humbly inscribed by His Majesty's devoted humble servant Philip Orsbridge.



To Gen. Augustus Elliot Esq. Maj. Gen. of His Majesty's Army Colonel of Light Horse and Second in Command on the Glorious expedition against the Havannah in the year 1762. This perspective view of His Majesty's Land Forces going in Flat Boats to take Possession of the North Gate of the City and Punta Castle on the 14th of August. Also three sloops of war assisting to open the booms. It is most humbly inscribed by His Majesty's devoted servant Philip Orsbridge.

II. Cuba and the American and French Revolutions

Between 1776 and 1814, Cuba was intimately involved in the principal historical events of the period. These included the American Revolution, the French Revolution, the Haitian War of Independence, the Napoleonic wars and the British-American War of 1812. Although Cuba was not a direct belligerent in these conflicts, the island was the center of a considerable amount of military activity and Cubans were often involved in important episodes of these historical events.¹

The American Revolution of 1776 was the principal event of this period. It was the first anti-colonialist war of national liberation and the first liberal-democratic revolution of modern history. The Declaration of Independence provided an example to other people that it was possible to be free. It also set the stage for old rivals to make new alliances and take sides in the conflict between Great Britain and her thirteen North American colonies. From the beginning France was friendly to the American patriots seeking independence from Great Britain. The French contributed funds, equipment and troops to assist them in the revolution. Spain on the other hand did not take direct part in the war until 1779. However, Spain made a serious effort to benefit from the military problems of the British to expand its own power and territorial control.

Cuba was at the center of the French and Spanish involvement in the American War of Independence. Spanish Louisiana, which was administratively dependent on Havana, became a staging area to launch attacks in an attempt to recover Florida from the British. Bernardo Gálvez, Governor of Louisiana, using Cuban voluntary militia and Spanish troops fought the British in what are now Pensacola and St. Augustine, Florida; Mobile, Alabama, and several towns in Mississippi. An expeditionary force of Cuban troops from Havana also attacked and captured the Bahamas.² These military campaigns provided an indirect assistance to the American revolutionaries by keeping busy many British troops.

Cubans not only contributed manpower to recover land from the British, but also critical funds to help finance the American

¹ Cuban "internationalism" was not invented by Fidel Castro after the revolution of 1959. Cuban involvement in "liberation movements" can be traced back to the American Revolution.

² Herminio Portell Vila, Historia de Cuba en sus relaciones con Estados Unidos y España (La Habana: Jesus Montero, 1938).

War of Independence. The American struggle for independence was popular among the Cuban population, perhaps due to the recent experience with the British in Havana. Both the Spanish-born residents of Cuba, and their Cuban-born offspring (Creoles), were friendly to the American cause.

There is ample historical evidence that shows that public funds, as well as funds donated by Cubans in Havana, were used to finance the Yorktown campaign and the defeat of General Cornwallis in 1781. American Historian Stephen Bonsal, in his book, When the French were Here: A Narrative of the Sojourn of the French Forces in America and their Contribution to the Yorktown Campaign, (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Co, 1945), went as far as to state that, "The million that was supplied Saint-Simon to pay his troops by the ladies of Havana may with truth, be regarded as the bottom dollars upon which the edifice of the American independence was erected."³

The Continental Army had been suffering for at least two years from limited funds. General George Washington was at the end of his resources. The troops had not been paid. They lacked basic supplies including food and clothing, and he was unable to raise more funds from traditional sources in Europe. To make matters worse, troops from the northern regiments had to be moved south to fight, something they always found disagreeable.

The French allied forces under General Rochambeau also had a very limited military chest that could not support the war effort for very long. This was the situation in 1781 before Yorktown. French General Rochambeau wrote to Count de Grasse, Admiral of the Fleet, on June 8 and again on the 11th, urgently requesting funds to finance the war effort. Admiral de Grasse, was in command of a French fleet in Haiti. He was unable to raise funds there, but sent the fast frigate Aigrette, under the command of Claude Henry Saint-Simon to Havana to request financial assistance.

With the help of Lieutenant General Juan Manuel de Cagigal, the new Governor of Cuba, and his aide-de-camp, Francisco de Miranda, funds were collected from merchants, women's associations, and other sources. Many ladies of Havana donated

³ The events surrounding the assistance provided by Cuban residents to the American War of Independence are depicted in Eduardo Tejera's bilingual monograph La Ayuda Cubana a la Lucha por la Independencia Norteamericana/ The Cuban Contribution to the American Independence (Madrid: Ediciones Universal, 1972). Many original manuscripts on the subject of the Cuban assistance to the American revolutionaries are part of the collection of the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

their jewelry to the cause. A total of 1,200,000 livres was collected and given to help finance the American Revolution.

The French fleet arrived on Chesapeake Bay on August 30, 1781, and news of the arrival of the funds reached Washington's camp on September 5th. General Washington, who was known for his composed manner was depicted by General Rochambeau's aide-de-camp in his personal journal as "shaking his hat and a white handkerchief and showing signs of great joy."⁴ The funds collected in Havana were then used to defray the cost of the southern campaign including the decisive battle of Yorktown, which ended with the surrender of General Cornwallis. Haitian troops and some Cuban volunteers also fought on the American side in this important campaign. Two years later the United States became independent with the signing of the Treaty of Paris.

There is no similar historical evidence of direct Cuban participation in the events of the French Revolution a few years later in 1789. However, the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the anticlerical and libertarian philosophy of the revolution reached Cuba and affected the thinking of the people, particularly the better educated. The ideas of the revolution together with other ideas that had arrived in Cuba during the British occupation, such as, Freemasonry and other rationalist philosophies, were accepted by the "criollos" in Cuba. Freemasonry, in particular, was widely accepted and in the next 100 years, most Cuban political and military leaders turned out to be Freemasons.⁵ The secrecy of the organization and the exclusion of non-members provided an ideal setting for conspiring against the Spanish authorities.⁶

⁴ J.J. Jusserand, With Americans of Past and Present Days, (New York: 1916), pp.78-79.

⁵ Freemasonry seems to have had its origins in France as an association of masons (maçons), or workers who built with bricks or stones, possibly as far back as the VIII century. By the XVI century it had become a mutual help society and accepted members from outside of the craft of masonry. It had also developed a humanitarian theology, rationalistic philosophy and a strong secrecy rule for its members. From France it was exported to Great Britain, where it became increasingly powerful as a political force after a Great Lodge was formed in London around 1717. The symbols of the organization are the compass and a carpenter's square. Chapters of the organization are called "lodges."

⁶ Francisco Ponte Dominguez, La masonería en la independencia de Cuba, (La Habana: Modas, 1954). Also, Luis Oliva Pulgarón,

In 1791, a slave rebellion in the French colony of Haiti led to the creation of the first black independent republic. The rebellion also created the second country in the Western Hemisphere to free itself from colonial rule. As many as 60,000 white inhabitants of Haiti fled to Cuba. The majority were French. They settled in the Eastern part of the island, mainly in the area between Santiago de Cuba and Guantánamo. They took with them new agricultural technologies and crops which helped to improve the economy of the region. But they also took with them the experience of having survived a slave rebellion in which many of their friends and relatives had perished. This experience was translated in Cuba into more sophisticated ways to maintain control over slaves and more effective tactics to fight any slave uprising.

Within a few short years after the Haitian Revolution, several slave uprisings took place in Cuba, probably inspired by the Haitian example. One of the largest of these uprisings took place in the center of the island, in Camaguey in 1798. They were all met with strong military action by the colonial government and usually resulted in the death of all the people associated with each insurrection.

One year later, in 1799, a popular young French General by the name of Napoleon Bonaparte, participated in a coup d'état in France and made himself First Consul. This was the culmination of a series of events in France beginning with the storming of the Bastille on July 14, 1789. The capture of this hated prison by the people of Paris was followed by seizure of aristocratic properties; abolition of regional and class privileges; the beheading of the king and queen; the formation of a republic; a reign of terror against opponents of the revolution, and finally, to a series of economic measures to help the poor. Napoleon exploited the political divisions caused by the fast moving events of the previous decade to take power as a dictator.

The ideals of the French Revolution and the desire of Napoleon to spread them by use of military power were the dominant forces in world history for years to come. In 1804, Napoleon declared himself Emperor and led France in a series of military victories that resulted in French control over most of Europe.

Apuntes históricos sobre la masonería cubana La Habana: no-
publisher, (1934).

Francisco Ponce Domínguez, La masonería en la independencia de Cuba (La Habana: Nodas, 1984). Also, Luis Givá Pulgarón,

Significance of this Period in Cuban History - 111

The American Revolution marked the first time that Cubans assisted in an anti-colonialist war. Considering that this was the first war of this type recorded in modern history, it can be said that Cuba has been involved in foreign wars and revolutions since the outset. Another important aspect of this period is that Cuba was directly involved in promoting and financing revolution in what is today the United States. The strategic location of the island for activities such as this and the potential threat it presents cannot be overlooked.

Revolution, he rose in the ranks with his distinguished participation in several important military campaigns. In the war in Italy between 1798-1799, Napoleon was active in the battles of Lodi, Castiglione, Rivoli and Arcole. He mention only a few. Next, he led the French invasion of Egypt in 1798-1799. Within a short time, Alexandria and Cairo fell, as Napoleon extended French control over Egypt.

Despite some serious setbacks for the military campaign in the Middle East, Napoleon returned to France in October of 1799, acclaiming a coup d'état. Napoleon appointed himself First Consul, a position which gave him several effective powers. He surrounded himself with able men, such as Talleyrand and Fouché and enacted a series of reforms. France, under his leadership, was modernized. Napoleon's military administration in Italy was only one of the many successes he achieved. He signed an agreement with the Pope in 1801 which brought about a year of conflict between Church and State. The new agreement, known as the "Concordat", provided him the power to nominate candidates for the church hierarchy, before they were appointed by the Pope.



Comte de Rochambeau

Comte de Grasse

Finally, on December 2, 1804, Napoleon was crowned Emperor. A year later, with the defeat of Austria and Russian troops at Austerlitz, Napoleon became, for all practical purposes, the Emperor of most of the European mainland. On the other hand, the British controlled the seas. France blockaded the continent to British commerce, while the British established a blockade around the European mainland. For the next ten years the two super powers fought for European supremacy. But the war had ramifications that reached well beyond Europe and determined the future of the Western Hemisphere.

Although there was no direct military conflict involving Cuba and the European powers during the Napoleonic Period (1793-

III- Napoleonic Period in Cuban History

Napoleone di Buonaparte, a Corsican born in 1769, a year after the island was annexed by France, became not only the Emperor of the French from 1804 to 1815, but perhaps one of the most powerful men ever in Europe. As a young man with a heavy Italian accent in French, Napoleon entered the French Military Academy at Saint-Cyr and received his commission as a lieutenant of artillery in the French Army in September of 1786. Years before he had also studied at the Brienne Military Academy. During the turbulent years of the French Revolution, he rose in the ranks with his distinguished participation in several important military campaigns. In the war in Italy between 1796-1798, Napoleon won merits in the battles of Lodi, Castiglione, Rivoli and Arcole, to mention only a few. Next, he led the French invasion of Egypt in 1798-1799. Within a short time, Alexandria and Cairo fell, as Napoleon extended French control over Egypt.

Despite some serious setbacks for the military campaign in the Middle East, Napoleon returned to France in October of 1799, acclaimed as a conquering hero as he travelled to Paris. A month later, Napoleon participated in a military coup d'etat, and was appointed First Consul. Napoleon surrounded himself with several efficient and knowledgeable men, such as Talleyrand and Fouché and managed to bring order to France, ending years of caotic rule. New legislation enacted under his leadership modernized and codified the administration of government. Napoleon set out to unify the country by proclaiming a general amnesty, while at the same time organizing an effective police organization to keep track of his political enemies and neutralize them if they took action against his rule. He signed an agreement with the Pope in 1801, which brought about an end to years of conflict between Church and State. The new agreement with the Catholic Church, known as the "Concordat," provided him the power to nominate candidates for the church hierarchy, before they were appointed by the Pope.

Finally, on December 2, 1804, Napoleon was crowned Emperor. A year later, with the defeat of Austrian and Russian troops at Austerlitz, Napoleon became, for all practical purposes, the Emperor of most of the European mainland. On the other hand, the British controlled the seas. France blockaded the continent to British commerce, while the British established a blockade around the European mainland. For the next ten years the two super powers fought for European supremacy. But the war had ramifications that reached well beyond Europe and determined the future of the Western Hemisphere.

Although there was no direct military conflict involving Cuba and the European powers during the Napoleonic Period (1799-

1815), the wars in Europe triggered important developments in Cuban military history. These developments had very significant effects with regard to the future of Cuba. These included the start of a series of conspiracies and uprisings to achieve either independence from Spain and/or the abolition of slavery; the use of Cuba as a staging area to attack the United States, an episode that added fuel to American interest in annexing Cuba; and finally, the breakdown of traditional authority in Spain and her colonies, including the politization of the military, and a never-ending struggle for power by different political groups.

Spain Under Napoleonic Rule

War between France and Spain was inevitable, due to the combination of imperialistic desires of Napoleon and the French dream of spreading the ideals of the French Revolution to the rest of Europe. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Manuel Godoy and King Carlos IV, Spain tried to avoid a conflict with France. Spain elected to become a French ally to fight against Great Britain, their traditional mutual enemy. This decision led to one military disaster after another for Spain and an eventual conflict with French expansionism.¹

War broke out with the British in 1797. The basic premise of the French-Spanish alliance was that the French Army would control the European continent and the Spanish Navy, with the support of the French, would rule the seas. France would have a continental empire and Spain would have an overseas empire if they were able to defeat the British. But the Spanish fleet was old and no match for the British. French naval leadership was also inferior to that of the British. The French could not coordinate their activities well in any operation with the Spanish fleet. This set the stage for the defeat of the French and Spanish fleets at Trafalgar in 1805 by a smaller British force commanded by Admiral Nelson.²

After defeat at Trafalgar in 1805, the Spanish-French alliance continued on its inevitable downhill course. Under the pretext of a joint invasion of Portugal, French troops crossed into Spain in large numbers. By then, Prime Minister Godoy and King Carlos IV realized that war with France could not be avoided. They considered moving the government to one of the American colonies, as the Portuguese had done with British help upon the French invasion, but the plan met with resistance and the king abdicated. Amid strong family

¹ José Luis Comellas, Historia de España Moderna y Contemporánea. (Madrid: Ediciones Rialp, S.A., 1982), pp. 256-262.

² Ibid.

Reaction in Cuba to the French Invasion of Spain during this period was reflected in 1814 when the King Ferdinand VII returned to Spain and the Spanish authorities in Cuba, as well as a majority of the population, remained loyal to Fernando VII, whom they still considered to be the legitimate head of state. The Spanish Revolutionary Government based in Seville was accepted by the government of the island and several emissaries sent by Napoleon to Cuba to discuss recognition of his puppet government were arrested and executed.⁴

In 1812, two delegates from Cuba, Andres de Jauregui and Jose Bernardo O'Gaban, attended the Cortes held at Cadiz to draft a new constitution for Spain and other territories. A liberal constitution was enacted granting previously unknown participation in the government to the people and a considerable degree of self-government to the colonies. The constitution became the basis of Spanish Liberalism. All Spaniards were recognized as equals before the law and the government divided into executive, legislative and judicial powers along the example of the American and French revolutions. The Tribunal of the Inquisition was dismantled and the power of the Church reduced considerably.

Although a vast majority of the Cubans seemed to have sided with Spain and even participated in the Spanish War of Independence, at least one Cuban distinguished himself in the French Army. A black Cuban named Jose Domingo Heredia (1761-1826) commanded over 1000 black troops in Napoleon's elite forces and distinguished himself in battle, and he received the French Cross of Honor among other decorations for his military deeds.

Despite the war that was being waged against France, the delegates at this constitutional convention as well as many of their compatriots in Spain and the colonies, were influenced by a number of French philosophers of the XVIII century and the ideals of the French and American revolutions. The separation of executive, legislative and judicial powers was the result of ideas espoused by Charles-Louis de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu (1689-1755). The concept of the right of the majority to rule through a representative assembly can be traced to Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778). The concept of individual liberty and the rights of man were put forward by Antoine Lavoisier, Marquis de Condorcet (1748-1794). The new rights and duties of the people were to be drafted into a constitution as exemplified by the American revolutionaries in the United States. The concept of self-determination of a people when their monarch was no longer able to perform his executive functions was the product in part of Spanish Jesuit theologians and philosophers Francisco

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This Spanish Constitution was in force in Cuba from 1812 until Napoleon was defeated in 1814 and British and allied forces entered Paris and liberated Fernando VII. The King returned to Spain on March 22, 1814, to take power again. Napoleon was forced to abdicate and retreated to the Island of Elba. A few months later in 1815, Napoleon returned to France and made an attempt to reorganize his military forces, but was defeated by the allied European powers and vanished to the Island of St. Helen, where he died in 1821.⁶

During the period of the French occupation of Spain, the Spanish colonies in America obtained a substantial degree of self-government which was to lead to movements for total independence. Revolutionary juntas were organized in most of the large cities in the Spanish colonies in America. However, Cuba remained loyal to Spain, despite several attempts to seek independence, which were discovered by the authorities in the island and quickly drowned in blood. The first attempt was led by Román de la Luz Silveira in 1809 and the second was a slave rebellion in 1812 led by the free black José Antonio Aponte.

During the Napoleonic occupation of Spain, the Spanish colonies in the Western Hemisphere set up their own governments while maintaining loyalty to the crown. However, once Napoleon was defeated and Fernando VII took over the reigns of the empire, he did away with all the liberal legislation enacted during his imprisonment and reestablished absolute monarchical control over all aspects of Spanish Government. The king did not take account of the loyalty of his people during his imprisonment in France and showed no appreciation for what they had done.

Not unlike the Spanish people in the mother country, the people of the colonies rebelled against authoritarian rule as exemplified by an absolute monarchy. Within two years of the return of Fernando VII, the American colonies declared their independence from Spain and by 1822 all except Cuba and Puerto Rico had been lost. Cuba did not gain independence in part due to the large numbers of Spanish immigrants relative to the total population of the island.

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⁶ An interesting historical fact is that Napoleon's attending physician at St. Helen's was Cuban born Juan Antomarchi. He died in Santiago de Cuba, of yellow fever on April 4, 1838.

The Spanish economy had been damaged by the effects of the war against the French from 1808 to 1814, and with the loss of the American colonies the country was in bankruptcy. The economic structure of Spain had been set up on the basis of a colonial empire and without these resources Spain had become a second rate power. The Spanish crown could not muster the resources to recover the American colonies and by 1826, all military attempts to reconquer them had failed. The ten million inhabitants of Spain could not continue to rule over the destiny of 30 million people in the American colonies.

The War of 1812 and Cuba

Napoleon brought together two old enemies, Spain and Great Britain. After years of fighting, they united to make war against France. This alliance led to Spanish assistance to the British in the War of 1812 between the United States and Great Britain. The key to the friction between the United States and the British was trade. British naval vessels had seized U.S. ships trading with France and provided weapons to American Indians to raid western outposts of the United States. British ships had also stopped American warships to search for British deserters, even within American territorial waters. These and other incidents led the U.S. Congress to approve a war message sent by President James Madison. War was declared on June 18, 1812.

The war was not very popular in the United States, particularly in the coastal states in the northeast that depended on trade. In the frontier territories the war was more popular, because they hoped to expand the national territory. However, few volunteers signed up for the armed forces. Despite several unexpected victories at sea against the powerful British Navy, the eastern seaports were blockaded by a strong British naval force. The United States also suffered several defeats in the north, fighting British and Canadian forces. After Napoleon abdicated in April of 1814, the British were able to concentrate their attention on the war with the United States and sent thousands of veterans of the European war to America.

On August 24th, the British entered Washington and burned down the Capitol and the White House, possibly in retaliation for the burning of Parliament House in York, now the Canadian city of Toronto. However, several attempts to invade the United States from Canada were turned back by American forces, who defeated the British veterans in several important battles. Finally, British and American representatives met in Belgium to discuss peace. The Treaty of Ghent, ending the war was signed on December 24, 1814.

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While the peace delegates were meeting the war went on in the south. General Andrew Jackson captured Pensacola, then part of Spanish Florida and defeated Indian nations that had been waging war in the south against the United States. Expecting a British attack, Jackson moved his men to New Orleans. On January 1, 1815, unaware that the war had ended, about 5,300 British troops commanded by General Sir Edward Pakenham attacked New Orleans. The British naval task force under Admiral Cochrane had been organized out of the British colony in Jamaica and then moved on to Havana.

In Havana, the British collected more ships, men and materials arriving from Europe, by way of Bermuda under Colonel Edward Nichols. Possibly as many as 8,000 veterans of the European campaigns and blacks from the British islands in the Caribbean were organized into a powerful landing party. The British sailed from Havana to invade the United States, landing outside of New Orleans.

They were met and defeated by General Andrew Jackson, suffering over 2,000 casualties, compared to 21 for the Americans. After they were forced to withdraw, the British sailed back to Havana to reorganize what was left of their forces. In March 1815, the British returned to Europe on board 19 ships.

This experience made more evident than ever before the strategic importance of Cuba, particularly as it applied to the security of the United States. The Spanish Government was also concerned about the future of Cuba. The Spanish feared that the British could provide assistance to Cuban free blacks and slaves to overthrow the Spanish Colonial Government and form an independent country under British protection or simply pave the way to a British invasion. After this experience the United States under the philosophy

7 The majority of these Indians were Creeks. General Jackson defeated them at a major battle at Horseshoe Bend in Alabama in March, 1814. The Creeks were forced to vacate thousands of acres of land that had been previously under their control. In 1817 a couple of British adventurers once again convinced the Creeks to go to war to recover their lands but were routed by Jackson for a second time. Their chiefs, as well as the two British instigators, were captured and executed. Jackson also attacked and captured Pensacola with the excuse that the Spanish had provided assistance to the Indians. War between Spain, Great Britain and the United States almost broke out as a result of this incident. However, Spain decided that the best course of action was to sell Florida to the United States.

of Manifest Destiny, started a series of efforts that lasted over fifty years to buy Cuba from Spain.⁸

The United States had started efforts to acquire Cuba in one way or another a few years before the New Orleans incident. In 1809, president Madison sent General James Wilkinson to Cuba to meet with the Marqui de Someruelos, Governor of the island, to discuss possible annexation to the United States. Both the French and the British governments protested this move by the United States and Someruelos referred Jefferson to discuss the matter with the revolutionary government in Spain based in Seville.

Although the United States was not able to acquire Cuba, in 1819, after several border incidents, Spain agreed to sell Florida for five million dollars. The United States Congress approved the treaty to purchase Florida in 1821. Two years later, President James Monroe declared that the Americas should not be considered as subjects for future colonization by European powers. The Europeans were also warned that any interference with the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the new independent republics in the old Spanish colonies in the Americas would be considered an unfriendly act. This pronouncement, warning the European powers of American resolve to defend the Americas as part of her own territory, is known as the Monroe Doctrine.

Significance of the Napoleonic Period

Cuba once again became an important military base from which Spain hoped to launch expeditions to recapture lost territories in the continent. The large military presence on the island and the loyalty of the large number of Spanish residents made it very difficult to organize a movement for independence. The Spanish dream of recapturing lost territories received a major blow with the mutiny of an expeditionary force that was gathering in Spain destined to this task. Spanish troops in Cuba joined the uprising and forced the king to restore a constitutional form of government and the Liberal Constitution of 1812. A counterrevolution two years later with the backing of French troops helped the King to return to absolutism and suppress the Liberal reforms. This was the start of over 100 years of political instability in Spain, with over 130 governments, nine constitutions, multiple civil wars and a complete breakdown in civilian

⁸ Herminio Portell Vila's book Historia de Cuba en sus relaciones con los Estados Unidos y España, op. cit. offers possibly the best written account of this period of Cuban History vis-à-vis the United States.

authority over the military. This was the legacy and example that Spain gave to the Cubans.

SPANISH MILITARY GOVERNORS OF CUBA



FIELD MARCHALL F. CAGIGAL 1747-1760



LT. GEN. A. M. BUCARELLY
1766-1771



GEN. MIGUEL TACÓN
1834-1838



GEN. GERONIMO VALDES
1841-1843



GEN. LEOPOLDO O'DONELL
1843-1848

IV. The Birth of Cuban Nationalism

The period from 1814 to 1868 is one of great significance in Cuban history. The population of Cuba, particularly the sons and daughters of the Spanish immigrants born on the island, began to identify more with their place of birth than with the land of their parents. A national identity as "Cubans" began to take hold among the creoles.¹ This is also a period in which major changes took place in the racial composition of the island with the introduction of large numbers of black slaves, new white immigrants from Europe, indentured servants from China, and Mexican natives of Yucatan as workers. This population, which had not followed the example of the colonies to the north, west and south, and had remained loyal to Spain, slowly developed a desire for independence. Most of the military and civilian leaders as well as rank and file of the Army of Independence were born between 1814 and 1868. When war broke out in 1868 to achieve Cuban independence, men born during these years formed the bulk of the Cuban Army.

Political and Military Trends in Spain

The political climate in Spain was of great influence in the formation of the Cuban character.² After centuries of absolutism, and relatively stable government, Spain became politically unstable as liberals and conservatives, monarchists and republicans, those favoring royal absolutism and those favoring a liberal constitution fought over and over again for control of the country. The Spanish fought over many issues, including the succession to the crown, the relationship between church and state, and often simply because they followed one or another military leader or caudillo.³

Insurrection became a frequent trait of the Spanish military both against their civilian and military leaders. Cuba, as

¹ Creoles or "criollos," were the white people descended from the Spanish settlers. Sometimes the term may be used also to include people of mixed race (white and black), assimilated into the Spanish/Cuban culture.

² As defined in the Introduction, "character" is the sum total of the distinguishing traits, features and characteristics of an individual or a society. This definition is expanded here to include signs of a conscious purpose or mind, with specific thoughts and opinions.

³ See footnote 13 in the Introduction for a definition of caudillo.

the principal Spanish military base to carry out their dream of recapturing the lost colonies in America, was often the stage for rebellions of the troops stationed on the island. For example, in 1820, when troops that had been gathering at Cadiz to fight in America rebelled demanding the restoration of the 1812 Constitution, a battalion stationed in Havana joined the action and was seconded by the rest of the military forces in Cuba.

In 1836, another rebellion took place in Spain, this time led by sergeants stationed at La Granja, near Madrid. They obtained the support of a large number of troops from around the country. The sergeants demanded a return to the 1812 Constitution. In Cuba, this rebellion was seconded by General Manuel Lorenzo, who was the military Governor of Santiago de Cuba.⁴

Of the three victorious generals of the political upheavals in Spain in the 1840's, (Baldomero Espartero, Ramón Narvaez and Leopoldo O'Donell), one (O'Donell), was sent to Cuba as Captain General. Again after the military rebellion of 1854 in Spain, three of the victorious generals, Francisco Serrano, Domingo Dulce and Leopoldo O'Donell, were sent to Cuba to take their turn serving as captain generals. A job in Cuba for them, as well as for other Spanish officials, was viewed as a reward. Cuba was a place where quick fortunes could be obtained, often through corrupt administrative practices. These captain generals had absolute power in Cuba, particularly after the creation of the Permanent Military Executive Commission formed in 1825. They could take whatever actions they deemed necessary to administer the island. They could govern at will even in contradiction to royal decrees. This absolute power extended to all departments of government including the judiciary.⁵

From 1814 to 1868, Spain took part in multiple military conflicts. First, after fighting against Napoleon, they fought to keep the Spanish colonies, with major battles taking place in Mexico, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Peru and Venezuela, losing everywhere. In the early 1820s Spain again made an effort to recover the lost colonies but suffered several

⁴ This rebellion of the sergeants of the Spanish Army may have established a precedent for the rebellion of sergeants of the Cuban Army in 1933, led by Sergeants Fulgencio Batista, José E. Pedraza, Manuel López Migoya and Pablo Rodríguez.

⁵ This legacy of absolute power concentrated in the hands of the top military commander, who doubles as the top civilian official, has been a curse in Cuban politics to the present. The same applies to the question of corruption in public administration.

major defeats in Mexico. In the 1830, they fought the first of the Carlist Wars in Spain over succession to the Spanish crown. This was followed by more civil war and rebellions in the 1840's and 1850's. In 1859, the Spanish fought in Morocco and sent an expedition to Indochina. In 1861, they returned to Santo Domingo and the following year participated with France and Great Britain in an expedition against Mexico. This was followed by a naval war against Chile and Peru. From all of these conflicts, Spain had a substantial number of experienced rank and file soldiers to face any military confrontation in Cuba.

First Revolutionary Movements in Cuba

Confrontation in the battle field was preceded by a slow development of a native Cuban ideology and a sense of national identity. Many secret organizations, for the most part masonic lodges, were formed throughout Cuba starting in the last years of the 18th century. The ideology that developed was almost as diverse as the number of secret organizations and Masonic Lodges. But the principal trends in social and economic thought could be grouped into those which favored abolition of slavery, reform of the political and economic system, autonomy or self-government of the island under the Spanish flag, and annexationism or a desire to join the United States as a new state.

Many favored economic liberalism, but did not necessarily favor extending their liberal ideas to the political or social arenas. As in Spain, the power of the Catholic Church was gradually reduced starting around 1842, when the University of Havana was secularized. In 1836, church property had been secularized. Hundreds were arrested during these years in Cuba under allegations of complicity with one movement or another, real or imaginary. Among the best known movements and conspiracies starting in 1824 are: the uprising led by Lieutenant Gaspar Antonio Rodriguez in Matanzas, "Gran Legión del Aguila Negra," "Conspiración de la Cadena Triangular y Soles de la Libertad," "Conspiración de la Escalera," "Grupo de Trinidad," and "Mina de la Rosa Cubana." All of them failed, in part because the population, particularly in rural areas, refused to join movements against the government. Cuban peasants often cooperated with the Spanish authorities to track down rebel groups. The Cuban population saw many of these groups as somehow being associated with foreign ideas or as foreign enemies. They may have been right to a certain extent.

A case in point is the movement led by Narciso López directed at overthrowing the Spanish Government and either forming an independent nation or joining the United States. López was born in Venezuela in 1798, and had fought as a Spanish

officer against the pro-independence forces led by Simón Bolívar. He reached the rank of colonel. Later he fought in Spain in the First Carlist War, reaching the rank of Field Marshall (Mariscal de Campo). López went to Cuba as an assistant to Captain General Gerónimo Valdez in 1841, and served in several important positions including that of President of the Permanent Military Executive Commission.

López established contact with Cuban annexationists, mostly slave owners, who favored joining the United States. Commercial relationships between Cuba and the United States had grown tremendously in the first 45 years of the 19th century. Slowly the Cuban economy was becoming more interrelated and dependent on trade with the United States than with Spain. Cuban slave owners feared the end of slavery which they considered essential for an economy based on sugar production. The British Government had forced an end to the slave trade and was pressuring Spain to end illegal trade and emancipate the slaves.

At the same time, similar interests in the south of the United States were not pleased with the break up of the balance between free states in the north and slave states in the south when Texas joined the Union as a free state. The entrance of Cuba to the Union as a slave state would help to regain the previous balance. General William Jenkins Worth was working closely with the Cubans and had even promised to organize an expeditionary force of Americans to assist in the war against Spain, but he died in 1849 before the plans could be carried out.

⁶ The origin of the Carlist Wars in Spain stems from the fourth marriage of King Fernando VII to María Cristina of Nápoles. In 1830, King Fernando VII promulgated the Pragmática Sanción, which once again recognized the right of females to inherit the throne. A few months later a daughter, Princess Isabel, was born. The king's brother, Don Carlos, who had the support of the conservative elements in Spain, never recognized the right of females to inherit the throne. These elements erroneously assumed that the liberals would capture power. When the king died in 1833, the followers of Don Carlos started an insurrection for the purpose of placing their man in power. The liberals nevertheless managed to remain in power, although their political philosophy was elitist and opposed to popular government. The Regent, María Cristina, obtained the support of the military and managed to remain in power. The Carlitas were particularly popular in the north, around Navarra, Guipúzcoa, Vizcaya and Bilbao. Due to the fact that the princess was very young, the military ruled the country in her place for years.

Narciso López's Expeditions

Despite the fact that President Zachary Taylor, who was elected in 1849, declared that any United States citizen who fought in a foreign war against a country not at war with the U.S. would lose his citizenship and be liable to arrest, many Americans participated in an expeditionary force organized by Narciso López in 1851. They landed on May 19, 1851, at Cárdenas on the north coast of Cuba, about 100 miles east of Havana. After some initial success in capturing Cárdenas, López decided to cancel the operation and reembarked his men because Cubans did not join him in the numbers he had expected and possibly interpreted his movement as a foreign invasion. Large numbers of Cubans joined with Spanish troops to repel the invasion.

López had taken to Cuba for the first time in this expedition the Cuban flag. It had been designed in New York City by Cirilo Villaverde, Juan Manuel Macías, Miguel Teurbe Tolón and José Aniceto Iznaga. The flag was flown for the first time at the offices of the newspaper The Sun,⁷ on the corner of Fulton and Nassau streets, in New York City.

López's landing, however, did seem to inspire some Cuban revolutionaries to increase their conspiratorial activities directed at fighting for Cuban independence. Among other things, they began to establish ties with revolutionaries from other countries. For example, Giuseppe Garibaldi, the Italian patriot and revolutionary leader, visited Cuba in 1851 under the pseudonym Giuseppe Pane, and established contact with Cuban revolutionaries. These contacts continued for many years while Garibaldi lived in the United States as a political exile.⁸ Cubans living in the United States

⁷ Carlos Márquez Sterling and Manuel Márquez Sterling, Historia de la Isla de Cuba, (New York: Regents Publishing Co, Inc., 1975), p. 77.

⁸ Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807-1882), was an Italian patriot and revolutionary who could also be called an "internationalist fighter," adventurer or soldier of fortune, depending on ones political ideology. Garibaldi had fought in Uruguay, together with a group of his followers (known as the "red shirts"), against the forces of Argentine dictator Juan Manuel de Rosas between 1836 and 1846. He also fought in favor of Italian reunification and against Austrian, Papal and Napolitan troops. He lived in exile in the United States and finally moved to France, where he fought in the French Army against Germany in 1870-71. For additional information about Garibaldi's contacts with Cuban revolutionaries see: Raul Roa, Aventuras, Venturas y Desventuras de un Mambi (La

formed new social and political organizations. New secret conspiratorial groups multiplied throughout the island. Some of these groups took part in assaults against military installations in Cuba but were quickly rounded up and shot. These groups had prominent people as leaders, some of whom had been previously closely associated with the Spanish regime. For example, Isidoro de Armenteros, who was one of López's co-conspirators in Trinidad, was a lieutenant colonel in the militia and was rather wealthy. He took up arms on July 23, 1851, in Camagüey, and after some small encounters was captured and executed.

López returned to Cuba with about 400 men, of which only about 10 percent were Cubans. Most of his men were Americans, including former officers in the U.S. Army. They landed on August 12, 1851, about 100 miles west of Havana, at Bahía Honda, in the Province of Pinar del Rio. The Spanish sent about 1,500 men under the direct command of General Manuel Enna, second ranking military officer in the island, to route the expeditionaries. López was able to defeat General Enna, in the initial battle, but was forced to take refuge on the hills awaiting the arrival of more help from the United States and the assistance of Cuban revolutionaries. Instead, the rural population assisted the Spanish Army to capture López and his men.

López was able to defeat the Spanish again at Cafetal de Frias, where General Enna was killed in battle. However, with superior forces and local support, the Spanish captured many of the members of the expeditionary force within a few days of the landing. A group of about 50 Americans, most of them from Kentucky, including Colonel William Crittenden, a nephew of the U.S. Attorney General, were captured and taken to Havana. They were charged with piracy, and executed and mutilated on August 16, 1851. López, himself, was captured a few days later and executed on August 29th. Only Colonel William Scott Haynes, who was second-in-command to López was able to escape.

Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1970), p. 43, and Fernando Ortiz, Los Mambises Italianos (La Habana: 1916).

⁹ Narciso López has been a controversial figure in Cuban History. Some writers have viewed him as an agent of American imperialism while others have viewed him as a patriot. The flag that was adopted for Cuba during and after the War of Independence from 1895 to 1898, is the one that Narciso López brought to Cuba in his ill-fated attempt to secure independence from Spain. Herminio Portell Vila's Narciso López y su Epoca (La Habana: 1930), 2 vols. presents the most systematic account of López's efforts to seek independence from Spain. Portell Vila presents also the most positive view of López and his intentions. The most negative account

Composition of the Cuban Population

The population of Cuba underwent dramatic changes in its composition in the first half of the 19th century. In 1792, whites constituted 56.4 percent of the population. But in the next 30 years large numbers of slaves arrived in the island despite British attempts to end the slave trade. By 1830, the percentage of whites had declined to 44 percent despite the arrival of many new white families from Europe. With the end of the slave trade, over 50,000 Chinese workers were imported as indentured servants. Later, over 2,000 Mexican prisoners were sold by the Governor of Yucatan to Cuba. They were mostly Indians and were imported to work in the cane fields. By 1859, the percentage of whites in Cuba had once again increased to 52.2 percent and three years later it increased further to 58.8 percent. The total population of the island was placed at 1,396,530 in 1861, of which about 300,000 were black slaves. Free blacks numbered about the same as the slave population, perhaps slightly higher.

The black population, free and slave, were among the most restless in Cuban society. They wanted economic reform and an end to slavery, which by 1865 had come to an end in the Western Hemisphere with the exception of Brazil. Many, and possibly the vast majority, favored an end to Spanish colonial rule. Cuban intellectuals, as well as wealthy planters and merchants, were influenced by political developments abroad. They began to favor independence not only on political, but also on economic grounds. They wanted to liberalize trade and achieve closer ties with the United States, which had become Cuba's leading trade partner.

Cultural Developments

The corruption of the Spanish administration in Cuba added to the growing dissatisfaction of the population with the general conditions of the island. At the same time, the population was being influenced by a wave of new writers, particularly poets, who lifted the national spirit by writing

of López was published by Sergio Aguirre in Quince objeciones a Narciso López: anexionismo, esclavitud, mercenarios (La Habana: Dirección Nacional de Escuelas de Instrucción Revolucionaria, 1961), 61 p. Another publication which covers many facts about the initial revolutionary activities of López is : Los primeros movimientos revolucionarios del general Narciso López 1848-1850, (Habana: Oficina del Historiador de la Ciudad de La Habana, 1950), 188 p.

about Cuba, its popular traditions and landscape. An important component of the literature of the time was the black theme. They wrote about the slave trade, the life of the slave, and the pain and sorrow of the black families and how they were affected by colonial life. They also wrote about the original inhabitants of the island, the Siboney Indians, and the struggle of Hatuey and other native leaders against the Spanish conquerors. These writers fermented the dissatisfaction with the state of things in colonial life into a growing desire for independence.¹⁰

Cubans Gain Military Experience Abroad

Many Cubans were forced to migrate from the island as Spanish persecution of those who did not agree with the colonial government increased in numbers. Many of these Cubans went to the United States. Some joined the expeditionary forces of Narciso López or associated themselves with men like General John A. Quitman with his plans to invade Cuba. Other Cubans fought in the American Civil War and gained valuable military experience. Others went to Mexico and gained military experience fighting with President Benito Juárez against the European invaders. Others, like Domingo de Goicuria and Francisco Alejandro Laine, joined the American adventurer William Walker in 1855 in the invasion of Nicaragua.¹¹

¹⁰ Among these writers were: José María Heredia y Heredia (1803-1839), José Antonio Saco (1797-1879), Félix Varela y Morales (1787-1853), Francisco de Arango y Parreño (1765-1837), Gabriel de la Concepción Valdés (1809-1844), José Jacinto Milanés (1814-1863), Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda (1814-1873), Rafael María Mendive (1821-1866), Juan Clemente Zenea (1832-1871) and Domingo del Monte (1804-1853).

¹¹ The presence of Cuban troops in Nicaragua is not a new development. Years of political turmoil in Nicaragua between members of the Liberal and Conservative parties led to the arrival in Nicaragua of several soldiers of fortune from the United States lead by William Walker. They arrived under contract with the Liberals to wage war against the Conservatives. Walker managed to have himself elected President and sought annexation to the United States. He promised several Cuban patriots living in exile in the United States that if they helped him, he would allow them to use Nicaraguan territory to organize an expedition to liberate Cuba from Spain. Possibly as many as 300 Cubans under the command of Francisco Alejandro Laine and Domingo de Goicuria joined Walker and fought against an alliance of Central American states led by President Juan Rafael Mora of Costa Rica. The Cubans fought under the flag used by Narciso López in the early 1850's until they realized that the association

Slowly, a substantial cadre of Cubans with military experience and strong desires for Cuban independence was created. In 1868, all of these factors led to the declaration of war against Spain for the purpose of forming a free and independent nation.



General Narciso López
Born in Venezuela



with Walker was a mistake and that he had never intended to honor his promises. After the Cubans pulled out Walker was defeated, captured and shot in Honduras. A captured Cuban flag is prominently displayed in the Costa Rican Museo de Historia in San José. The United States and British Governments never recognized Walker and his followers as a legitimate government in Nicaragua and assisted the Conservatives and Central American states to wage war against the foreign soldiers of fortune. At the present time, over 125 years later, an estimated 3,000 Cuban soldiers are providing military assistance to the Sandinista Government in Nicaragua. Other Cuban anti-Communists are providing assistance to the Nicaraguan Anti-Communists to overthrow the Sandinistas. At least two Cuban exiles fighting with the anti-Sandinista guerrillas have been captured by the Nicaraguan Government.



Retrato de Máximo Gómez antes del 68, publicado por el «Correo de Ultramar».

MAJOR GENERAL MAXIMO GOMEZ
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE CUBAN ARMY OF INDEPENDENCE

This picture of General Máximo Gómez was taken before the start of the Ten Years War
(1868-1878).

CUBAN GENERALS WHO FOUGHT IN THE TEN YEARS WAR



C. M. de DESPEDES



M. de QUESADA



F. FERNANDEZ-CAVADA



IGNACIO AGRAMONTE



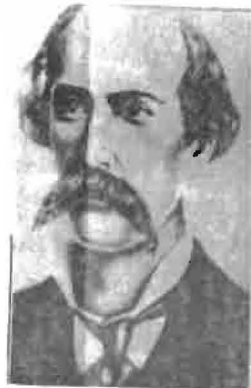
MAXIMO GOMEZ



CALIXTO GARCIA



ANTONIO MACEO



VICENTE GARCIA



HENRY M. REEVES
Born in New York City

V. The Ten Years War 1869-1878

The thirty years from 1868 to 1898, constitute the most important period of Cuban military history before 1959. The Cuban culture and the character of the Cuban people were forged during the struggle for independence which lasted almost 30 years.¹ For the purpose of this book, this period is important because it helps in understanding the character of the Cubans in the context of a military conflict. Although close to one hundred years have passed, the Cubans of today probably would react along the same lines as they did then in a military setting.

The Cuban struggle for independence from Spain has traditionally been divided into three main periods. The first, known as the "Ten Years War," lasted from 1868 to 1878. The second period, between 1878 and 1880, is known as the "Small War." And finally, the last period from 1895 to 1898, is known as the "War of Independence."

The Ten Years' War started on the night of October 9, 1868, at the sugar mill "La Demajagua," located in Oriente Province in eastern Cuba. October 10, however, is recognized as the starting date. A group of Cuban patriots led by Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, the owner of the sugar mill, declared war against Spain to secure the independence of Cuba. Céspedes assumed the title of Captain General of the Revolutionary Army. The initial number of men who joined the struggle for independence was 36, who for the most part had no experience in military matters. The exception was a small group of Dominicans who joined the Cubans shortly after the start of the war, including Máximo Gómez and Luis and Francisco Mercano.²

Foreign Participation in the War

Dominican ex-servicemen in the Spanish and Dominican armed forces contributed the bulk of the initial military experi-

¹ "Culture" and "character" are defined in the Introduction. See footnotes 3 and 6.

² A substantial amount of literature has been published both in Cuba and Spain about the Ten Years War. One of the most extensive analysis of the war from the Cuban point of view was made by Ramiro Guerra y Sánchez in Guerra de los Diez Años 1868-1878, (La Habana: Cultural, S.A., 1952). For additional information see Rosa Abella, "Bibliografía de la Guerra de los Diez Años," Revista Cubana, Año I, Número I, (January-June, 1968), pp. 239-270.

ence of the Cuban Army. They had been officers in the Dominican Army during a short period of time from 1861-65 in which Spain re-annexed the Dominican Republic. When Spain decided to leave Santo Domingo in 1866, many Dominican officers who had served under the Spanish Government went to Cuba. Some of the highest ranking officers were allowed to remain in the Spanish Army but most of them were dismissed and forced to fend for themselves. Many of these Dominicans joined the Cubans fighting against Spain and provided the initial military training and leadership of the Cuban Army. One of the first Dominicans to join, Máximo Gómez, rose through the ranks and became the General-In-Chief of the Cuban Army.

Cubans learned their military skills in the battlefield, but also received assistance from other sources, including Cuban-Americans who had fought in the Civil War in the United States. These men included high-ranking experienced officers in the Union Army. For example, the Fernández-Cavada brothers, Frederic and Adolpho, who had reached the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the Union Army, joined the Cuban forces.³

Frederic Fernández-Cavada's military experience included service as a Lieutenant Colonel at Fredericksburg in 1862, under General Burnside and at Chancellorsville in 1863 under General Hooker. At Gettysburg in 1863, he had command of his regiment in the absence of the colonel, in the Brigade of General Charles K. Graham, in the Division of General Birney, in the Third Corps, commanded by General Sickles. At Gettysburg, he was captured, together with General Graham, and taken to Libby Prison in Virginia. In 1864, after his release he served as a Staff Officer with General Birney, in General Hancock's Corps. He served in Birney's Staff during General Grant's campaign from Fredericksburg to Petersburg.⁴

Other Cubans and Spaniards who had been in the Spanish Armed Forces also joined the Revolutionary Army, followed by Cubans who had obtain military experience elsewhere. An interesting example was General Manuel de Quesada y Loynaz, born in Camagüey in 1833. He had fought in Mexico with President Benito Juárez under General Jesús González Ortega against

³ Other Cubans who fought in the American Union Army include Antonio Luaces, J. Garesche, Ambrosio José Gonzales and Sebastian Amabile.

⁴ Sketch of Frederic Fernandez Cavada, a Native of Cuba, Showing Partially What one of His Friends Knew of Him as a Soldier, a Gentleman, a Poet, a Diplomat, an Author, a Patriot and a Victim (Philadelphia: James B. Chandler, printer, 1871). Printed for private circulation in 1871 and reprinted in 1963 by Dr. Fernando Fernández-Cavada.

Emperor Maximilian and his French forces, reaching the rank of General. He also served as Governor of Veracruz. Quesada was the first Cuban to be named General-in-Chief of the "Ejercito Libertador" (Cuban Army of Liberation) in 1868.

Other foreign born officers who joined the Cuban Army included General Thomas Jordan, an American citizen and a General in the U.S. Army, and Canadian William O'Ryan. General O'Ryan was born in Toronto, Canada, in 1848, and fought in the Union Army during the Civil War, reaching the rank of Captain. He reached the rank of Brigadier General in the Cuban Cavalry.⁵

Many other foreigners joined the Cuban Army and obtained prominent positions, but their prior military experience before joining the revolution may have been limited. They include Major General Juan Rius Rivera, born in Puerto Rico; Division General José Rogelio Castillo, born in Colombia; General Carlos Roloff, born in Poland; Venezuelan born Generals José María Aurrecochea and Amadeo Manuit, Colonels José Payán and Leoncio Prado, born in Peru; French citizens, including Beauvilier and Ravier; Mexicans, including Rafael Bobadilla and José Inclán; and many Chinese nationals who had gone to Cuba as indentured servants.⁶

The role of the Chinese in the Cuban military is legendary. A monument dedicated to the contribution of Cuban Chinese to the War of Independence in Havana reads: "Nunca hubo un chino cubano traidor." (There never was a Cuban Chinese that was a traitor). This tradition of dedication and valor has been maintained to the present.⁷

⁵ General O'Ryan was captured and executed by the Spanish in 1873.

⁶ Among the many Cuban-Chinese who distinguished themselves in the Ten Years War were Captains José Cuan, Liborio Wong, Juan Sánchez (Lam Fu Kim), and Juan Díaz. Several books have been published on the Cuban-Chinese and their contributions in Cuban History. Two of these books are: Juan Jiménez Pastrana, Los Chinos en las Luchas por la Liberación Cubana 1847-1930, (La Habana: Instituto de Historia, 1963); and Guillermo Tejeiro, Historia ilustrada de la colonia china en Cuba (La Habana: no publisher, 1947).

⁷ For example, as Ernesto "Che" Guevara and Camilo Cienfuegos, Commanders of the Rebel Army fighting against the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista moved from Oriente Province toward Havana in 1958, they often met token resistance and most Army commanders surrendered. One of the notable exceptions was when Cienfuegos ran into Captain Abon Lee at Yaguajay, who resisted for eleven days, immobilizing the revolutionary troops. When asked to surrender by larger

One of the best known foreign-born officers was Henry Earl Reeves, born April 4, 1850, in Brooklyn, New York. He was only 19 years old when he joined the Cuban Army in 1869, and served under General Thomas Jordan. He rose to the rank of Division General and was killed in combat on August 4, 1876, after having been wounded in battle at least 10 times. Once, he was captured and given up for dead by the Spanish, after being sent to the firing squad. He managed to struggle back to Cuban lines and recovered his health. Reeves rose to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the cavalry. As a cavalry officer he captured the Spanish artillery at Santa Cruz del Sur, losing a leg in the course of the battle. He had a special chair made for his horse so that he could continue to fight as a cavalry officer. For his numerous heroic deeds Reeves was promoted to the rank of brigadier general.⁸

Birth of the Cuban Army of Liberation

The Cuban Army (Ejercito Libertador), was formally created by a law enacted by Carlos Manuel de Cespedes, then President of the Revolutionary Government on April 10, 1869. This law was amended by Congress on April 20, 1872, vetoed by the President and approved again by Congress on December 1, 1873.

The size of the Cuban Revolutionary Army in the period from 1868 to 1878 never passed more than 15,000 regular well-armed troops, although many more fought in irregular units. Spanish troops reached 55,000 by 1871 and counted with an

forces his response was that it was against the tradition of Cuban officers of Chinese extraction to do so. He fought until all ammunition ran out. (See Reminiscences of the Cuban Revolutionary War, by Che Guevara, New York: M.R. Press, 1968), p. 250.

⁸ General Henry M. Reeve, also known in Cuba as "Enrique" and "el inglesito," was the son of Alexander Reeve, Protestant Minister in Brooklyn, and Maddie Carrol Reeve. During the Civil War in the United States he served as a drummer boy with the Union Army when he was only about 14 years old. He arrived in Cuba on board the Perit, in May of 1869. The expedition, which was under the command of General Thomas Jordan and Francisco Javier Cisneros, consisted of about 200 well-armed men and a considerable cargo of military supplies. For more information see: Herminio Portell Vila's El Brigadier Reeve, o "Enrique el Americano," (La Habana: Sociedad Colombista Panamericana, 1949), 22 p. and Gilberto Toste Ballart's Reeve, el inglesito (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1978), 323 p.

additional 30,000 Spanish born militia members and another 30,000 Cuban born militia force called "guerrilleros."

Military tactics were different for the Spanish and Cuban armies. While the Spanish used well-disciplined troops and European infantry tactics, the Cubans used guerrilla warfare as well as conventional military formations and fast moving light cavalry. The most outstanding Cuban military tactic was the use of fast moving light cavalry armed with strong "machetes," a tool normally used for cutting sugar cane, against Spanish infantry and cavalry armed with conventional weapons. The heavy "machetes," with large blades, were feared by Spanish soldiers who had never before faced such a weapon in their military experience. When Cuban buglers played the tune for a "machete" charge called "al dequello," Spanish troops often turned and ran. Battle fields were covered with limbs and heads after an encounter with Cuban cavalry.

The Cuban tactics may have been inspired by the Napoleonic model, with emphasis on the fury of attack with little thought given to defense or holding ground. Some of the cavalry tactics may have been imported from the United States by officers with experience in the Civil War. The Cubans added the "machete" as a fearsome cavalry weapon. General Thomas Jordan was also known to have successfully used some trench warfare tactics which he learned during the U.S. Civil War against the Spanish on several occasions. But the principal advantage of the Cubans was the knowledge of the terrain, which was used effectively by their military leaders. They often forced the Spanish to fight at the site of their choosing, where Cuban troops had already taken the most advantageous field positions.

During the Ten Years War, Cubans organized a civilian Council of Government with a President as head of state. This council supervised the military war effort, as well as the coordination of fund raising and international relations for the revolutionary movement. The military was headed by a General-in-Chief, with a lieutenant general as his second. Rank in the Cuban Army up to the rank of major, was obtained by nomination by the commanding general of an Army Corps, and approved by the General-in-Chief of the Army. Rank above lieutenant colonel was obtained by nomination of the General-in-Chief of the Army and approval of the Council of Government.

The Cuban Army was organized into Army Corps. Each corps was commanded by a major general and was composed of two or more divisions. Each division was composed of two or more brigades. Each brigade was composed of two or more regiments of cavalry and infantry. In the infantry, each regiment was composed of two battalions of two companies. Each company had 48 men. In the cavalry, each regiment was composed of

four cavalry squadrons of 72 men. However, many units were often under their ideal strength, particularly outside of Oriente province. In addition to this formal structure, there were many irregular units that conducted guerrilla warfare behind enemy lines. (They should not be confused with the "Guerrilla" units of Cubans loyal to Spain that fought on the Spanish side.)

The Army was divided into two services: cavalry and infantry. Artillery units were only considered as auxiliary forces and their number were very limited. The Army also had a Medical and Sanitation Service, an Inspector General and a Legal Department.

Weapons were obtained from several sources. The machete was a common work tool in the Cuban cane fields and available to rural workers particularly free blacks and slaves that worked in the cane harvest. Rifles and ordnances were captured from the Spanish Army. Cuban immigrants in the United States collected funds and purchased weapons and ships and organized expeditions to deliver them to Cuba. Cuban colonies in New York, Philadelphia, Tampa, Miami and Key West were very active in support of the revolutionary efforts in Cuba. Cuban emigres in Spain, Venezuela, Mexico and other countries also joined the efforts of the Cubans in the United States. Sympathizers in the United States and Latin America also contributed funds and weapons for the Cuban Army.

At least 14 different ships, including Galvanic, Anna, Per-rit, Edgard Steward, Catherine Whiting, Lillian, Hornet, Herald of Nassau, Salvador, Virginus, Fanny, and George B. Upton, transported fresh troops and large quantities of weapons and military supplies to Cuba during the war. These ships and their commanders could be considered as the precursors of the Cuban Navy. Some Cuban ships fought with Spanish Navy gunboats and captured at least one coaster named Comanditore. Admiral Osorio was the first Cuban admiral and responsible for this deed. He was later captured by the Spanish gunboat Neptuno and executed as a pirate in 1871.

The Spanish Army in Cuba

The Spanish forces in Cuba were organized in a conventional way, and were commanded by a captain general. Five captain generals served in Cuba during the Ten Years War. In addition to the traditional infantry, cavalry and artillery forces and a strong naval presence around the island, Spain had two unconventional military organizations. The "Cuerno de Voluntarios del Comercio de La Habana," composed for the most part of Spanish residents in Cuba of all social classes, was led by wealthy merchants. They provided the Spanish military both a source of frequent headaches, as they were

very unruly and staged several riots and civil disturbances demanding stronger action against the Cubans, as well as a force of about 30,000 men that could be used to guard railroad stations and other strategic locations and thus free regular troops for combat. In addition, a force of Cuban nationals who sided with Spain, was organized and proved a very valuable asset since they knew the terrain and were as adamant in their ideology as the Cubans on the other side. They were called guerrilleros, a reason why the term guerrilla in Cuba is not necessarily regarded with respect.

At the beginning of the war in 1868, Spain only had about 13,000 regular troops in Cuba in addition to volunteer irregular forces of about 20,000 men. By 1871, the number of regular troops had been increased to 55,000 plus about 30,000 men in the volunteer forces and an equal number of "guerrilleros." By April of 1877, regular troops had been increased to 94,745 men, with close to 10,000 horses and thousands of volunteers and guerrilleros. The Cuban Army never had more than 15,000 men.

Spanish tactics included block formations by infantry to fight cavalry charges, the construction of fortifications at close intervals to isolate the enemy in different areas of the island, and the saturation of a region by large numbers of troops to "pacify" the area. In the first years of the war, Spain carried out what they called a guerra de exterminio, which consisted of the execution of prisoners, total destruction of property owned by sympathizers of the Cuban cause and harsh treatment of civilian non-combatants. The worse acts of cruelty were committed by Cuban troops fighting for Spain as "guerrilleros." They were commanded by Carlos González Boet (1829-1882), who made a name for himself for his deeds and those of his men.

As part of the Spanish military tactics, civilians in rural areas were forced to move to the cities and large towns in an effort to deny the Cubans food and support from friendly civilians. Cuban insurgents were executed and cruelty was used as a tactic of war. When Spain changed this tactic in 1877 and 1878, and respected the lives of prisoners and the civilian population, they were able to bring the Cubans to negotiate an end to the hostilities.

Terror as a Weapon of War

Cruelty and terror were not practiced only by the Spanish. In fact, Cuban troops may have used terror more effectively than the Spanish in the battlefield. For example, Cuban troops, particularly blacks were known to be prone to killing prisoners. One Cuban black general (Quintín Banderas), made a name for himself by decapitating Spanish soldiers in combat

or after capturing them. He would ask them "¿Cómo te llamas?" (What's your name?), and when they answered, he cut their heads off with a machete blow as he answered "te llamabas," (That was your name...).

The "machete" which was the principal weapon used by Cuban cavalry was an instrument of terror. Spanish troops with substantial combat experience who were willing to face conventional weapons of war such as rifles and bayonets often ran in the face of Cuban machetes.¹⁰

Cuban troops added to the reign of terror in part due to the conditions of want in which they fought. Many Cuban soldiers lacked shoes. Their uniforms were rags and often their only weapon was a machete. One of their goals in battle was to capture a rifle and obtain shoes, clothing, supplies, etc. As they fought they also acted as scavengers. For example, a Cuban soldier fighting barefoot, upon killing an enemy soldier would cut off the feet of the dead enemy and put them in a saddle bag and continue fighting. After the battle was over, he would then remove the shoes and dispose of the feet of the dead Spanish soldiers. Naturally, these grotesque scenes did not make Spanish soldiers, many of them draftees, very eager to go into battle with the Cubans.

General Quintín Banderas, born in 1837, in Santiago de Cuba, has been a controversial figure. He was a poor black man with very limited education, who dedicated his life to fighting for Cuban independence starting in 1851, and rose to the rank of Division General. He was an excellent infantry officer but his actions were at times questioned. During the War of Independence in March of 1895, Lieutenant General Antonio Maceo demoted him temporarily after an encounter with Spanish troops at El Galope, because his men failed to surround the Spanish and failed to support the cavalry. A few days later Maceo changed his mind and gave Banderas back his rank. After the War of Independence ended in 1898, Banderas refused to accept any employment in the government and retired to his home. During an uprising in 1906 he was assassinated by elements of the Cuban Rural Guard. For more information on his life see: Tomas Savignon, Quintín Banderas: El Mambí sacrificado y escarnecido (La Habana: Imp. P. Fernández y Cia, 1948).

¹⁰ Miguel Barnet, Biografía de un Cimarrón (Mexico: Siglo XXI editores, S.A. 1971), p. 158. "Los españoles eran unos cagados para los machetes. A los rifles no les tenían miedo, pero a los machetes sí."

Cuban Military Leadership

The war was fought for the most part in the eastern provinces of Oriente, Camagüey and Las Villas. A Cuban Army Corps operated in each one of these provinces with the exception of Oriente where there were two Army Corps. Each corps operated with a substantial degree of independence from the General Staff and the Government Council, particularly in the first four years of the war. Local revolutionary leaders organized military units and led them into battle. Over time, soldiers in these units rose in rank as they distinguished themselves in combat. As time passed, a more rigid formal military structure developed.

The initial military leaders did not have much military experience, if any, or obtained their military rank based on foreign experience. This was the case of General Manuel de Quesada y Loynaz, who was General in Chief until he resigned in December, 1869. He was followed by General Thomas Jordan, who held the title of Chief of the General Staff. This was also the case of General Frederic Fernández-Cavada. He had been United States Consul at Trinidad, Cuba, from 1864 to February, 1869, when he resigned his commission and joined the Cuban Army. Within a short period of time he was named Commanding General of the Cuban forces in the area of Trinidad, Cienfuegos, Sagua, Villa Clara, Remedios and Sancti Spiritus. Later he was named Chief of the General Staff and Commander-in-Chief of all Cuban forces. His brother, Adolfo, replaced him in his previous command. General Frederic Fernández-Cavada was captured in 1871 and executed despite the effort of several prominent Americans, including several Union Army generals, to save his life.

Some of these first military leaders were killed in combat or captured and executed. Others resigned or were fired due to conflicts with the civilian and military leaders of the revolution. As these men departed the scene new Cuban military leaders took their place. But each commander left his mark on the Cuban military.

For example, Mayor General Ignacio Agramonte, commander of the Cuban Third Army Corps in Camagüey, not only distinguished himself for his valor in combat as a cavalry officer, but also for his rigid discipline.¹¹ He summarily executed or otherwise punished those guilty of lack of discipline, disobedience, immoral acts or war crimes. He organized schools, weapons factories, production of war supplies, and built a strong force by capturing weapons from the Spanish.

¹¹ In civilian life prior to the war Agramonte had been a practicing attorney in his native Camagüey.

He also gained a place in history as the drafter of the Constitution of the Republic-at-Arms in Güaimaro in 1869. General Agramonte was killed in battle in May of 1873, perhaps only a few short weeks away from being named General-in-Chief of the Cuban Army, a position that was vacant at the time.

By 1874, the four major generals in the Cuban Army were Máximo Gómez, Calixto García, Antonio Maceo, and Vicente García. Gómez, was the teacher, the man most responsible for training the Cuban military. Calixto García distinguished himself as a careful military strategist. In 1874 he was surprised by a Spanish column as he was moving with a small force. Rather than surrendering or risking capture he placed his gun under his chin and fired. The bullet came out of his forehead. His life was saved by the quick intervention of Spanish Army surgeons. Maceo was a combat soldier, a leader of men, and a great cavalry commander. Vicente García was a careful strategist who was followed blindly by his men as he showed great valor in combat leading his troops. General Vicente García is also known for his participation in a conspiracy in 1874 against the civilian government and other acts of insubordination. This lack of discipline and a tendency towards insubordination became a tragic common problem among Cuban veterans after independence.¹²

Principal Battles of the War

The largest battles of the war were fought in 1874. The Cuban General Staff and the Commander-in-Chief, Máximo Gómez favored an invasion of the western provinces. Finally after several years at war, the forces and the weapons and supplies seemed to be available to carry the war closer to Havana. Spanish Brigadier Generals Sabas Marín, Esponda, Portillo, Bascones and Armifán had obtained intelligence on the concentration of Cuban forces and their intentions and were just as determined as the Cubans to stop the spread of the war to the western provinces.

The first combat in the campaign was fought at Naranjo, when General Máximo Gómez, with 400 infantry and 300 cavalry men, faced Brigadier Bascones, who was leading a force of about 2,000 men, composed of infantry, cavalry and artillery.

¹² Several biographies of Generals Agramonte, Gómez, Maceo, Calixto and Vicente García have been published. These include: Leopoldo Horrego Estuch, Máximo Gómez Libertador y Ciudadano (La Habana: Imp. P. Fernández y Cia, 1949); Philip Sheldon Foner, Antonio Maceo: the "bronze titan" of Cuba's struggle for independence, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1977) and Magdalena Pando, Cuba's freedom fighter, Antonio Maceo 1845-1896 (Gainesville, Fla: Felicity Press, 1980).

Gómez placed his troops in good positions on February 10th at Naranjo. Bascones attacked but was unable to break through the Cuban lines. On the evening of the 11th, Bascones began to retreat, but was followed and attacked by Cuban cavalry. The Spanish suffered over 100 dead and 200 wounded. Cuban forces also had heavy casualties with over 150 men wounded including several leading officers. The encounter halted the Cuban advance for several days.

On March 7, General Gómez pushed on, this time with a force of 800 infantry men and 150 cavalry. He was joined by Brigadier Manuel Suárez with another 1,000 infantry and 300 cavalry men. On March 15th, they learned that General Armíñan with 4,000 men was heading for a stockyard at Las Guasimas. Gómez moved his troops into position and awaited the arrival of the Spanish. The Spanish cavalry was quickly defeated by the Cubans who led them into a trap. The Spanish infantry was surrounded by Cuban forces divided into small units.

The surrounded Spanish troops kept up their morale by chanting regional Spanish songs which were answered by the Cubans with other songs. The battle lasted three days. On the 18th, a brigade commanded by General Bascones with 2,000 men came to the rescue of General Armíñan. On the 19th the Spanish retreated with 1,537 casualties. The Cubans suffered over 175 casualties, including 29 dead and 28 seriously wounded soldiers. But although the Cubans had won the battles, they had used large amounts of ordnances and other resources that had been gathered for the invasion. The Spanish had obtained their goal of preventing the Cuban Army from advancing to the west. These questionable Cuban victories may have sealed the fate of the war.

Internal Problems in the Cuban Revolutionary Movement

In addition to the problem of fighting a protracted war which had lasted close to a decade, the Cuban movement had suffered from many internal problems. Some of the original leaders of the movement, including Carlos Manuel de Céspedes were conservative. Others, including Ignacio Agramonte were liberal in their political philosophy. The two groups clashed over many issues, but particularly about the form of government the movement should adopt. When the leaders met at Güaimaro in April of 1869, to draft a constitution, the resulting document followed the liberal thoughts of the American and French revolutions. The constitution created a system of government with three independent branches: executive, legislative and judiciary. The military was placed under the control of the civilian members of the government.

The advent of the constitution did not end the internal squabbles. Céspedes, who had been named President under the new constitution was deposed in October of 1873 and Salvador Cisneros Betancourt, a liberal who had presided over the single-chamber legislature, was named to replace him. In addition to the problems among the civilian leadership, the military and civilian leaders also clashed over jurisdiction of how to carry out the war.

The war also drained the leadership resources of the revolution. Ignacio Agramonte, one of the most respected leaders of the movement, was killed in May of 1873. A year later, in 1874, Céspedes was discovered in a mountain hideout and fought to the end. Some historians claim that he took his own life with his last bullet. Others claim that he was assassinated after capture by the Spanish. President Estrada Palma, who had succeeded Cisneros Betancourt, was captured by the Spanish in 1876. Finally, regional and racial squabbles were hindering the progress of the war effort.

The War Ends

With the arrival of Captain General Arsenio Martínez Campos in 1877, Spanish tactics changed. The number of Spanish regular troops in Cuba had been increased to over 100,000 and an attempt was made to "humanize" the war. Spain stopped the execution of prisoners and began to treat the civilian population better. Slaves were given their freedom if they fought on the side of Spain. Cuban soldiers who defected with their weapons were given five pesos in gold, and those who defected with their weapons and horse, were given twenty pesos in gold. They were given protection against reprisals and assured that they would not be persecuted. Finally, an offer was made to the Cuban insurgents which included greater administrative self-government and other concessions; political amnesty for all the revolutionaries, including deserters of the Spanish Army who fought on the Cuban side; and freedom for black and Chinese slaves who had fought on the Cuban side.

Despite the long years of warfare and the experience gained in combat, the Cuban revolutionaries could not defeat Spain. Regional conflicts, racism and personality clashes between the insurgent leaders weakened the movement. For example, a major problem in the revolution was caused by strong regionalism between Orientales and Camagüeyanos. In addition, thousands had died and the population was tired of fighting. The war had been fought in the eastern provinces and the Cubans had not been able to fulfill their principal military goal which was to invade the island moving from east to west to carry the war to the entire country.

Hostilities came to an end on December 21, 1877. This was followed by discussions between Spanish Captain General Arsenio Martínez Campos and Cuban military and civilian representatives. The Cubans were asked to draft the treaty to end the war. Despite the opposition of several Cuban officers led by Generals Antonio Maceo, Carlos Roloff and Ramón Leocadio Bonachea, and their effort to continue the war, the Spanish used psychological warfare to end the conflict. When General Maceo and Cuban troops, who desired to continue fighting, charged Spanish troops, these did not fire back and shouted "Do not shoot....we are brothers...peace" and died in the battlefield in a heroic way without firing their weapons; to force the Cubans to stop the war. The Spanish tactics prevailed.

The war, known as the "10 Years War," came to an end with the pact of El Zanjón in February of 1878. Although the Cubans had failed to win, they had obtained very valuable military experience. When the promises of Spain were not kept, war broke out again in 1895. This time the Cubans counted on many native-born military leaders to lead the struggle for independence. Another important lesson of the war was the need to unite the revolutionary movement, regardless of race and local politics, into a well disciplined fighting force.

Spain had suffered thousands of casualties. Not only did they have to face the Cuban Army but also tropical diseases that kept a large percentage of their regular troops in military hospitals. Up to 60 percent of the Spanish soldiers at times were sick. The war was very costly to Spain in human and material resources. It has been estimated that as many as 160,000 Spaniards were casualties of the war. When they finally were able to pacify the island they did it by changing their tactics and reaching a compromise with the Cubans.

The Little War

When the Ten Years War ended, Cubans organized themselves in two principal groups: those who wanted to arrive by peaceful means to administrative autonomy of the island and the separatists who wanted to continue fighting for Cuban independence.

In search for a peaceful solution to the problems of Cuba, a Liberal Party was formed in August of 1878, seeking the implementation of the administrative changes that had been promised by Spain in the peace treaty. The party asked for civil and religious liberty; tax reform so that Cuban products could be exported free of duties; the signing of trade reciprocity treaties with other countries; complete abolition of slavery, and a ban on other than white immigration to

Cuba. They wanted to "whiten" the island and gradually lessen the black population. Among the leaders of this group were Rafael Montoro, José A. Cortina, Eliseo Giberga and Juan Bautista Spotorno.

In exile, the separatists had as their principal leaders Generals Máximo Gómez, Antonio Maceo, Calixto García and Ramón Blanco. They attempted to organize a new war. In Cuba, veterans of the Ten Years War and exiles who had returned to Cuba after the end of the war began to conspire against the Spanish. Finally, in 1880, insurgent forces landed in Cuba and a new war started, but it failed within a few weeks. Most of the conspirators had been arrested before they could organize themselves. The same type of divisions that had caused the failure of the previous war surfaced again and these divisions and the fact that the people were tired of so much bloodshed made the movement fail.

But this movement showed the Spanish authorities that it was necessary to carry out some reforms to reduce tensions. In April of 1879, black children were allowed to attend public schools. In February of 1880, slavery was abolished, although the liberated slaves were left under the protection of their previous owners. In January of 1881 marriage between blacks and whites was legalized, although they had been taking place for many years. As of March of 1881, the church books that registered the births, baptisms, weddings and deaths of people in each parish were ordered to be desegregated. Finally, in 1886, complete liberty was granted to the ex-slaves.

Spanish authorities made repeated efforts to use racial antagonisms that existed in the island to divide the Cuban population. For example, they accused the Cuban leaders of the "Little War" of having as their goal the establishment of a black republic in order to scare the whites from joining the insurrection. They also told the black population that the Cuban insurgents wanted to bring back slavery. In general, the Spanish authorities viewed the fears of the white population of the blacks as the best weapon that Spain had in Cuba to retain control of the island.

SPANISH CAPTAIN GENERALS DURING TEN YEARS WAR



SPANISH GENERALS WHO FOUGHT IN THE
WARS IN CUBA
1868-1878 AND 1895-1898



GENERAL SANTOCILDES



GENERAL GARCIA ALDAVE



GENERAL MONROY Y RUIZ



GENERAL LAGUE



GENERAL LINARES



GENERAL SUAREZ INCLAN



GENERAL SUERO



GENERAL FRANCISCO BERNAL



GENERAL VICUNA

FOREIGN BORN GENERALS IN THE CUBAN
ARMY OF INDEPENDENCE



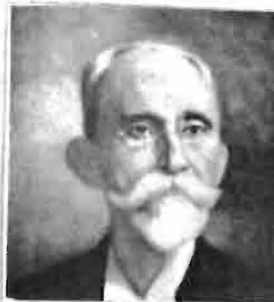
Maj. Gen. Carlos Roloff y Mialoksky

Born in Warsaw, Poland on November 4, 1842.
Died in Cuba on May 17, 1907.



Maj. Gen. Juan Rius Rivera

Born in Mayagüez, Puerto Rico on
August 26, 1848. Died in Honduras on
January 19, 1924.



Generalísimo Máximo Gómez Baez

Born in Baní, Dominican Republic, on
November 18, 1836. Died in Havana on
June 17, 1905.



Leoncio Prado

Born in Huánuco, Peru, on
August 28, 1853. Killed in combat at
Huamachuco, Peru, on July 15, 1883.



Div. Gen. José Rogelio Castillo Zufiga

Born in Popayán, Colombia, on May 19, 1845.
Died in Cuba on September 21, 1925.



Brig. Gen. William A. Ryan

Born in Toronto, Canada.



Brig. Gen. Frederick Funston
Cuban and United States Armies

Born in Kansas, United States.
Commanded the 5th Reinforced Brigade,
-73- (U.S. Army and Marine Corps Mixed Brigade)
during U.S. invasion of Mexico in 1914.



CUBAN INFANTRY UNIT DURING THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

Infantry unit in battle formation under the command of Major D'Estramps during the War of Independence 1895-1898.



EL VISO FORT AT EL CANEY

El Viso Fort at El Caney, near Santiago de Cuba. This fort was the scene of bloody combat between Spanish defenders and U.S. and Cuban troops in 1898. The Spanish had a limited number of men between American positions and Santiago de Cuba, but the rank and file were ready to fight to the last man. Brigadier General Joaquín Vara del Rey, one of the most experienced Spanish officers in Cuba, had about 600 men to face much larger American and Cuban forces. He organized a strong defensive position in the hills of El Caney and held the attackers for hours. Even after being wounded twice, the Spanish General fought until the end and then took his own life. The Cuban and American forces suffered over 450 casualties while the Spanish suffered over 400, before the Spanish positions could be captured. This battle preceded the famous battle at San Juan Hill. Cuban and American flags were flown together for over half a century at this monument for the casualties of the war.

VI. War of Independence 1895-1898

After almost half a century of struggle to form a free and independent nation, the Cuban struggle for independence seemed to have failed. However, a new and remarkable leader arose from the ranks of the revolutionary movement: José Martí. He summoned all Cubans to unite in order to carry out a democratic revolution in which there would be a place for all, regardless of race or social and economic status. Martí dedicated himself to organizing the Cuban exiles in the United States into an effective instrument for revolution. His personal magnetism and masterful oratory fired the patriotic fervor of his countrymen to take up arms again to win independence from Spain.¹

During the Ten Years War, as well as after its conclusion, thousands of Cubans left the island as economic or political exiles. Many settled in the United States, with large Cuban communities starting in Key West, Tampa, Philadelphia and New York. Other Cubans, as well as non-Cuban veterans of the war, settled in the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Mexico, Venezuela and Spain. In the mid 1880's a new leadership began to develop abroad among the exiles as attempts to reform the Spanish colonial system in Cuba failed. The moment to declare war again to seek independence was coming closer, but the movement needed a leader to bring all the Cubans together to fight for independence.

José Martí: Apostle of Cuban Independence

José Martí, a writer and poet, with great missionary zeal began to organize and coordinate the activities of the Cubans abroad, particularly in the United States, to renew the struggle for independence. In 1891, when José Martí addressed the Cuban colony in Tampa to raise funds for the revolution, he exhorted Cubans of all racial and social groups to join in the new struggle for independence. The goal of his activities was to unite all Cubans into one organization. To do this he bade Cubans to "...form your ranks ... countries are not created by wishful thinking in the depths of the soul ..." His formula for the new republic was simple, "...with all, for the good of all."²

¹ The literature on José Martí is very extensive, particularly in Spanish. Several biographies of Martí have also been written in English. One of the most recent biographies in English is John M Kirk's José Martí: mentor of the Cuban nation, (Tampa: University Presses of Florida, 1963), 201 p.

² José Martí, Speech of November 28, 1891, at the Liceo Cubano in Tampa, Florida, Obras Completas de José Martí (La

On this theme of unity of black and white Cubans, Martí wrote on January 5, 1892, the Bases and Secret Statutes of the Cuban Revolutionary Party,³ which contained the ideology of the independence movement. The Partido Revolucionario Cubano (PRC) was then organized in New York, and Martí was elected "delegate," for he refused to be called president. In March the party began to publish Patria, the official newspaper of the PRC. Money for the cause came from the exiles who approved the idea of unity. Most of the exiles were working people whose donations meant great personal sacrifices.

Once the movement was organized in the United States, Martí went to the Dominican Republic to meet with General Máximo Gómez, the veteran leader of the struggle for independence during the Ten Years' War and offered him the rank of Supreme Chief of the Military Section of the party. Despite some initial friction, Gómez accepted the offer. Next, Martí went to Costa Rica to enlist General Antonio Maceo, a black military leader who had distinguished himself as an outstanding soldier in the Ten Years' War. He had reluctantly accepted the end of the war in 1880 only after he failed in his efforts to continue it with a handful of men. Martí then returned to the United States and continued preparations for the revolution.

The War Starts

The date officially recognized as the beginning of the War of Independence is February 24, 1895. A series of coordinated uprisings throughout Cuba had been planned, but the arrest of several leaders prevented the achievement of this plan. However, within a period of about a week, many groups had taken up arms throughout Cuba.⁴

Habana: Editorial Nacional de Cuba, 1963), Vol. 4, pp. 267-279.

³ Ibid., Vol. 1, pp. 279-286.

⁴ Many books have been published both in Cuba and Spain about the Cuban War of Independence. The Spanish authors have tended to present the war from the Spanish point of view and so have the Cuban authors presented it from their own point of view. The truth of course is somewhere in the middle. Readers interested in a balanced view of the conflict should consult books presenting both points of view. One of the books on the war from the Spanish side is Rafael Guerrero's Crónica de la Guerra de Cuba y de la Rebelión de Filipinas 1895-96-97, (Barcelona: Casa Editorial Maucci, 1897). The war from the Cuban point of view has been covered by many

Ten days later Martí landed in Cuba-- after sixteen years away from his homeland as an exile. On May 19, 1895, Martí was killed in a skirmish in Oriente, at Dos Rios. He had been asked by the military leadership to stay behind but so as not to expose himself to criticism of being a coward, Martí rode his horse right into the enemy lines and was shot. His death fired the Cubans to greater efforts. Although Martí did not live to see Cuba free, the bullet that killed him could not stop the momentum that he had created and could not destroy the unity he had brought about.

This time the leaders of the revolutionary movement had designed a system of government to avoid political stalemate and to wage war. The difference with the start of the war in 1868 was evident from the first moment. A strong effort was made to avoid many of the key problems that contributed to the stalemate in the Ten Years' War, such as racism, regionalism, and personality cults. The Revolutionary Government was also designed in such a way as to facilitate military operations and avoid previous conflicts between the military and civilian leadership. The military was given more authority to carry out the war without civilian interference and second guessing, particularly in disciplinary matters in the military.

The civilian government was headed by a president and four secretaries which constituted the Executive power of the Revolutionary Government. They designated Major General Máximo Gómez as General-in-Chief to direct the war effort.

Organization of the Cuban Army of Liberation

A Constitutional Assembly was held in liberated territory in Oriente and a Constitution approved on September 16, 1895. After designating the civilian officials, they designated the military leaders. General Máximo Gómez was ratified in his position of Commander-in-Chief of the Army. Major General Antonio Maceo y Grajales was designated Lieutenant General of the Army. Major General José Maceo y Grajales, his brother, was designated commander of the First Army Corps, in the

authors. Specific monographs will be pointed out in the rest of this chapter. These are some general books that cover the war: Miguel A. Varona Guerrero, La Guerra de la Independencia de Cuba, 1895-1896, (La Habana: Imp. P. Fernández y Cia, 1948); Ramiro Guerra y Sánchez, J. Cabrera, Juan J. Remos y Emeterio Santovenia, Historia de la Nación Cubana (La Habana: Editorial de la Nación Cubana, 1952). Hugh Thomas's book Cuba and the Pursuit of Freedom (London: Eyre and Spothswoode, 1971), provides an extensive account of the war in English.

eastern zone of Oriente province. Major General Bartolomé Masó Márquez was designated commander of the Second Army Corps, which covered the rest of Oriente. Major General José María Rodríguez y Rodríguez was named commander of the Third Army Corps, in Camagüey Province.

The initial ideal strength and organization of the Army consisted of three Army Corps, eight divisions, 20 brigades and forty regiments of 500 men each. This organization was designed for an Army with a strength of about 20,000 men, although it never reached this size in the early stages of the war. As the war progressed, three more corps were organized in the western part of the island.

The 4th Corps operated in Las Villas province, the 5th Corps in Matanzas and La Habana provinces; and the 8th Corps in Pinar del Rio Province. The organization and unit strength of the Army followed the same pattern as in the 1868 war. Although the ideal strength of the Cuban regiments was 500 men, they often had only about 100 men and were commanded by a colonel.

The basic infantry unit was the company with an ideal strength of 48 men. Two infantry companies formed an infantry battalion. Two or more battalions formed a regiment, which was commanded by either a colonel or a brigadier general. A cavalry regiment was composed of four squadrons of 72 men. Two or more regiments formed either an infantry or cavalry brigade. Two or more brigades formed a division. Several divisions formed an Army Corps, commanded by a major general.

Role of the Blacks in the War

Cuban blacks played a very significant part in the struggle for independence of the island. The backbone of the Cuban Army of Independence was the black soldier, who made up to 70 percent of the Army, while only about 32 percent of the entire population. In referring to the black soldier, Lieutenant Colonel R. L. Bullard (U.S. Army), stated in 1907, "He was the soldier, the man behind the gun, the arm that swung the machete."⁵

The Cuban Army of Independence was completely integrated. This integration was reported by Dorothy Stanhope, special correspondent for the New York Times, who wrote in 1900:

⁵ R.L. Bullard, "The Cuban Negro," North American Review 184 (March 15, 1907), p. 625.

... all regiments were made up of men of any and all colors. There were white Cubans, black Cubans, black and white Americans and natives of other countries. There was no regiment reserved for whites or blacks.⁶

This integration of blacks and whites in the Army was the result of José Martí's efforts to unite all Cubans. He had called for the brotherhood of Cubans of all races and for an end to both black and white racism. He wrote in 1892:

... In Cuba there is no fear of racial war. Men are more than white, more than mulatto, more than black. They died for Cuba in the fields of battle, the souls of blacks and whites have risen together up to heaven. In daily life, in defense, in loyalty, in brotherhood, in study, at the side of every white there was always a black. Blacks, like whites, are divided by their personalities, timid or brave, selfless or selfish, in the different manners in which men are grouped.⁷

An example of the contribution of blacks to the Cuban struggle for independence is that of the Maceo-Grajales family. In 1808, Mariana Grajales, a Dominican mulatto girl, moved to Cuba with her family to escape the danger of invasion by Haitian forces. The family settled in the province of Oriente. In 1831, Mariana married Fructuoso Rogueiferos Hecheverría and had four children; Felipe, Fermín, Manuel and Justo. When her husband died, Mariana, who was about 35 years old, married Marcos Maceo. Maceo was a Venezuelan mulatto who had fought on the side of Spain against the revolutionary forces led by Simón Bolívar. Upon the defeat of the Spanish, he moved to Cuba and developed some capital working as a merchant. From this marriage, Mariana had nine more children: Antonio de la Caridad, María Baldomera, José Marcelino, Rafael, Miguel, Julio, Dominga, José Tomás and Marcos.

When the Ten Years' War started in 1868, the entire family supported the Cuban struggle. Marcos Maceo, despite the fact that he was an old man, joined the Cuban Army with several of his sons. Before long, Justo, Marcos, Julio, Miguel, and Fermín had died in battle. José and Antonio became major generals in the Cuban Army. Upon the start of the War of

⁶ Dorothy Stanhope, "The Negro Race in Cuba; Insular Society Draws no Discriminating Color Line," New York Times, September 16, 1900, p.5., col. 1.

⁷ José Martí, "Mi Raza," Patria, April 16, 1893. (Translation by the author).

Independence in 1895, José and Antonio both joined the movement led by José Martí.

General José Marcelino Maceo y Grajales commanded the Cuban First Army Corps until his death in combat. Lieutenant General Antonio de la Caridad Maceo y Grajales led the Cuban Army in front of his men in many of the most important battles of the war until his death in combat December 7, 1896. The sacrifice of this family for the Cuban cause was unprecedented.

Many Cuban blacks distinguished themselves in the Cuban Army. But many blacks also joined the Spanish forces and distinguished themselves in combat fighting under the Spanish flag. Without a doubt, the number of casualties and the contribution of blacks to both sides of the war was well above their numbers in the population of Cuba.

Strategy of the War

The principal military objective of the Cuban Army was to defeat Spain. To do this the war had to be conducted in all corners of the island. As in 1868, the eastern part of the island, particularly Oriente and Camagüey, provinces was the stronghold of the revolution. Thus the war had to be carried from the eastern to the western provinces by means of a military invasion.

In the '68 war the Cuban Army under the leadership of Máximo Gómez had tried and failed to carry out this objective.⁸ This time the invasion was given priority and was started in October, 1895, from Mangos de Baragua in Oriente, to Mantua in Pinar del Rio by January of 1896. In 90 days the Cuban Army covered 1,018 miles, fought 27 major battles, captured 21 towns, over 2,000 rifles, 770,000 rounds and caused hundreds of casualties to the Spanish as they were defeated over and over again. At no time did the Cuban invasion force count with more than 4,500 men. To make their task even more difficult, the Cuban Army was slowed down by the fact that several hundred unarmed recruits, women, children and old people followed their men into battle to avoid capture or reprisals by the Spanish.⁹

⁸ One of the best sources of information on the strategy of the war is General Gómez's own account of the war as presented in his campaign diary: Máximo Gómez, Diario de Campaña (La Habana: 1940).

⁹ The new unarmed recruits and civilians that marched along with the Army was given the name "impedimenta."

The principal military objective of the Spanish Army was to defeat the Cuban Army. Their tactic was to separate the island into smaller territorial units by means of lines of fortifications, which they called "trochas," in order to localize the conflict and prevent the formation of large units of insurgents.

When the war started at the end of February of 1895, the number of Spanish troops in the island was very limited, which helped the Cubans to organize their own forces before the Spanish had time to react. Spanish troops in Cuba were commanded by Captain General Emilio Callejas who had his headquarters in Havana. The second ranking officer, whom the Spanish called "Segundo Cabo," was General Arderius, who was also stationed at headquarters in the capital. A Division General was stationed in Santiago de Cuba (José Lachambre), and brigadier generals were stationed in Las Villas (Antonio Luque), Puerto Principe (Federico Alonso), Matanzas (Luis Prats), and Pinar del Rio (Cipriano Carmona).

These flag rank officers had: 7 infantry regiments with 12,030 men and 468 officers; 2 cavalry regiments with 1,590 men and 90 officers; two artillery units with 775 men and 43 officers; and 414 men and 27 officers in a combat engineer unit. The Civil Guard had 4,318 men and 185 officers and the volunteer militia with 19,999 men and 383 officers.

By the start of the invasion in October 1895, the Spanish forces had over 120,000 regular troops in addition to at least 60,000 irregular troops composed of "voluntarios" and "guerrilleros." In addition, the Spanish Navy provided support in coastal towns and attempted to intercept shipments of men and materials to the Cubans.

General Arsenio Martínez Campos was sent to Cuba once again to take over military operations as Captain General. He was Spain's most prestigious general of this period in Spain. He had led the military uprising of 1874 which reestablished the monarchy and brought back some degree of political stability and economic prosperity to Spain after years of practical anarchy. He was also responsible for bringing to an end the Ten Years War in 1878. He returned to Cuba with offers for a political solution and strong conventional military tactics to put an end to the uprising. He failed to accomplish both.

The Revolutionary Offensive

The invasion was started with two large units designed for this purpose, commanded by Generals Máximo Gómez and Antonio Maceo. The unit commanded by General Antonio Maceo consisted of 1,403 men, of which 810 were in the cavalry, 350 in the infantry, 20 in the medical unit, 25 in the General

Staff, 62 were attached to the General Headquarters, and 40 were assigned to provide protection to the civilian Revolutionary Government that accompanied the troops. The infantry brigade was commanded by Brigadier Quintin Banderas and the cavalry brigade by Brigadier Luis Feria.

On November 11th, General José María Rodríguez, commander of the Third Army Corps, joined General Maceo with another 1,300 men. On November 21st, 320 more men from the Second Army Corps, under Colonel Esteban Tamayo y Tamayo, joined Maceo. To avoid the same mistake of the '68 war, the invasion force avoided contact with the Spanish Army so as not to lose strength and supplies needed for the invasion west of Las Villas. The only problem encountered was the desertion of about 15 officers and about 90 soldiers who did not want to fight too far from the area where they lived before the start of the war. Although General Maceo issued orders to capture and execute the deserters they were not captured.¹⁰

This problem of troops not willing to fight far away from their homes was not unique to the Cuban War of Independence. Readers may recall that General George Washington experienced the same problem when he tried to move his forces from New England to the south to fight the British. Had this problem not been overcome, the eventual defeat of General Cornwallis in Virginia would never have taken place.

In the western part of Camagüey, General Gómez's forces joined with those of General Maceo, thus forming a force of over 4,000 men. A 4th and 5th Army corps were formed and General Antonio Maceo assumed their direct command. Due to the limited number of men and weapons, the ideal organizational strength of the units could not be reached.

The forces participating in the invasion west of Camagüey were divided into two groups. One commanded by Gómez and

¹⁰ During the Ten Years War, Maceo not only faced the problem of troops from Oriente not willing to participate in the invasion force away from their home, but also racism on the part of Cuban troops from Camagüey. Some white troops were reluctant to fight under the command of a black general. Maceo, who was then a brigadier and Chief of the 2nd Division of the 1st Corps, wrote to the President of the Republic at Arms, stating that those who accused him of favoring blacks did not understand that his only desires were to serve his country and fight for freedom and independence. He correctly stated that the fatherland would be the one to suffer as a result of divisiveness. Brigadier Antonio Maceo to the President of the Republic, 16 May 1876, included in Hortensia Pichardo Vinals, Documentos para la Historia de Cuba (Época Colonial) (La Habana: Editora del Consejo Nacional de Universidades, 1965), pp. 405-408.

Maceo and consisting of about 3,000 men, advanced west in the center of the island. This was a fast moving column with a large contingent of light cavalry. The second force under the command of Brigadier Quintin Bandera, which consisted of about 1,000 infantrymen, advanced near the south coast of the island.

By December 14th, the Cubans had reached the mountains in the south of Las Villas and continued their advance, holding frequent skirmishes with the Spanish Army, but no major battles took place. The Spanish made frequent use of their artillery and fought the Cubans at a distance. Despite Captain General Martínez Campos' intentions of stopping the Cuban advance in Las Villas, as it had been stopped during the Ten Years War, the Spanish Army did not press for a definitive encounter with the Cuban forces.

The first major combat took place on December 15, 1895, at Mal Tiempo, in sugar cane fields of the Teresa sugar mill. The Spanish forces consisted of the Bailén and Canarias battalions. The Cuban forces launched a strong cavalry charge with Generals Gómez and Maceo leading the troops, machete-in-hand in direct command of the Cespedes, Martí and García Regiments. The Spanish formed square formations to resist the attack. After a little over half an hour the Spanish retreated leaving behind over 100 dead and many more wounded, as well as their flag, which was captured by the Cubans. Over 200 weapons and many boxes of ammunition, medical supplies and horses were captured. The Cubans suffered 24 dead.

After the battle the invasion force continued moving west, now enlarged by the arrival of additional forces. By the time they reached Matanzas their numbers had been increased by at least 1,000 more men. The Spanish in the meantime had a force of at least 35,000 men dedicated to stopping the Cuban advance. Their mobility was based on the use of railroads to move about the countryside. Cuban guerrilla units and advance parties cut the lines to make their movements more difficult.

By December 20th, the Cuban forces were advancing in Matanzas, toward Colón, through the cane fields in this mostly flat province. As they advanced they burned the cane fields to cause maximum economic damage. Several towns were taken, sacked and burned and several Spanish forts and barracks destroyed. But no major battles were held despite the fact that General Martínez Campos was personally leading his troops in the field in search for a definitive battle with the Cubans. Only skirmishes took place on December 23th at Limonar and Coliseo, again in the middle of cane fields.

General Máximo Gómez moved the Cuban forces north and south and at times retreated east, thus making the Spanish unsure of what town or military objective would be attacked. Finally, one of the principal battles of the invasion campaign took place on December 29th at Calimete. Casualties were high on both sides and the Cubans were forced to retreat toward the swamps in the south of Matanzas.

By January 1, 1896, Cuban troops had entered the Province of Havana. In this province the Spanish counted with their best troops and several of their best colonels and generals. In addition to the regular troops, the Spanish counted with large numbers of volunteer militia and many Spanish immigrants in the population of the many small towns in the province who sided with Spain. Cuban "guerrillero" units provided additional strength to the Spanish.

Cuban forces captured Melena del Sur, Guara, Quivicán, El Gabriel, Güira de Melena, Caminito, Alquizar, Ceiba del Agua, Vereda Nueva, Hoyo Colorado, Guayabal and several other small towns. They also continued to burn sugar cane to paralyze the harvest which was in full force at this time of the year. The Spanish did not leave the towns to meet the Cubans in battle. They were concerned that one of the larger towns might be attacked and even feared that Havana could be the target of the Cuban forces.

On January 7th Generals Gómez and Maceo divided their forces again. Gómez with about 2,000 men, which included the García and Martí Regiments from Oriente, a cavalry regiment from Matanzas, and one infantry brigade moved back to Matanzas. Major General Pedro Díaz and Brigadier Angel Guerra were the two senior officers under Gómez in this column. Lieutenant General Antonio Maceo, in command of another force of about 1,500 men composed of the Céspedes and Gua Cavalry Regiments and one infantry regiment, continued the advance west toward Pinar del Rio. Major Generals Pedro Sotomayor and Silveiro Sánchez Figueras and Brigadiers Juan Bruno Zayas and Esteban Tamayo were Maceo's senior officers.

General Maceo's forces continued taking towns in Havana, including El Cano and Punta Brava and began to make preparations to cross the "trocha" from Mariel to Majana, designed by the Spanish to stop the advance toward Pinar del Rio. In his advance, Maceo fought with success against Spanish forces commanded by Generals Echagüe and Suárez Valdés (sic).

Once in Pinar del Rio, Maceo continued to capture more towns, and to increase his forces with new recruits. By January 22, 1896, his forces had reached Mantua, the western most town in Cuba at the time, in Pinar del Rio Province. With the capture of Mantua, the military objective of taking the war to the entire island had been achieved in 90 days.

The War in 1896

Captain General Arsenio Martínez Campos was relieved of his command in January of 1896, and went back to Spain after failing to contain the Cuban advance. He was replaced by Captain General Valeriano Weyler, who arrived in Cuba in mid February. With his arrival the course of the war changed, as Spanish methods to fight the war turned to repression against civilian non-combatants and any and all sympathizers of the revolution. This included forcing farmers and their families to move into concentration camps in the larger towns and cities to deny the Cuban Army access to food and other types of assistance from the local population.

The Cuban forces, under the strong leadership of General Máximo Gómez, became more professional and disciplined as time passed. Gómez, even against criticism from the civilian leadership of the movement, gave instructions to hang any soldier regardless of rank who did not follow orders or engaged in acts that violated the code of ethics of the Cuban Army. Cowards who failed to advance in combat when ordered to do so were severely punished. Gómez wanted to avoid the problems of the Ten Years' War when anarchy sometimes prevailed among the Cuban forces. His efforts were rewarded by the excellent fighting record of the Cuban Army when faced with much larger and better equipped forces.

The Cuban Army was reorganized upon the completion of the invasion in March of 1896. The Army was expanded to six corps and two special forces commanded directly by Generals Gómez and Maceo which consisted of their general staffs and troops from Oriente, Camagüey and Las Villas, supported by local forces from Matanzas, La Havana and Pinar del Rio.

The First and Second Army Corps continued to operate in Oriente under Major Generals José Maceo and Jesús Rabí. The Third Corps operated in Camagüey under the command of Major General Javier de la Vega. The Fourth Corps operated in Las Villas under Major General Francisco Carrillo. The Fifth Corps operated in Matanzas and Havana under Major General José María Aguirre. Division General José Lacret commanded the troops in Matanzas, of the Fifth Corps, assisted by Brigadiers José Roque and Eduardo García. A Sixth Corps was formed in Pinar del Rio under Major General Juan Rius Rivera.

In 1896, the Cuban forces began to receive increasing levels of support from Cubans in the United States and other countries. Several expeditionary forces landed, adding new recruits who, for the most part, were well-equipped. New weapons and ammunition arrived regularly despite the Spanish naval blockade of the island.

Support from Abroad

The Cuban Revolutionary Government, with its headquarters in the United States under the leadership of Tomás Estrada Palma, organized a strong public relations campaign, as well as an effective system to collect funds to purchase weapons and supplies. Expeditions were organized to deliver them to Cuba. By mid 1896, a special section of the government was formed under the direction of Brigadier General Emilio Nufiez to coordinate the organization of naval support to the Cuban Army of Independence. Several ships were purchased and placed in service. Among these famous ships were: Laurada, Horsa, Bermuda, Dauntless, Charlot Hatson, Three Friends, Comodoro and Sumner Smith. Most of their names reflect their U.S. origin.

Several Americans participated in the expeditions and provided great service to the Cuban cause, particularly as ship captains. Among them were Samuel Hughes and Johnny O'Brien, who commanded several of these ships. The headquarters of the operation was first located in New York and later moved to Tampa. The center of operation was located in Key West and other Florida Keys, from where most of the ships departed.

To illustrate the support provided by Johnny O'Brien and this small "Cuban Navy," one can point to the expedition that landed near Baracoa in the Province of Oriente on March 24, 1896. Johnny O'Brien, captain of the "Bermuda," landed Cuban reinforcements led by General Calixto Garcia. In addition to troops, 900 rifles, 50 carbines, 90 mausers, one artillery piece and several hundred thousand rounds of ammunition were delivered to Cuban forces in Oriente.

Lieutenant General Antonio Maceo's 1896 Campaign

General Antonio Maceo is regarded as the most outstanding Cuban military leader of all times. He rose rapidly through the ranks due to his great valor and leadership in combat. He joined the Cuban Army in 1868. By 1869, he had reached the rank of Major. In 1872 Maceo was promoted to Colonel and in 1874 he reached the rank of Brigadier General. By the end of the Ten Years' War he was a Major General. Maceo came from a family of heroes who gave their lives for Cuban Independence. Six of his brothers, as well as his father were either killed in battle or were seriously incapacitated. At the beginning of 1896, his brother, Major General José Maceo, commanded the First Army Corps in Oriente.

After reaching the western tip of Cuba, Maceo returned to Havana to join the forces commanded by General Máximo Gómez. On his way he fought at Paso Real de San Diego and Rio Hondo in Pinar del Rio, inflicting over 200 casualties on the Spanish while suffering close to 100 himself. On February 17th, Maceo and Gómez met at Moralitos, where they fought the Spanish together.

After the encounter at Moralitos, the Cuban forces split again. Maceo moved in the direction of the north coast of Matanzas and then turned south, reentering the Province of Havana. His forces fought the Spanish at Santa Cruz del Norte, Santa María del Rosario, Nazareno, La Diana and Auras. Upon his return to Havana, Maceo attacked Batabanó on the south coast and fought the Spanish at Artemisa. Reunited with Gómez's forces, both fought the Spanish at Galeón.

General Maceo was then ordered by Gómez to return to Pinar del Rio and intensify the war in that province. On his way Maceo continued to fight the Spanish, with encounters at Artemisa, Las Mercedes, Labori, Cacarajicara, El Rubio, Loma Redonda, Vega de Morales, San Martín, Consolación del Sur, Lomas de Tapia, El Guaro, Coja del Negro, again in Artemisa, Soroa, and again at El Rubio. He clashed with troops commanded by some of the best Spanish officers, including Generals Molina, Prats, Echagüe, Bernal and even Captain General Weyler. The Spanish suffered over 500 casualties in these encounters with Maceo.

Between March and December, Maceo managed to defeat the Spanish time after time, despite the efforts made by General Weyler to trap him. The Cuban forces continued to grow with the assistance of men and supplies from the United States. One of the expeditions that arrived on board the "Dauntless," under the direction of Mayor General Juan Rius Rivera on September 8th, brought over one thousand weapons, including an artillery piece and thousands of rounds of ammunition.

By December 1896, the Cuban forces in Pinar del Rio were well organized and a 8th Army Corps was formed under the command of Major General Rius Rivera. Maceo and his general staff and what was left of his original invasion force attempted to move back east, across Havana to meet with General Gómez and the civilian government in the Cuban stronghold of Oriente. Maceo once again crossed the ineffective "trocha" from Maril to Majana and joined the forces of the 5th Army Corps in Havana.

In Havana Maceo found that several high-ranking officers were feuding and that discipline had declined. He tried to reorient these officers and bring back order. But before he could reeducate these units, the lack of discipline and organization led to security violations at the Cuban camp at Punta Brava. On December 7, a "guerrilla" unit formed by

Cubans fighting for Spain were able to reach the Cuban Army camp before a general alert could be sounded. In a skirmish that ensued Maceo and about a dozen men were killed as they attempted to organize a counter attack.

Maceo's death was received with great celebration in the Spanish Government. Throughout Spain parties were held to celebrate what they considered to have been the end of the war in Cuba, with the death of one of the principal military leaders. But instead, Maceo's death only contributed to greater efforts on the part of the Cubans and the war continued. The Cuban forces were well-organized and the death of one general could not defeat the entire Army.

The War in the East

While Generals Gómez and Maceo organized the war in the western part of the island, in the east the war continued. The Spanish faced some of the strongest Cuban units there. In Oriente the First and Second Army Corps under the excellent leadership of Generals José Maceo and Jesús Rabi did not let the Spanish rest. In Las Villas, the Third Army Corps counted with excellent leadership under Generals Serafin Sánchez, Francisco Carrillo, José Miguel Gómez, José de Jesús Monteagudo, Gerardo Machado and other senior officers. (Two of these generals were to serve as Presidents of Cuba after independence and others became top commanders of the Cuban Armed Forces.)

With the arrival of Major General Calixto Garcia in March of 1896, one of the most experienced Cuban generals of the Ten Years War of 1868, the war in Oriente picked up. Garcia was a careful strategist who planned his moves well and obtained optimum results with minimal casualties. He also was famous for his use of artillery and other conventional tactics while other Cuban generals favored the use of light cavalry as the ultimate weapon of war against the Spanish. Within a short time after his arrival Garcia was placed in command of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Army Corps and promoted to the rank of Lieutenant General.

Reorganization of the Cuban Army

Toward the end of 1896, the Cuban Army of Independence was again reorganized. It had grown in size and several generals had been killed in battle. General Máximo Gómez continued as Commander-in-Chief of the Army. Calixto Garcia held the position of Lieutenant General and commanded the First, Second and Third Corps in Oriente and Camagüey. Mayor General José Maceo had been killed in battle on June 5, 1896,

and had been replaced by Major General Agustín Cebreco. The Second Corps was still under the command of Major General Jesús Sablón Moreno (known as Jesús Rabi). The commander of the Third Corps, Major General Manuel Suárez, was relieved of his command by Máximo Gómez and replaced by Major General Javier de la Vega.

The forces in the western part of the island were under the command of Major General José María Rodríguez. The Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Corps reported to him. Major General Serafín Sánchez, who had commanded the Fourth Corps was killed in battle on November 18, 1896, and replaced by Major General Francisco Carrillo. Major General José María Aguirre, who commanded the Fifth Corps, was also killed in battle on December 29, 1896, and replaced by Major General Alejandro Rodríguez, who was later to become the head of the Cuban Armed Forces after independence. The Sixth Corps was commanded by Major General Juan Rius Rivera. (Gen. Rius Rivera was captured in 1897 and was replaced by Maj. Gen. Pedro Díaz Molina.)

The Headquarters of the Army was also reorganized and expanded. The legal department was headed by General Domingo Méndez Capote. The Inspector General's Office was under the direction of Major General Serafín Sánchez, until his death on December 29, 1896. The Medical and Sanitation Corps was under the direction of General Eugenio Sánchez Agramonte. The medical units in the east were under the command of Brigadier Eugenio Molinet and the units in the west under Brigadier Hugo Roberts.

The War in 1897

After the death of General Antonio Maceo, Captain General Weyler thought that the war in the west was finished for all practical purposes. Based on this erroneous assumption, he moved about 40,000 men to the center of the island, the Province of Las Villas, where General Máximo Gómez was personally leading the Cuban forces. The Spanish concentrated 35 infantry battalions, four cavalry regiments and several artillery units in the province. But despite their efforts, General Gómez managed to avoid a large battle and went back to guerrilla warfare and the quick charges of the famous Cuban light cavalry against Spanish columns. The effective action of the Cuban forces and the climate and tropical diseases decimated the Spanish troops.

The Spanish Government pursued a policy of total war, which included concentrating the rural population in urban areas that were well guarded by Spanish troops. The movement of hundreds of thousands to concentration camps resulted in many civilian casualties from malnutrition and tropical diseases.

Public opinion, particularly in the United States turned against the Spanish. The United States Government asked the Spanish to use more humane methods in Cuba but the request was rejected. President William McKinley also offered to buy Cuba for 300 million dollars, but this offer was also rejected. The road was leading to a direct confrontation sooner or later between the two countries over the Cuban question.

The Spanish policy toward Cuba changed after the assassination of the President of the Council of Government, Antonio Cánovas del Castillo, by an Italian Anarchist on August 8, 1897. Cánovas del Castillo was a member of the Conservative Party. His replacement, Liberal Party leader Praxedes Mateo Sagasta, recalled Captain General Weyler and sent to Cuba Lieutenant General Ramón Blanco Erenas as the new Governor and Captain General. General Blanco had instructions to put an end to the concentration camps and to attempt to use the same soft policies that had ended the Ten Years' War to end the current insurrection in Cuba. The plan included self-government and Cuban participation in the political process of the island. This time the Cuban leadership rejected all offers of reform.

The war continued and Cuban forces maintained practical control of all rural areas and many small-and-medium-sized towns in Oriente and Camagüey Provinces. In Las Villas, Gómez and his men controlled the mountains on the south side of the province and continued to pick and choose when and where to strike at the Spanish forces. In Matanzas, La Havana and Pinar del Rio, the Cuban forces continued to carry out the war with effective use of guerrilla warfare and at times conventional tactics including the use of light cavalry against the Spanish. The fact that General Weyler had concentrated the bulk of his forces in the center of the island helped the Cubans in the west to carry out an effective campaign. The Spanish had, as perhaps their most effective resource, the Cuban "guerrillero" forces fighting on their side. These guerrilla units pushed into territory controlled by the Cuban Army of Liberation and attacked their rear guard positions, hospitals, supply centers, and burned and destroyed crops planted by the Cuban forces to feed the Army.

The United States Enters the War

In February of 1898, the United States sent to Havana Harbor the battleship Maine, under the command of Charles Swight Sigsbee. The Maine had a crew of eight officers and 350 enlisted men. In the evening of February 15th, an explosion caused the ship to sink rapidly, killing most of the crew. The officers were not on board at the time of the explosion.

This incident became a major public relations problem for Spain in the United States. Several newspapers and politicians claimed that Spain was at fault. Cuban exiles and Americans who favored a declaration of war agitated the public with a strong newspaper campaign. On April 23, 1898, the Congress of the United States declared war and within days large numbers of men were being prepared to go to war in Cuba.

The small fleet that the Cubans in the United States had been using to supply the Cuban Army of Liberation received assistance and an American naval escort to land men and supplies in Cuba. The chief spokesman for the Cuban Revolutionary Government, Tomás Estrada Palma, who lived in the United States and was a United States citizen, offered the assistance of the Cuban forces to fight against Spain. To make arrangements for the coordination of Cuban and American forces, the U.S. Government sent Lieutenant Andrew S. Rowan to Cuba with a message for Lieutenant General Calixto García. General Gómez was harder to reach due to the nature of the war in Las Villas.

As a result of this message, Lieutenant General García sent Brigadier Enrique Collazo and two other officers to meet at the highest level with American officers planning strategy for the war. They met with the American Chief of Staff, General Miles, as well as with General Ager, who was Secretary of War. The plan decided upon was to land American troops in Oriente province and attack Santiago de Cuba. The American Navy at the same time would try to meet the Spanish fleet for a decisive battle.

The Cuban campaign was carried out under the direct command of Major General William R. Shaffter and the Fifth Corps of the U.S. Army, stationed at New Orleans. A force of 20,000 men under General Shaffter's command arrived in the south coast of Oriente on June 20, 1898. A meeting was arranged between the senior American officers and General Calixto García to plan strategy for capturing Santiago de Cuba.

The plan presented by General García was accepted by the American officers. It consisted of landing the American contingent east of Santiago de Cuba at Daiquiri Beach, and from there they would move to attack the city from that flank. General García would organize an attack with his forces from the western flank and at the same time provide support for the American landing.

Major General Cebreco, commander of the Cuban First Corps, was placed in charge of the troops in the western part of the city. Brigadier General Demetrio Castillo Duany attacked the Spanish at Daiquiri, captured the town and cleared the beach for the American landing. The first American troops to land

were an infantry division under General Kent and a cavalry division under General Wheeler. In addition, a brigade under General Bates and the Rough Riders volunteer cavalry unit under Colonel Leonard Wood and Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, landed at Daiquiri. On June 29th, General Shafter landed and met with General Garcia to work out final details of the campaign.

The Spanish had a limited number of troops between the American positions and Santiago de Cuba, but the rank and file were ready to fight practically to the last man. Brigadier General Joaquín Vara del Rey, one of the most experienced Spanish officers in the Cuban campaign, had about 600 men to face much larger American forces. But he organized a strong defensive position in the hills of El Caney.

From his position at El Vizo fort in the Caney hills Vara del Rey held the American and Cuban forces for hours. Even after being wounded twice, the Spanish General fought until the end and then took his own life. The Cuban and American forces sustained over 450 casualties while the Spanish suffered over 400, before the Spanish positions could be taken.

The Spanish forces, many of them volunteers from Puerto Rico, under the leadership of General Linares, set up another line of defense at San Juan Hill. The Spanish once again fought bravely for hours. The American troops sustained 1,012 casualties and Cuban forces over 150. American black troops distinguished themselves in this battle, fighting uphill against well-entrenched Spanish defenders. They deserve more credit than the super-romanticized cavalry charge of the Rough Riders under Theodore Roosevelt. The Spanish lost 310 men before they retreated from their positions.

The Spanish fleet, under Admiral Cervera, had been trapped by the American Navy inside Santiago de Cuba harbor. Cervera was ordered to move out. As the Spanish ships left the harbor Indian file and making a mad dash to sea, they were outgunned and outnumbered by Admiral Sampson. The Spanish fleet was destroyed, and with it all hopes that Spain would be able to carry the war any further. Spain could no longer supply its 200,000 men in Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines or any other Spanish territories. The Spanish forces in Oriente Province surrendered to the American forces.

With the assistance of the French Government, Spain contacted the U.S. Government and requested a meeting to put an end to the war. A protocol to end the war was signed on August 12, 1898. On January 1, 1898, Captain General Adolfo Jiménez Castellanos turned the administration of Cuba over to General John R. Brooke and 400 years of Spanish Government in Cuba came to an end.

VII. American Occupation 1898-1902

With the surrender of the Spanish troops in Cuba, the United States set up a Provisional Military Government under General John R. Brooke. The task assigned to General Brooke was to reorganize the government and the economy of the island. Cuba was riddled with disease, starvation, and economic chaos as a result of the three years of warfare. Possibly as many as 25 percent of the population had died. Another official task assigned to the Provisional Government was to prepare the people of the island to set up an independent government. To assist him in his multiple tasks, General Brooke appointed a cabinet formed for the most part by non-revolutionary Cubans, all white men who had lived in the United States. Tensions between the Cuban revolutionary leadership and General Brooke soon developed over many issues which had to be resolved.

Relations Between the American Government and the Cuban Revolutionaries

The Cuban Revolutionary Government which had operated during the war had as its principal coordinating body a National Assembly. General Bartolomé Masó, who presided over the Assembly at the close of the war, called a meeting which was held on October 24, 1898, to discuss what they would do in the future. A total of 44 general officers and colonels attended. At this meeting Domingo Méndez Capote was designated President of the Assembly and a decision was made to notify the American authorities that the Cubans would provide aid and assistance to the Provisional Government to bring the country back to normality. A delegation was also designated to travel to Washington to discuss several important issues, including the payment of back wages to the Cuban Army, as well as its demobilization.

The delegation was headed by General Calixto García and had as its members Generals Manuel Sanguily, José Miguel Gómez, José Ramón Villalón and José A. González Luna. They were received by President McKinley who explained that the U.S. Government would provide assistance to the Cuban Army but was prevented by the American Constitution from providing wages to a foreign army. The delegates differed on the amount of money needed to pay the back wages. García held that only about three million dollars would be needed while the others supported a higher figure of close to ten million dollars. While in Washington, General García, who was the most respected member of the group, passed away.

The U.S. Government, particularly the provisional governors, never accepted the Cuban assembly as an official body and

preferred to deal directly with General Garcia before he died. After General Garcia's death, the U.S. authorities preferred to deal directly with General Máximo Gómez, who had been the Commander-in-Chief of the Cuban Army. Gómez held that the Cuban Army had to be paid before it was disbanded, and to do so negotiated with the Americans, to the displeasure of the members of the Assembly who decided to strip him of his title of Commander-in-Chief. Although Gómez was widely respected, he also had some enemies who criticized his strong-arm tactics to maintain discipline and the way in which he had treated officers under him.

With the assistance of the U.S. Government, a loan was obtained from private banking sources in the United States and each Cuban soldier was paid 75 pesos. A total of 33,930 privates, corporals and sergeants received payments for their services. Despite this arrangement, the problem of veterans' wages and benefits was to become one of the hottest subjects in Cuba for over 30 years. Many of the veterans expected and demanded special privileges and benefits based on their service in the Army of Liberation. Political demagogues encouraged discontent and fueled the passions of the veterans to advance their own political ends.

New Cuban Police and Military Units Formed

As the Spanish officials pulled out of Cuba, the island was left without local institutions to protect the public from bandits. The old Guardia Urbana, which acted as a police force in Havana and the Policia Municipal, which protected public order elsewhere were disbanded. At the same time that this was taking place, new armed bands began to disturb the public order, particularly in rural areas. After years of warfare, members of the Cuban Army of Liberation and of the Guerrilla units which fought on the side of Spain defected from their units and formed bands of outlaws. The problem seems to have been particularly bad in the eastern part of the island. Something had to be done to restore law and order.

While the relationship between the United States and Cuba was discussed both in Cuba and the United States, General Brooke took steps to bring order back to the island. American military chiefs were named in each province and officers of the Cuban Army were named as civilian governors of each province. Colonel Leonard Wood, who had been appointed head of the Military District of Santiago de Cuba, began to organize a small police unit with Cuban veterans. By the end of July of 1898, a few days before the signing of the protocol to end the war with Spain, Wood already had formed a force of about 20 men. The following month, another small force was formed to police the area around Guantánamo, under the

direction of Lieutenant Colonel Enrique Brooks, a veteran officer of the Cuban Army. By December of 1898, this force had been increased to 40 men. Another veteran officer, Colonel Adriano Galano Coutin, was hired and placed in charge of a detachment based at Baracoa.

In Manzanillo, Colonel Whitside followed the example of Colonel Wood and organized another police unit with Cuban veterans. By December of 1898 the force had grown to about 50 men. That same month another police unit was formed in Holguin, following the same pattern. A police force of about 100 men was organized in the capital to assist the Provisional Government in maintaining public order. Colonel Raul Arango Solar was hired to head the unit. Before long all the American officers who had been named as regional chiefs had formed some kind of a police unit with Cuban veterans.

In December of 1899, General Brooke was replaced by Leonard Wood, who had been promoted to Brigadier, as Military Governor. During his administration all the police units that had been formed were unified. A Rural Guard was organized to patrol the Cuban rural districts. The creation of the Rural Guard was suggested by General Máximo Gómez, who was interested in providing employment to veterans of the Cuban Army. The force consisted originally of 1,350 men. For the most part, the members of the force were Cuban veterans of the War of Independence, the majority of whom were whites. The officers were all white. Major General Alejandro Rodríguez, who had commanded the Cuban Fifth Corps, was named Chief of the Rural Guard in 1901, with the rank of colonel.

Military Order 114 of April 5, 1901, unified the force under one command and provided the organizational structure. Captain H. J. Slocum (USA) was named as superintendent of the force to assist in its organization and training. The force was to be: prudent without showing weakness; firm but without using violence; and polite without resorting to lowliness. The unit was issued standard weapons. Officers were to carry a 38 cal. Colt revolver and a machete. Sergeants and other enlisted men were issued 7.7 mm. Mausers (Remington) and a machete. The force was composed of four regiments headed by a lieutenant colonel. The First Regiment covered Pinar del Rio and Havana. The Second Regiment covered Matanzas and Santa Clara. The Third Regiment covered Puerto Principe (Camagüey) and the Forth Regiment was based in Santiago de Cuba and covered the province of Oriente.

An Artillery Corps was organized in 1901 for coastal fortifications. The New York Times quoted United States Government officials to the effect that it would "consist of 150 white Cubans, and will be recruited under the same conditions as to qualifications that obtain in the U.S. so far as these

will apply." ¹ This segregation of military units had not been practiced in the Cuban Army before the American forces took control of the island. These actions slowly began to anger many black veterans and were to lead to major confrontations in the future.

In 1902 the Rural Guard and the Artillery Corps were united under one command, with Major General Alejandro Rodriguez as the chief of both organizations. By 1905, the Rural Guard had 8,000 men and the Artillery Corps 700 men distributed throughout Cuba, in 250 detachments.

Preparations for Independence

The major topic of discussion in Cuba, the United States, and in the U.S. Congress was the relative desirability of either continuing U.S. rule in Cuba indefinitely annexing the island to the United States, or granting Cuba independence. Although there were Americans who had long desired to annex Cuba, and Cubans who wanted annexation, the United States Senate, in authorizing U.S. intervention in the Cuban war for independence, had passed a resolution on April 16, 1898, stating that the government of the island would be left to its people. Introduced by Senator Henry M. Teller of Colorado, this resolution is known as the Teller Amendment.²

The Cuban people for the most part demanded independence and expected to receive it. In the United States, despite the fact that many wanted to take over the island, a moral commitment existed due to the Teller amendment to grant Cuba its independence. Cubans had lost thousands of lives and had fought for almost half a century to achieve their independence and the American public for the most part had seen the Cuban struggle favorably. Preparations for electing a constitutional convention were started. The first step was to find out how many eligible voters existed in the island.

A census was taken in 1899, which showed that 1,572,797 people lived in Cuba. With data developed in this census, lists of eligible voters were prepared and the first municipal elections were held in June 1900. In June of 1901 municipal elections were held again, although somewhat tainted by corruption in some localities. In 1900, Governor Leonard Wood announced that elections would be held for 31 delegates, distributed among the provinces according to population, to draft a constitution for Cuba. After elections were held on

¹ "Cuba to Have an Artillery Corps," New York Times August 9, 1901, p.2, col. 3.

² U.S. Congressional Record, 55th Congress, 2nd Session, April 16, 1898, p. 53954.

November 5th, the delegates began the work of the Constitutional Convention. In a speech to the delegates, the Governor said that one of the duties of the Convention was to work out an agreement for the future relations of the island with the United States.

In Washington, Senator Orville H. Platt (Republican of Connecticut) presented an amendment to the Army Appropriations Bill of 1901, which authorized the President of the United States to withdraw the Armed Forces from Cuba, only after the Cuban Constitutional Convention had agreed to a set of conditions regarding the relations between the two countries. Among the conditions of the Platt Amendment were limitations of Cuba's authority to enter into treaties and contract debts; granting the United States the right to intervene in Cuban affairs to preserve Cuban independence, to maintain a stable government, or to protect life or property; ratification of all acts of the military occupation; and leasing of land for American coaling or naval stations.

When the news of the conditions for independence reached Cuba, demonstrations of protest took place throughout the island. The amendment was debated at great length in the Constitutional Convention, but the assembly reluctantly complied and the Platt Amendment was added as an appendix to the Cuban Constitution on June 12, 1901.

General Elections of 1901

When the scheduled elections for the first Cuban president and Congress were held on December 31, 1901, the early leaders of the struggle for independence were no longer on the scene: José Martí, Antonio Maceo and many others had died in the War. General Calixto García had died in Washington in 1899 during a trip to that city. Others, like General Máximo Gómez, were very old. A new controlling group in the independence movement eagerly sought public office and not necessarily with the best intentions.

By the time the 1901 presidential elections approached, the Cuban economy had been transformed from the chaos of 1898 when the war ended. The farmers had gone back to planting crops. New public works had been started in the capital, as well as in the interior. The railroads had been repaired and the lines expanded to cover most of the island. Sanitation had also received major attention and with cooperative work yellow fever was eradicated by Cuban physician Carlos Finlay, a graduate of the Jefferson Medical School in Philadelphia and Major William Gorgas. The island once again enjoyed some degree of prosperity.

In Cuba's first presidential elections General Máximo Gómez, Tomás Estrada Palma and Major General Bartolomé Masó were the leading contenders for the office. Of these, the most popular figure was probably General Máximo Gómez. But he was a native of the Dominican Republic and foreign-born Cubans were not eligible candidates for the office of president. However, the Constitutional Convention had added a clause to the Cuban Constitution extending eligibility to foreigners who had fought for Cuban independence for at least ten years, thus permitting Gómez to run for office.³ But the old General was not interested in running for office.

Tomás Estrada Palma was a logical candidate for President. He had fought for Cuban independence in the Ten Year's War and had been elected President of the Republic at Arms on March 29, 1876. A year later he had been captured by the Spanish Army and spent the rest of the war in a prison in Barcelona. At the end of the war Estrada Palma was released and went to live in Honduras, where he married the daughter of President Santos Guardiola. A few years later he moved to the United States, making his home in Central Valley, Orange County, New York, where he founded a school in which he taught for over twenty years. He had taken American citizenship while in the United States.

During the War of Independence (1895-1898) Estrada Palma became one of the leading members of the Partido Revolucionario Cubano. When the war started, he closed down the school in Central Valley, mortgaged his home and devoted all his time to the cause, collecting money for arms, organizing the Cuban exiles in the United States and writing about the Cuban struggle in order to gain support for the movement.

Another likely presidential candidate was Major General Bartolomé Masó, also a veteran of both wars. On October 6, 1868, he was one of the sixteen Cuban patriots who signed the Declaration of Independence. Four days later he was named second in command to Carlos Manuel de Céspedes. According to the experts, the only copy of the 1868 Declaration of Independence now preserved was written by General Masó himself.⁴ During the War of Independence he served as President of the Republic at Arms and had an impressive record as a fighter.

³ Article 65 of the Cuban Constitution of 1901, extended eligibility to foreigners who were veterans. Similar action was taken in 1959 after the overthrow of Batista in order to make it possible for Ernesto "Che" Guevara and other foreigners who had reached the rank of major in the rebel army to hold public office.

⁴ Francisco J. Ponte Domínguez, "El Acta de Independencia de Cuba," Revista Cubana, I, No.1 (January-June, 1968), pp. 46-47.

In the Constitutional Convention General Masó had led the opposition against the Platt Amendment.

A group of eight prominent leaders in the struggle for independence, including General Máximo Gómez, met in August of 1901 at the home of General Emilio Nufiez to decide which candidate they were going to support. After writing to both Estrada Palma and Masó asking for their views on the important issues and reviewing their answers, they decided to support the candidacy of Estrada Palma. General Gómez also suggested that Bartolomé Masó run for the vice-presidency in a united front candidacy, but Masó declined.

In his program of government, Estrada Palma stated that the people of Cuba and their government would in good faith comply with the stipulations of the treaty with the United States (meaning the Platt Amendment) and that the people of Cuba were confident that the people and government of the United States would respect Cuba's independence. As for internal economic policies, he advocated austerity, indicating that Cubans were people of moderate means. Estrada Palma also called for the future abolition of the Armed Forces:

We should have a degree of order such that the Army would become unnecessary by virtue of a high patriotic spirit in the orderly practice of the democratic institutions.⁵

Estrada Palma awaited the outcome of the elections in New York. He did not campaign personally in Cuba. A man of unquestionable integrity and thoroughly honest, he was not qualified for the responsibilities of chief executive in the stormy times of sharp political struggle that were to follow. He was an educator and not a politician. He was irritable, stubborn, and as opinionated as he was honest. Even his virtue as an honest man became a liability when he began to see himself as the only honest man in Cuba, and thus the only one fit to be president. He had spent too much time in the United States, was a United States citizen, and was not as well aware as he should have been of the politics of the island.

The chief difference between Estrada Palma and Masó was the matter of veterans' back pay. Masó wanted the Cuban Congress to accept without discussion the amount of payment that had been assigned by the Revolutionary Government and to honor the mandate of the Constitution to pay the salaries. Estrada Palma wanted the salaries reduced and insisted in a careful examination of the names on the payroll.

⁵ Tomás Estrada Palma, Carta-Programa September 7, 1901 (Santiago de Cuba: Imprenta El Cubano Libre, 1901).

Estrada Palma had the support of the most conservative elements in Cuba, as well as the support of General Máximo, Gómez and the most prominent leaders of the struggle for independence. General Bartolomé Masó appealed to the black voters and maintained a harder line against the United States and the Platt Amendment. In the end Masó and his followers decided to drop out of the elections and asked their supporters to abstain from voting, claiming that the elections had been rigged by General Wood.

Estrada Palma was thus elected without opposition on December 31, 1901. But the days prior to the election were filled with clashes between supporters of Masó and Estrada Palma. Even General Máximo Gómez was greeted at a rally for Estrada Palma with shouts of "death to the traitor" and the Masoistas even went as far as to stone the old man who had given so much of this life for Cuba. This was a bad start for Cuban politics after independence.

Historical Significance of this Period

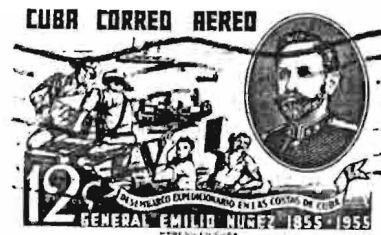
There are three significant developments during this four-year period in Cuban history. First, the veterans of the Army and their problems, i.e. back pay, pensions, employment, etc., became some of the major issues in Cuban politics. The debate on these issues was to last for many years. Second, the question of military expenditures also became a major political issue. Estrada Palma, representing those who wanted to spend limited resources in education and economic development instead of on weapons and soldiers, won the first elections. However, before long they found themselves unable to retain control of the country because the "orderly practice of the democratic institutions" they had hoped for did not materialize. Third, the initial police and military units were formed under American supervision. Some of the practices associated with the management of these organizations, particularly recruitment, were to contribute to years of political turmoil after independence. Finally, the peculiar relationship between Cuba and the United States which resulted from the Platt Amendment, led to anti-American feelings among Cubans and lent itself to abuse by corrupt politicians, both Cuban and American.



José Martí
Addressing Cuban exiles in Tampa, Fla.
in the 1890's to raise funds for the war



Maj. Gen. Bartolomé Masó y Márquez

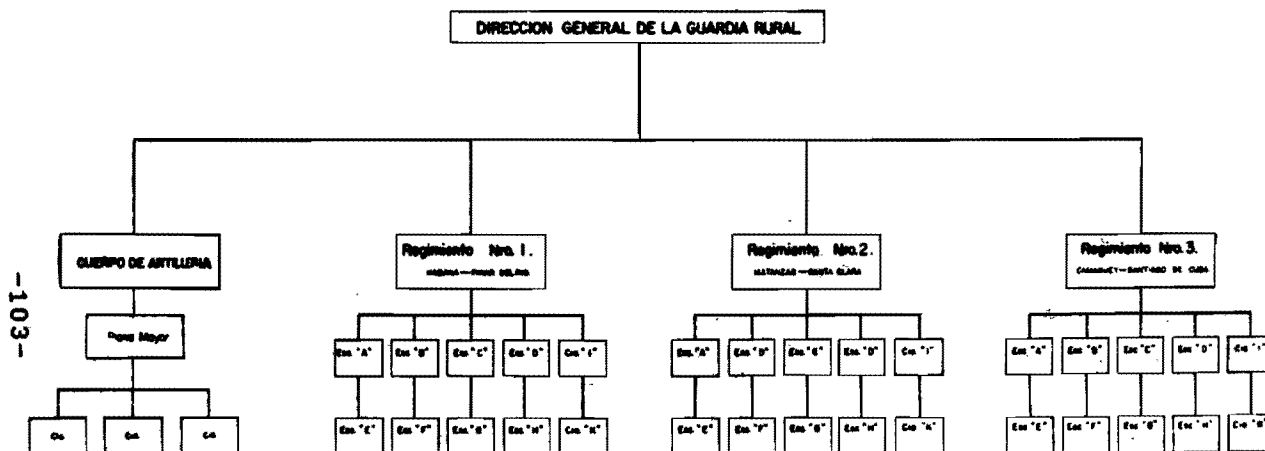


Cuban Postage Stamp
In memory of the expeditions from the
United States led by General Emilio Núñez
to deliver men, weapons and supplies to the
Cuban Army of Independence 1895-1896



Maj. Gen. Alejandro Rodríguez Velasco
First Chief of the Cuban Armed Forces
1901-1906

CUBAN ARMED FORCES 1902



-103-

The Cuban Armed Forces in 1902 consisted of the Artillery Corps and the Rural Guard. The Artillery Corps was divided into three companies and one general staff. In 1902, the Artillery Corps and the Rural Guard were united under one command, with Major General Alejandro Rodríguez as the Chief of Staff of both organizations. The Rural Guard consisted of three regiments. The 1st Regiment was headquartered at Camp Columbia in Havana and covered the provinces of Pinar del Rio, Havana and part of Matanzas. The 2nd Regiment was headquartered in Matanzas and covered the provinces of Matanzas and Las Villas. The 3rd Regiment had responsibility over the provinces of Camagüey and Oriente. The regimental headquarters was at Cuartel Moncada in Santiago de Cuba. Each regiment consisted of eight cavalry squadrons (A-H) and two infantry companies (I-K). The Rural Guard had 1,604 men and was deployed in 247 posts around the country.

THE REPUBLIC

VIII. Cuba's First Independent Administration

On May 20, 1902, Tomás Estrada Palma was sworn into office as the first President of the Cuban Republic and the four years of American occupation came to an end. Estrada Palma followed a conservative economic policy based on thrift, tight money, and obtained budget surpluses. He wanted to maintain a solvency level in the treasury by cutting down unnecessary government expenses and keeping the government payroll at a minimum. At the same time, his administration enjoyed a growing income as the economy recovered from the war years. An increase in the production of sugar and in foreign commerce brought about economic prosperity.

Estrada Palma was a good and honest President, despite his many shortcomings. Income surpassed expenses and the surplus in the treasury increased from less than a million dollars to over \$24 million at the end of his term in office. He increased the number of schools and teachers and spent 25 percent of the budget on education. There were over 500 more teachers than soldiers in Cuba, a situation never to be repeated again in Cuban history.

Estrada Palma and the Military

One of the principal problems faced by the Cuban Government was still the question of salaries and compensation of the veterans of the war. Finally in 1904 the Cuban Congress authorized the chief executive to negotiate a \$35 million loan from Speyer and Company of New York to pay the back salaries of the veterans. However, many veterans received a small share of the loan, because they had sold their claims at large discounts to scalpers, many of whom were leading politicians, congressmen and senators. Among the speculators were veteran Colonel Miguel Tarafa and Alfredo Zayas, both of whom were arrested for these activities.

The veterans and the Armed Forces, instead of playing a role as the leading defenders of Cuban independence and democracy, became vultures often at the expense of other veterans who were poor. A great accomplishment of the Estrada Palma Administration was to keep expenses for military personnel and armaments at a minimum. Considering the demands of a large number of unemployed veterans for posts in the government and in the military he handled the situation well.

The nation had a National Police force to control crime in the cities and the 3,020 Rural Guards to patrol the countryside. There was no army. However, since both of these police units were organized and trained by the United States during the occupation, the loyalty of many of the officers to the President was questionable. For that reason, the Artillery Corps, which had been basically a ceremonial unit, was expanded to six companies and a total of 619 men in 1904, and put under the direct command of the President. Estrada Palma wanted a body of men near him whom he could trust.¹

There was considerable labor unrest and the government used the Rural Guard and police force against the workers. Estrada Palma's Secretary of the Interior mobilized the Rural Guard against striking workers and even ordered a cavalry charge that resulted in many deaths and injuries. Some Cuban scholars have charged that provocateurs were used to instigate violence with the idea of triggering an American intervention and possibly the end of the Cuban Republic.

Labor unrest was in part the result of the frustration of unemployed Cuban veterans, particularly when Spanish immigrants were given employment by businessmen who were also Spaniards. The workers demanded protection for the native workers, regardless of race, and further demanded that more Cuban young people be hired as apprentices or assistants--especially in the tobacco industry. The Spanish workers were also organized into anarchist-led trade unions. They complained that the Cuban demand for preferential treatment only served to divide the working class. Violence erupted into clashes between police and striking workers and between workers and strikebreakers in the afternoon of November 19, 1902, in downtown Havana.

As a result of the clash between police and striking workers, the Mayor of Havana, Juan R. O'Farrill, discharged the chief of police, General Rafael de Cárdenas, for ordering a cavalry

¹ An example of the questionable loyalty of the officers of the Rural Guard is cited by Dr. Herminio Portell Vilá in his book Historia de Cuba en sus relaciones con los Estados Unidos y España. General Alejandro Rodríguez (an annexationist), the Chief of the Rural Guard, called on American Minister Squiers to complain about the increase of the Artillery Corps to the United States. When Mr. Squiers then visited the Cuban President to ask for the dissolution of the Artillery, he was told by Estrada Palma: "I want a body of men near me on whom I can rely absolutely in time of danger," Vol. 4, p. 385.

charge against the workers. The mayor also sent a letter to Congress favoring the demands of the workers.²

The clashes between police and workers continued until November 25th, when five people were killed, 114 wounded and 80 arrested in street fighting in downtown Havana. Secretary of the Interior, Dr. Diego Tamayo who, like the Mayor of Havana had given support to the striking workers, mobilized the Rural Guard against the workers. Recognizing the gravity of the situation, General Máximo Gómez, Juan Gualberto Gómez, Oreste Ferrara, and other leading veterans formed a commission to try to settle the dispute that they felt was a threat to Cuban independence. They asked the workers to return to work and elect a delegate in each factory to represent them in collective bargaining with the employers. The commission also asked that all factories be compelled to employ Cubans, without distinction of race, as apprentices.⁴

The peculiar relationship forced upon Cuba in 1902 through the Platt Amendment enabled Cuban politicians to use the threat of American intervention as a political weapon, thus producing the opposite results to those intended by the United States. Some individuals interested in an American intervention may have acted as provocateurs and instigated the violence, including some of Estrada Palma's own cabinet officials.

1905 General Elections

Estrada Palma decided to run for a second term and this led to additional unrest. War of Independence veteran General José Miguel Gómez was nominated by the Liberal Party to run against Estrada Palma and Alfredo Zayas as his running mate. Both men were corrupt and unscrupulous as were many of their followers. Zayas, for example, had been arrested for his participation in a conspiracy to defraud veterans of the back salaries and for adding fictitious names to the lists of veterans in order to claim the money for himself.

The political campaign was very violent. Supporters of the Liberal Party were fired from their government jobs and the Rural Guard and police were used time and time again to break

² "La Huelga General: sus proporciones alarmantes; motines en las calles," La Lucha, November 20, 1902, p.2.

³ "Terminación de la Huelga," La Lucha, November 26, 1902, p.2.

⁴ Leopoldo Horrego Estuch, Juan Gualberto Gómez: Un gran Inconforme (La Habana: Edit. La Milagrosa, 1954). 2nd ed., p. 179.

up meetings of supporters of Gómez and Zayas. At the end, the Liberals, in the tradition of the 1901 elections, dropped out of the race and Estrada Palma ran without opposition.

When the Liberal Party lost the 1905 presidential elections, they sought to annul the results by threatening to bring about an American intervention. When everything else had failed to make President Estrada Palma desist from serving a second term, the Liberals fomented an insurrection. The Cuban Government had only a tiny army at its disposal and was unable to put down the insurrection. As a last act of desperation the Cuban Government asked for American intervention in the hope that the Americans would support the Cuban Government.

The Revolution of 1906

The leadership of the Liberal Party made promises of reform to the different groups in Cuban society that were dissatisfied with the prevailing conditions during Estrada Palma's first term in office. These included blacks, veterans and members of the labor movement. Within a few weeks they were able to obtain a strong following, particularly among poor blacks.

Many blacks were dissatisfied with the administration of the first Cuban president. They complained of racial discrimination and demanded more government jobs. The discriminating practices, they claimed, took various forms: the police in Havana did not hire enough blacks and the few who had obtained jobs found it almost impossible to move up in the ranks. The Artillery Corps of the Army discriminated against blacks, and in the Rural Guard blacks were not able to obtain the rank of captain. They could not find well-paying jobs in the different departments of the government and the school system excluded poor black children. There were no blacks in the diplomatic corps and high-ranking officers of the Army of Independence were starving.

In the elections of 1905 the Liberal Party, opposing the reelection of Estrada Palma, promised the blacks that the existing inequalities would be corrected and urged them to take action against the government. A few months later, after Estrada Palma had been reelected, and starting about February of 1905, several groups of blacks began to attack Rural Guard posts, led by prominent leaders of the Liberal Party, including black politicians.

Post election agitation led to an uprising in August of 1906. Hundreds of blacks were drawn to the rebellion by promises to eliminate alleged discriminatory practices against them. Blacks, as well as whites, joined because the insurrection

provided an excuse to loot, steal and feel powerful because they had guns.

The military commanders proved unable to defeat the insurgents, in part because they were outnumbered and had to use many of their men to protect the cities and towns and could not go after the insurgents. By the middle of September the government situation was critical. The rebels were not challenging the government forces in open combat. Basically, they were engaged in gathering their forces and moving into areas from which the government forces retreated to go to the larger towns. Soon they displayed a tendency to destroy foreign property, possibly to force a U.S. intervention.

President Estrada Palma was convinced that should the United States intervene in Cuba, the intervention would support the Cuban Government. Unclear political intrigue at the U.S. Embassy by minor officials, in the absence of the Minister, led to the arrival in Havana of two U.S. warships requested by Estrada Palma.

The United States Intervenes

The Cuban Government officially asked for intervention to assist in the defeat of the insurgents. Unable to get a clear picture of what was going on in Cuba and thoroughly disgusted with his representatives there, President Theodore Roosevelt held a six-hour conference in Oyster Bay on September 14, 1906, with Secretary of the Navy Charles J. Bonaparte, Secretary of War William H. Taft and Acting Secretary of State Robert Bacon. From this conference came the decision to send Secretaries Taft and Bacon to Cuba to thoroughly investigate the situation and render such aid as they found necessary to bring about a cessation of hostilities and restoration of calm.

President Roosevelt made repeated appeals to President Estrada Palma for his cooperation, as well as to rebel leaders, to avoid military intervention. Estrada Palma held that to yield in any way to the insurgents with the backing of the United States would create a habit of insurrection. He charged:

Anything which fails to demonstrate to the insurgents and to the Cuban people in general that hereafter it will not be possible to disturb the public order is only to suspend the actual conflict until new elections.

Secretary Taft agreed that a dangerous precedent of temporizing and compromising with rebels against a constituted government could be established. But he felt that the Cuban

people were against the government and that it was necessary to arrive at a compromise. But the Cuban Government did not see it that way and would not agree to any compromise. Estrada Palma made up his mind to resign and the Cuban Congress could not reach a quorum, causing the collapse of the government and forcing a U.S. intervention.

The two members of the U.S. peace mission played into the hands of the interests that had produced the political crisis. The establishment of a U.S. Provisional Government in Cuba on September 29, 1906, after the resignation of the Cuban President because he refused to negotiate with insurgents resulted in a de facto recognition of belligerency rights to the insurgents, who were fighting against a constitutional government. The Cuban Government had surrendered to an armed rebellion. This settlement, instead of solving the political crisis, set a dangerous precedent. It was possible to predict further trouble in the future.

TELEGRAM,

(Sept 19) 1906

White House,

Washington.

URGENT TO CUBAN CONSUL.



President Tomás Estrada Palma

Assistant Secretary of State

President Palma, the Republic of Cuba, thru an official cable for American intervention because he cannot prevent rebels from entering cities and burning property. It is doubtful whether given when Congress convenes next Friday (tomorrow). President Palma has irrevocably resolved to resign and to deliver the Government of Cuba to the representative whom the President of the United States will designate as soon as sufficient American troops are landed in Cuba. This act on the part of President Palma to save his country from complete anarchy and imperative intervention came immediately. It may be necessary to land force of 25,000 to protect American property. Probably about 2,000 rebels outside Havana. Clearings also at camp of rebels; three sugar plantations destroyed. Forgetting all residents in Palma. Present President, Secretary of State, Secretary of War and

Standard.

IX. United States Intervention 1906-1909

Secretary of War William H. Taft issued a proclamation to the people of Cuba announcing that the President of the United States was establishing a Provisional Government in Cuba to restore order and protect life and property on September 29, 1906. This action was taken because Cuba had been left without a government by the irrevocable resignation of the President and the Vice President of the Republic of Cuba and the failure of the Cuban Congress to elect a successor.¹ Taft then assumed the title of Governor temporarily. A few days later Charles Magoon was named Provisional Governor of Cuba, as the United States moved to reestablish order and to prepare the country for new elections and resumption of independent government.

A distinguished Cuban scholar of the day, Enrique José Varona, observed that the insurgents and those who were committed to bringing about the end of the Cuban Republic had found her Achilles heel. Because the insurrection had put property in jeopardy that was owned by foreigners in Cuba, the United States intervened to restore peace. But instead of helping the Cuban Government as might have been expected, wrote Varona, the United States forced the government to abdicate.

What has taken place in Cuba is exactly the opposite of what might have been expected. The delegates sent by the President of the United States, after having informed themselves of the situation, accepted the demands of the insurgents and proposed them as the basis for compromise to the de jure government of the Republic. The government of the United States, in other words, demanded that the Cuban Government, which was officially recognized as the legal government of the country, surrender to an armed insurrection.²

Harold Howland wrote in Outlook that the organizers of the insurrection had "succeeded in their principal object--getting the other fellows out." According to Howland, the insurrection had been instigated by elements that were to profit by the intervention of the United States in Cuba to bring about the end of the Republic. Like Varona, he con-

¹ William Howard Taft, "To the People of Cuba," Gaceta Oficial September 29, 1906, p.1.

² Enrique José Varona, "El Tacón de Aquiles," La Discusión, October 1, 1906 (a free translation).

sidered the result of the mediation by the United States a mistake.³

Furthermore, one of the first acts of the new Provisional Government was the declaration of a general amnesty for political prisoners and rebels guilty of acts of violence and destruction during the insurrection. The insurgents were also allowed to keep the spoils of war, including the hundreds of horses they had stolen from their rightful owners.⁴

In December 1906 Governor Magoon then dismissed Congress and created two advisory commissions. One of the commissions, the Advisory Law Commission, was composed of subcommittees which were to revise the electoral system; prepare new laws to reorganize the municipal and provincial governments; prepare a civil service law, and revise the judiciary. The second commission was to advise the Governor on appointments to government positions to fill vacancies. This last commission was composed of leaders of the Liberal Party who had participated in the August rebellion, including: Faustino "Pino" Guerra, José Miguel Gómez, Alfredo Zayas, Juan Gualberto Gómez, José de Jesús Monteagudo, Demetrio Castillo Duany, Eduardo Guzmán, Ernesto Asbert, Tomás Rico and General García Velez.⁵

Corruption in the Provisional Administration

According to historian Charles Chapman, prominent Liberals were given jobs in the government with high salaries and nominal duties with the result that funds that Estrada Palma had so carefully saved were soon dissipated.⁶ Cuba was made a paradise for foreign companies which were given tax exemptions and handsome returns on their investments.

The corruption of the Magoon administration and poor management of the Provisional Government reached extreme and scandalous proportions; great fortunes were made by a small number of Americans and Cubans who were intimately linked to the regime. As the Havana Daily Telegraph put it, the

³ Harold F. Howland, "Saving a People from Themselves," Outlook, October 27, 1906, pp. 454-64.

⁴ "Full Amnesty Granted the Cuban Rebels," New York Times, October 10, 1906, p.3. Also "Thrifty Cuban Rebels Profit by Intervention; Permitted to keep Stolen Horses and Guns that will Shoot," New York Times, October 15, 1906, p.4, col.1.

⁵ Chapman, History, p. 253; also, Thomas, Cuba, p.484.

⁶ Chapman, History, p. 254.

Provisional Government was a "fiction, a burlesque on sovereignty, that has reduced Cuban independence to nothingness." The newspaper went on to say that the Cuban people became the victims of the "abominable adventure...the bellicose picnic," organized by the Liberals to overthrow Estrada Palma, with the wealth of their country shattered as a result.

The extent of the corruption has been well documented by several historians, as well as by contemporary newspapers, both in Cuba and the United States. Among those who obtained the greatest profits was Frank Steinhart, who had been the U.S. Consul General at the time of the 1906 insurrection, and who had been instrumental in bringing about the intervention. He became a stock-jobber, and became deeply involved in the poor management and corruption in the Provisional Government.⁸ Arthur Wigdil, an American who had lived in Cuba for several years wrote in an article for The Independent, that Steinhart and others who lived at the expense of Cuba acted like "human vultures." According to Wigdil, Steinhart had his private office in the anteroom of Governor Magoon's office, and was considered to be "the man behind the throne." When they took over, Cuba had no indebtedness. In three years they spent the surplus of \$23 million in the treasury, left the Cuban Government with about \$1 million and had created a bonded indebtedness of over \$50 million. They also secured several important business concessions in Cuba, such as the trackage right of way to the street car system in Havana.⁹

Birth of the Cuban Army

During the American Provisional Government, an army was created at great expense to the taxpayers. The insurgent leaders of 1906 were rewarded with jobs in its ranks. General Faustino "Pino" Guerra, one of the insurgent leaders, was named as Commander of the Army as a reward for his participation in that adventure. General José de Jesus Montegudo was given the command of the Rural Guard. In addition, several hundred participants in the insurrection were recruited into the new military service. Cuba began to have

⁷ "See How They Love One Another," Havana Daily Telegraph, August 20, 1907.

⁸ Woolley, "America's Bad Faith Toward Cuba," Pearson's Magazine, Vol. 23, No. 6 (June, 1910).

⁹ Wigdil, Arthur "Addition Without Division= Revolution," Independent, (June 20, 1912), p.1354.

more soldiers than teachers from that point on, a situation that exists to this day.

For the fiscal year 1906-1907, the size of the Army was 3,714. The following year, it was increased to 6,075 and by 1909 it was again increased to 8,778.

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Officers</u> | <u>Sergeants</u> | <u>Soldiers</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|-------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 1906-07 | 191 | 501 | 3,022 | 3,714 |
| 1908-09 | 201 | 687 | 5,187 | 6,075 |
| 1909-10 | 404 | 1,478 | 6,896 | 8,778 |

In 1906-07 there were 533 inhabitants in Cuba for every member of the Armed Forces. By 1909-1910 the ration had increased to one member of the Armed Forces for every 247 inhabitants. The cost of maintaining this military establishment also increased from \$2.4 million pesos to \$5.8 million pesos.

Black Restlessness Continues

The agitation that the 1906 revolution created and the bad precedent it set, together with the empty promises to the black population, led to a racial war in 1912. Blacks came away from the 1906 incident with a new hope that their demands would be met, especially since they had supported the party that had won.

A new black leadership developed among the rank-and-file blacks who had participated in the 1906 revolution and the struggle for independence. Although there were black political leaders in Congress, such as Martin Morúa Delgado, Juan Gualberto Gómez and Generoso Campos Marquetti, there were indications that new leaders were emerging.

By December 1906, the Headquarters of the Army of Cuban Pacification, the Military Information Division of the U.S. Army and the Cuban Secret Police reported rumors that blacks were dissatisfied, were holding gatherings in different parts of Cuba, and were talking of forming an independent black political party. Evaristo Estenoz and Pedro Ibonet emerged as the leaders of this new movement.

These two men were known to have participated in the War of Independence and to have been active in the trade union movement among construction workers and in the 1906 revolution. But they were not the only leaders. Local

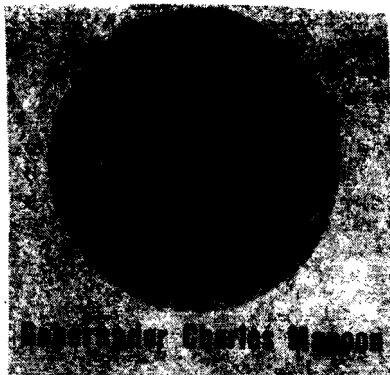
manifestos were issued by blacks leaders in several regions of the island calling for all blacks to form a united front to demand rights.

General Elections of 1909

As the 1909 elections approached all political groups and parties made promises to the blacks once again. Many black political leaders that held important positions argued that blacks should not divide Cuban society and form separate political groups. Liberals lined up blacks either to support the nomination of Alfredo Zayas or that of José Miguel Gómez for President. Even conservative politicians made promises of reform. Estenoz and his followers argued back that white Cubans had used the presence of the Americans in the past to deny blacks full participation in the government, and decided to participate in the elections under their own Partido Independiente de Color (PIC). They did not elect any of their candidates for office.

General José Miguel Gómez obtained the nomination of the Liberal Party and went on to win the elections. Zayas became his vice-presidential candidate after Gómez promised that he would not run for reelection and would support his own candidacy for president in 1912.

The second American intervention in Cuba ended on January 28, 1909, the anniversary of the birth of José Martí. Cuba resumed independent government under President José Miguel Gómez, who was inaugurated on that date. In 1906, he had been the leader of the rebellion against Estrada Palma, and had been elected President in the elections of 1906 which were supervised by the United States Provisional Government.



EVARISTO G. DE ESTENOZ

X. José M. Gómez and the Race War of 1912

General José Miguel Gómez took office as President of the Republic in 1909, as a poor man. In a four-year period as president he is alleged to have made a huge fortune at the expense of the country. The methods he and his friends used included the evasion of customs taxes, diversion of funds from public work programs, kick-backs on concessions to foreign companies and large purchases of military equipment to strengthen the Army, which was created under the American Provisional Government. The Army also served as a means to repay favors by providing jobs to political allies. Groups which were considered enemies of the state were also endangering the opportunity for quick profits by those in power. The tendency was to get rid of them.

Changes in Cuban Military Leadership

Rumors of revolutionary plots prompted President Gómez to place men of his confidence in all important civilian and military positions. The President replaced key military officers with close personal friends.

During the Provisional Government, General Faustino "Pino" Guerra had been named Commander-in-Chief of the Cuban Army as a reward for his participation in the 1906 "August Revolution" against Estrada Palma. He was a member of the Zayista faction of the Liberal Party and had campaigned for Alfredo Zayas in 1908, before a Liberal coalition was formed with Gómez as a candidate for President and Zayas as his running mate. Although he was also a friend of the President, Gómez did not trust him in such an important position. On October 22, 1910, as General Guerra was leaving the Presidential Palace after a friendly meeting with Gómez, he was attacked by some unknown assassins and was wounded in the leg. A few days later the general resigned from his post as Commander of the Army.¹

General José de Jesús Monteagudo, who had commanded the Rural Guard, was then placed in command of the Army, the Rural Guard and the Artillery Corps. General Monteagudo had fought during the War of Independence under the command of Lieutenant General Antonio Maceo, who personally gave him his commission as a brigadier general. In 1908 he became a division commander. In 1901 he was a delegate to the Constitutional Convention and was later elected to the Senate from Santa Clara Province in the first national elections.

¹ Chapman, History, p.299.

in addition. General Monteagudo was also a close personal friend of José Miguel Gómez.

Creation of the Cuban Navy

During the administration of Tomás Estrada Palma in 1902, a Coast Guard was formed to patrol the Cuban coast, which is over 1,500 miles long. It was placed under the direction of the Secretariat of the Treasury. It was started with several small vessels captured by the United States from Spain in 1898 and inherited by Cuba on May 20, 1902. These were the old "Baracoa," which was renamed "Céspedes," and the old "Intrepido," which was renamed "Maceo." Two other ships were named "Agramonte" and "Martí." Five additional 25- to 30-ton ships were ordered from United States shipyards. They were named "Abeja," "Abejorro," "Avispa," "Araña" and "Alacrán."

In 1905 the Coast Guard was increased with the purchase of the 300-ton tug boat "Humberto Rodríguez," which was renamed "Yara." Another 500-ton gunboat was ordered from Germany and named "Baire." It arrived in 1907. The Coast Guard was further expanded in 1907 under the Provisional Government with the purchase of three more ships in the United States. They were named "Hatuey" (600 tons), "Enrique Villuendas" (125 tons) and "20 de Mayo" (150 tons).

In 1909 José Miguel Gómez obtained congressional approval to convert the Coast Guard to a regular Navy (Marina de Guerra Nacional). Several more ships were ordered from foreign shipyards, including a school ship and two medium-size gunboats. These ships were the 2,055-ton cruiser "Cuba" and the 2,200-ton school ship "Patria" (both made at the Philadelphia shipyards); and the 200-ton British-made "10 de Octubre" and "24 de Febrero." In addition, four more 90-ton gunboats were ordered from the Havana shipyards and were named "Pinar del Río," "Havana," "Matanzas" and "Villas." Most of these new ships had joined the force by 1912.

The Navy was organized into two main districts, North and South. The main bases on the North coast were located at La Esperanza, Mariel, Cárdenas, Caibarién and Antilla, with headquarters in Havana. The Southern District was headquartered at Cienfuegos and had bases at Batabanó, Nueva Gerona, Cienfuegos and Santiago de Cuba. The Navy was authorized to have 149 officers and 1,014 enlisted men.

Black Restlessness

Many events in the first ten years after independence led to a race war in 1912, in which several thousand blacks were killed. The antecedents of this war could be traced as far back as the Ten Years War (1868-1878), when Cubans failed to obtain their independence from Spain, in part due to racial and regional antagonisms. But these problems were solved due to the efforts of José Martí, the leader of the Cuban independence movement that declared war against Spain in 1895. During the War of Independence (1895-1898), Cubans were able to unite regardless of race to fight for their goal of obtaining self-government. Blacks and whites fought together, and many blacks were able to obtain important leadership positions in the movement for independence.²

After the war ended in 1898, and during the American occupation from 1898 to 1902, some of the old racial antagonisms resurfaced. Whether or not the American presence was to blame or whether the United States presence simply became an easy excuse for Cuban racists to discriminate against blacks is difficult to evaluate eighty years after the events of this period. But one thing is clear, after Cuba became independent in 1902, racial problems continued and seem to have increased during the administration of President Tomás Estrada Palma. Unemployment which affected many veterans, a large number of whom were black, made the situation worse.

In 1906 the Liberal Party made promises of reform to the black population if they were able to take power. The insurrection that followed led to an American intervention and some of the members of the Liberal Party, including blacks who had participated in the insurrection, obtained employment. Many joined the newly created Cuban Army, which was formed under the auspices of the American Provisional Government. Other blacks, the vast majority, did not obtain the benefits that they had expected from their participation in the 1906 insurrection, and decided to form their own political party to press for reform. Their party became a new tool which could be used to manipulate the black population by politicians of all political parties, as well as by sinister elements who wanted to see the end of Cuba as an independent nation.

The three years preceding the 1912 race war provided new elements that led to the tragedy. Many factors, including the growing desire for power of many politicians who began to

² Many Cuban blacks also fought on the Spanish side as "guerrilleros."

see elected office as a way to get rich quick, and the increasing militarism in the country contributed to creating the conditions which resulted in the war.

Black Leaders Arrested

On February 6, 1910, Evaristo Estenoz was arrested for breaking a law regulating the press. He was charged with inciting blacks to attack whites and create disorders. In the meantime Senators Martín Morúa Delgado, Antonio González Pérez and Tomás Recio presented an amendment to Article 17 of a proposed electoral law which outlawed political parties and organizations based on race, class, place of birth or profession, which was obviously directed against the leaders of the Independent Black Party created by Estenoz and his followers in 1908. After a lengthy debate on February 14, 1910, the amendment was approved by a vote of 12 to 3 in the Senate.

A few months later, on the night of September 22, 1910, Evaristo Estenoz and the principal leaders of the Partido Independiente de Color were arrested and charged with membership in an illegal organization. The charge was later changed to an indictment for conspiracy with the intent to bring about a revolution. (A violation of Article 244 of the Cuban Penal Code.) The Cuban Army and Navy were mobilized to prevent any outbreaks of violence throughout the country.

Veteran Political Agitation

During the summer of 1911, a new move against President Gómez began to take form. The National Council of Veterans, under the leadership of General Emilio Nuñez, began a campaign to oblige the government to discharge people who had been sympathizers of the Spanish Colonial Government during the War of Independence and veterans of the Spanish Armed Forces from jobs in the civil service. They charged that while veterans of the Cuban Army of Independence were unemployed, Spanish loyalists were being hired by the government.

This veteran dissatisfaction came close to initiating a revolution in January of 1912. However, when the United States Secretary of State warned the Cuban Government on January 17th that any insurrection in Cuba could bring about another intervention, the veterans quieted down.³ Wishing to avoid the possibility of intervention, the National Council of

³ "Warning Note to Cuba," Independent, Vol. 72 (January 25, 1912), pp. 170-71 and 208-209.

Veterans reached an agreement with the government in March by which they promised to stop their campaign against Spanish sympathizers. By then many of the officials in question had been removed from office and the Congress had agreed to suspend the civil service law for eighteen months until it could be reformed.⁴

The 1912 Political Campaign

In April of 1912 the Liberal Party held its national convention to select a candidate for the presidential elections scheduled for November of that year. The three principal candidates were Dr. Alfredo Zayas, General Ernesto Asbert and General Eusebio Hernández. Although President Gómez had promised that he would not run for re-election, he was still considered a possible candidate.

General Ernesto Asbert was the Governor of the Province of Havana and was considered President Gómez's protegee and his choice for the nomination. Although General Eusebio Hernández, a professor in the School of Medicine of the University of Havana, had a good record as a veteran of the War of Independence, he did not have a large following. Dr. Alfredo Zayas, the Vice President of the Republic, was the favorite of the party and obtained the nomination by a vote obtaining 80 of the 82 delegate votes in the convention on April 15, 1912. The Conservative Party renominated General Mario García Menocal, its 1908 candidate.

The Conservative Party was aware that it represented a minority of the voters and that their only hope to win lay in divisions within the Liberal Party. They also expected to win the black vote because of Conservative support on behalf of the black radicals who had been arrested in 1910. Conservative Congressman Freyre de Andrade was the legal representative of the Independent Black Party and its leaders in their court action; other leaders of the Conservative Party had contributed bail money for the leaders of the black party whose arrests had been ordered by the government. They also went to the President to intercede on behalf of Estenoz and his followers. Blacks represented 172,610 voters out of 511,519 eligible voters, or a 34.1 percent of the electorate. Both parties were well aware that they would play an important part in the elections.

As early as February, 1912, followers of Estenoz were once again becoming restless and there was renewed agitation in black neighborhoods. This continued through the next two months until in early May, the National Executive Committee

⁴ Chapman, History. p.307.

of the black party met in Havana to review the situation and design a new strategy to obtain the repeal of the Morua Delgado amendment. Armed insurrection was proposed by the leadership.

The Black Insurrection

An insurrection was planned to start at sunset on Monday, May 20th, the tenth anniversary of Cuban independence. Although the movement was to begin simultaneously in all parts of the island, the heaviest concentration of forces would be in Oriente province, because there the proportion of blacks was higher than in the rest of the island. In addition, the mountainous terrain provided a more favorable ground for guerrilla warfare.

Several hundred blacks joined the insurrection. The government rapidly suppressed the movement in the cities and towns through mass arrests of radicals but the insurrection continued in the countryside. Estimates of the number of rebels in the field in the first days of the uprising range between 750 and 2,000 men. Most of them were in Oriente, near the town of La Maya, and the cities of Guantánamo and Holguín. In Las Villas province a substantial number of insurgents was also reported near the towns of Sagua la Grande and Cruces.

The action in the first hours consisted of preparations by both sides for a long struggle, with only a few minor engagements. The insurgents were pillaging for horses, food and arms. Most of the government troops were at Army Headquarters at Camp Columbia outside Havana, more than 500 miles away from the war zone in Oriente. This forced the Army to make preparations for transporting troops and providing them with weapons and supplies far away from their base.

The first 300 troops left Camp Columbia for Oriente by armored train on the evening of May 20th. They were followed the next morning by another train with 500 more troops, which included cavalry and artillery. The new Cuban Navy cruiser Cuba, which had just been delivered to the government, departed from Havana for Oriente later that day with 600 infantry and artillerymen. The following day the sister ship Patria sailed with an infantry battalion and one company equipped with rapid fire guns on board. By May 24th, the government had more than 2,000 men in Oriente with orders to deal drastically with the insurrection.⁵

⁵ An interesting article on the new Cuban Navy was published a few months before the uprising, "Launching of Cuba's ships Cuba and Patria," Bulletin of the Pan American Union, 33 (November, 1911), pp.865-70.

Reaction of the Council of Veterans to the Insurrection

The National Council of Veterans met in Havana to study the situation and define its position in the crisis created by the uprising. The meeting was presided over by a panel of prominent generals and colonels, including: Emilio Nuñez, Mario García Menocal, Agustín Cebreco, Alfredo Rego, Juan E. Ducasse, Lara Miret, Miguel Aranda, Alfredo Despaigne, Tomás Olivera, Saumeli Suárez, Javier de la Vega, Cosme de la Torriente and Sánchez Figueras.

The composition of this group is interesting in itself and deserves some comment. Generals Juan Ducasse and Lara Miret were arrested in September of 1907 for having conspired to start a rebellion against the United States Provisional Government then in power. Their move had been strongly condemned by the majority of the people in Cuba and by the Council of Veterans. Now the same men were out of jail and accepted as leaders by the very persons who had criticized their earlier actions. A few days later Ducasse was arrested on suspicion in connection with the black insurrection.

Generals Mario García Menocal, Alfredo Rego and Agustín Cebreco (a black) urged the Council to join the government in taking drastic measures to put down the rebellion. The Council voted to take this action and communicated their resolution to President Gómez to create a volunteer force of several hundred men to fight on behalf of the government. Although the offer was initially declined, on May 24th the government opened offices to recruit volunteers.

The Race War

The first and only major action of the insurrection occurred on the evening of June 1st, when about 800 insurgents took advantage of the fact that the troops at La Maya, a town in Oriente, had gone out on patrol leaving a small force behind. During the attack on the town, the rebels set fire to a house where the soldiers and volunteers had taken refuge. The fire spread quickly to other houses destroying the entire town.⁶ An irony of this engagement is that the majority of the inhabitants of the town were blacks, many of whom were veterans who had built their homes with the money they had

⁶ "Cuban Rebels Loot and Burn La Maya," New York Times, June 3, 1912, p.4. Also: Beaupre to Knox, June 2, 1912, National Archives Building, GRDS, RG59, telegrams received 11:06:15 p.m. (File 837.00/801) and 11:30 p.m. (File 837.00/864).

recently received as back pay for Army service during the War of Independence. Because of this fire, more than eighty black families lost all their possessions. Later, they were also to be victims of the savage Army counterattack.

Several American Navy ships were sent to Cuba and some marines were landed in different parts of the island to protect American property. President Gómez was warned that unless the insurrection was controlled soon, there was a strong possibility of a full-fledged intervention. Faced with the threat of American intervention, President Gómez immediately took steps to crush the insurrection. He ordered Major General Monteagudo, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, to take personal command of the troops in Oriente and to send more men and supplies. By June 1st, there were more than 5,000 well-armed and trained regular troops and an undetermined number of volunteers in Oriente.

After the La Maya action, the rebels retreated into the hills, pursued by the Army. While the retreating force was resting, the Army surrounded the encampment with mountain guns, machineguns, cavalry and infantry. The Army opened fire, killing more than a hundred rebels. Included in the large number of casualties were the families of some of the rebel troops who had accompanied their men, including women and children.⁷ The attack was followed by cold-blooded mass executions of rebels, as well as black civilians. These reports of mass executions were confirmed by the American Consul in Santiago and were reported to Washington by Minister Beaupre.⁸ General Monteagudo, Chief of Staff of the Army, claimed that the operations in the mountains had taken on the characteristics of a hunt and it was impossible to tell how many blacks had been killed by the troops. It is estimated that about 3,000 blacks were killed.

Both leaders of the uprising, Estenoz and Ibonet, were killed. The Army reported the death of Evaristo Estenoz in battle on June 27, 1912, when he and a small group of his men were surprised by an Army patrol commanded by Lieutenant Lutgardo de la Torre. On July 17th, Pedro Ibonet was captured and shot by Lieutenant Arsenio Ortiz. The bodies of both men were taken to the Moncada Army barracks and exhibited to the public and the press.

Ortiz rose in rank in the Army until he became military supervisor in Oriente province under President Gerardo Machado (1926-1933). He also built a reputation as a common criminal

⁷ "El Combate de Yarayabo," La Lucha, June 4, 1912, includes full text of official report by General F. Mendieta.

⁸ Beaupre to Knox, June 4, 1912, National Archives Building, GRDS, RG50, Despatch No. 262, File 837.00/711.

and hired killer. During Machado's dictatorship he also built up an impressive record as a murderer because of the atrocities he committed against opponents of the regime.⁹

Epilogue

The background of the race war of 1912 has been investigated by several authors and even by the U.S. Congress.¹⁰ Who or what was behind the insurrection is not known with certainty. President Gómez may have tried to use the blacks to pave the way for him to run for reelection, but this has never been confirmed. The black leaders may have taken money from annexionists, both Cuban and foreign, in order to trigger an American intervention, but this also has never been confirmed. Marxist writers have concluded that the black movement had a typical petit-bourgeois ideology that revealed some influence of anarchist thinking, as in the calls for uncoordinated violence. At least one Marxist author, Sergio Aguirre, has claimed that the blacks had a deep ideological disorientation and made many fundamental mistakes.¹¹

⁹ Public protests led to his arrest, court-martial and conviction. The Machado-controlled Congress later pardoned him, and Machado further rewarded him with the job of Chief of the Military Police in Havana, where he continued his brutal killings. Among his victims were the three sons of Congressman Freyre de Andrade, who were killed in cold blood in 1932.

Ortiz was a large mulatto who represented the worst of the Cuban military establishment. Incidentally, at the time of the 1912 uprising, Machado was President Gómez's Secretary of the Interior (Gobernación) and controlled the Secret Police. After his long, sordid career, he was regarded by many as a professional killer. Ortiz left Cuba in 1933, with money provided by Machado for his services. For additional information see chapter XII.

¹⁰ U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on Foreign Relations. Hearings pursuant to S. Res. 335 authorizing the Committee on Foreign Relations to investigate whether any interests in the United States have been or are now engaged in inciting rebellion in Cuba and Mexico. Sixty-Second Congress, Second Session, 1912.

¹¹ Sergio Aguirre, "El cincuentenario de un gran crimen," Cuba Socialista Año II (December, 1962), pp. 34-35.

One thing is clear however. The insurrection of 1906 and the American intervention that followed created a bad precedent. Cuban opposition leaders learned that if they could start up an insurrection the U.S. may intervene and place them in power. But this time the Cuban Armed Forces had been expanded and counted with many more resources than in 1906. The size of the Army had increased from 3,714 men in 1906 to 10,455 men. While only one in 533 Cubans was in the military in 1906, by 1912 one of each 226 Cubans was in uniform. The budget for the military had increased from \$2.4 million pesos in 1906, to \$7.01 million in 1912. The race war provided an opportunity to the Cuban commanders to use their new weapons, including French made Shnaider Cannet field artillery of 75 mm, armored trains and new naval vessels.



General José de Jesús Monteagudo
Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces



General Pablo Mendieta
Chief of the Infantry Brigade
Cuban Army

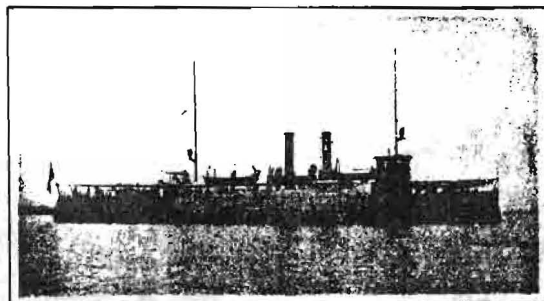


General José Miguel Gómez
President of Cuba
1908-1912

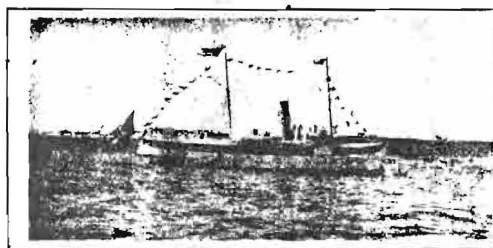


Lt. Arsenio Ortiz
An example of the worse
in the Cuban Military,
guilty of numerous crimes
between 1912 and 1933

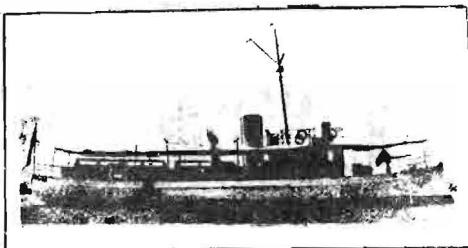
CUBAN NAVY AND COAST GUARD



CRUCERO "CUBA"
1912



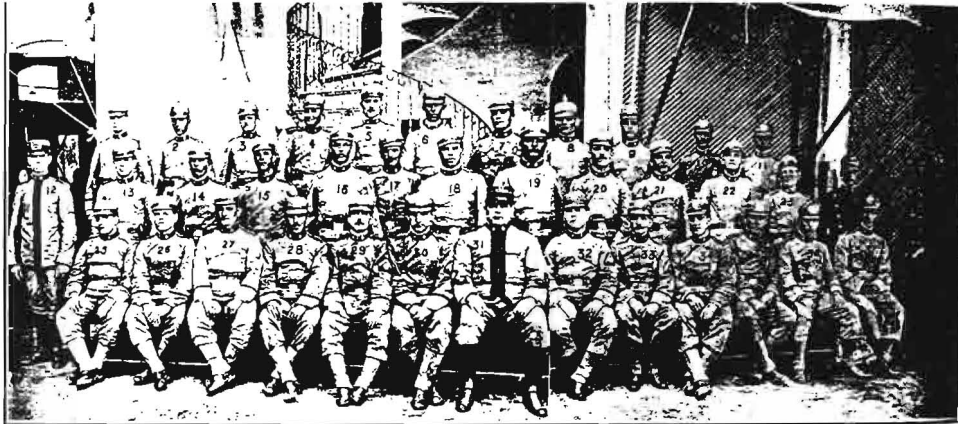
CANONERO "YARA"
1905



CANONERO "PINAR DEL RIO"
1912

The Cuban Coast Guard was created in 1902 with a small number of gunboats captured by the U.S. Navy from Spain in 1898. It was under the jurisdiction of the Treasury Secretariat. Some additional small gunboats were ordered from the U.S. and Germany in 1905 ranging from 25-to-150 tons of displacement. Additional gunboats were purchased in 1907 ranging from 125-to-150 tons. In 1909, President José Miguel Gómez created the Cuban Navy (Marina de Guerra Nacional) and transferred all the assets of the old Coast Guard to the new institution. Several new ships were ordered to increase the size of the Navy. The cruiser "Cuba" (2,055 tons) was built in the Philadelphia shipyards. The school ship "Patria" (2,200 tons) was also bought from the United States. Two additional ships of 200-tons each were bought in Great Britain. They were the "10 de Octubre" and "24 de Febrero." Four more ships of 90-tons each were built at the Havana shipyards. These ships joined the Cuban Navy in 1912. Several of the original ships served for many years.

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL POLICE FORCE IN HAVANA
1917



1-Juan Arias.
2-Marcelino Cartaya.
3-Angel Torras.
4-José Vila.
5-Gerardo Diaz.
6-Secundino Montana.
7-José Bello.
8-Santos Delgado
9-Pablo Puig.
10-Francisco Caparrós.
11-Luis Rodriguez.
12-Antonio Hernández. (Sargento).
13-Santiago Castellanos.

14-Juan Delgado.
15-Gerardo Lugo.
16-Gonzalo Fresneda.
17-Enrique Pouguet.
18-Juan Viola.
19-José Suárez.
20-Carmelo Llopis.
21-Oscar Valdés.
22-Pablo Aragón.
23-Amado León.
24-Isidro Ferrer.
25-Raúl Pardo.
26-Antonio Hoyos.

27-Miguel Salazar.
28-Eduardo Corrales.
29-Antonio Delgado. (Vigilante 1º.)
30-Pedro Machado. (Vigilante 1º.)
31-Alfredo Alvarez. (Teniente.)
32-Enrique Torres. (Vigilante 1º.)
33-Domingo Garcia. (Vigilante 1º.)
34-José Galindo.
35-Ramiro Alvarez.
36-Antonio González.
37-Antonio Cabrerizo.
38-Fidel Marrero. (Sargento).



1-Antonio Hernández. (Sargento).
2-Fernando Sierra.
3-Pedro Ripol.
4-Julio Rodriguez.
5-Julio Prats.

6-Antonio Hernández.
7-Ramón Paula.
8-Victorino Presne.
9-Pablo Mas.
10-Joaquín Morana.

11-Agustín Ruiloba.
12-Alejandro Herrero.
13-Carlos Rojas.
14-Fidel Marrero. (Sargento).
15-Alfredo Alvarez. (Teniente).

XI. Cuba from 1912 to 1924

While the rest of the world engaged in an arms race which led to WWI, Cuba continued to function in mediocre politics, with the military continuing to take an active role in civilian affairs. After the black insurrection in 1912, general elections were held and President José Miguel Gómez was replaced by another veteran general of the War of Independence. General Mario García Menocal, a member of the Conservative Party, took office in 1912 and served until 1918, when presidential elections were held once again. García Menocal had graduated with an engineering degree from Cornell University. After the War of Independence he had served as Chief of Police in Havana before going to work in the private sector.

The elections of 1918 were very close and both President García Menocal, who had run for reelection, and Liberal Party candidate Alfredo Zayas claimed victory. Zayas was probably the winner. To settle the question, a run-off election was scheduled for Oriente and Santa Clara provinces on February 14, 1917. But before the elections could take place, the Liberals claimed that the elections were going to be dishonest and rigged by the Conservatives. A day before the elections, several Army officers were arrested in Havana on charges of conspiracy to overthrow the government. This was followed by the start of an insurrection by members of the Liberal Party, very much along the same lines as they had done in 1906. This time, however, the government countered the insurrection with a large military force and was able to crush it before it was out of hand. As in the previous uprising, many veterans of the War of Independence joined the anti-government forces.

The Insurrection of 1917

An attempted coup failed at Camp Columbia, the headquarters of the Cuban Armed Forces. Members of the Liberal Party took to the fields in Las Villas, Matanzas, Havana and Pinar del Rio provinces. Former President José Miguel Gómez joined the rebels in Las Villas, in the same general area where he had commanded Cuban forces during the War of Independence. In Camagüey, Army commanders led by Colonels Solano and Quiñones took up arms against the government and were able to take control of the province with their troops. In Oriente Majors Rigoberto Fernández and Luis Loret de Mola, as well as troops at the Guantánamo barracks, joined the insurrection. Many other officers and men in other points of Oriente, known as Cuba's traditional "hot bed," joined the Liberals. To expand

their forces, they released prisoners from jail, and passed out weapons to civilian members of the Liberal Party.

Following the pattern that had been established in 1906 to trigger U.S. intervention, some American property was burned or damaged. Before long several gunboats showed up and American troops were landed at several strategic points to protect American-owned property. The U.S. Government, however, did not intervene directly this time. Instead, it supported the Cuban Government by providing guns and ammunition.¹

Before long the insurgents were on the run. José Miguel Gómez was arrested and taken to prison in Havana. Major Rigoberto Fernández escaped to Haiti on March 31, 1917. By May 20, 1917, most of the Liberals who had taken up arms had either been captured or had turned themselves in to the Rural Guard or the Army.

The significance of this insurrection in 1917 is that for the first time a military coup was attempted against the government. Camp Columbia entered Cuban politics as the most important barracks in Cuba and the target of every plot and counter plot to take control of the government. This was also the second instance in which the armed forces had been able to defeat an uprising.

In an article published in Worlds Week George Marvin, an American reporter who had covered the events in Cuba in February of 1917, discussed his experiences on the island. Marvin explained that there was an army of office seekers who had irreconcilable political differences with their political opponents - they were competing for the same jobs. Both sides engaged in electoral fraud and any election won by any opponent was ipso facto called corrupt. Marvin also had a lot to say about President García Menocal. He describes the President as an honest man, who worked 12-hour days and who was still a general at heart. He had directed every military movement of the armed forces and acted as his own Chief of Staff, holding the Army loyal. But despite García Menocal's personal honesty, like many other Cuban politicians, he allowed his personal friends and political allies to benefit from jobs in the public administration. The Liberal "revolutionaries," as in previous revolutions, led movements that degenerated into mere disorders.²

1 The United States sold 10,000 rifles and 2 million rounds of ammunition to the Cuban Government at the outset of the insurrection. Source: Jorge I. Domínguez, Cuba: Order and Revolution (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 16.

2 George Marvin, "Keeping Cuba Libre," Worlds Week, (September, 1917), pp.553-567. For additional information on

President Garcia Menocal retained power and was declared the winner in the elections of 1916. He served a second term in office until 1920. His second administration covered a period of rapid economic growth, when thousands of new European immigrants had to be imported to harvest the sugar cane and other crops because there was not enough manpower in Cuba to do the job. Cubans did not want to do the heavy task of working in the cane fields.

Reorganization of the Cuban Military

The size of the Cuban military establishment continued to grow under President Garcia Menocal. A new Army Law was passed by Congress in 1915, reorganizing the military into:

- 1 General Staff
- 6 Cavalry Regiments
- 1 Infantry Regiment
- 1 Artillery Regiment
- Sanitary (Medical) Service
- Auditor General Staff

The number of members of the military increased by 1915 as follows:

| Year | Officers | Sergeants | Soldiers | Total |
|---------|----------|-----------|----------|--------|
| 1912-13 | 448 | 1,782 | 8,225 | 10,455 |
| 1914-15 | 445 | 1,782 | 8,700 | 10,927 |

The ratio of soldiers per inhabitant increased from one for every 247 residents to one per every 229 residents of the island. The military budget increased to \$7.14 million pesos in 1915. A military academy to train young men to enter the military as second lieutenants began to graduate a class every year, starting in 1913. But the new, young officers had very little opportunity to move up in rank due to the large number of veterans who were still dominating the higher ranks in the military, even though often they did not have formal military education. In addition, political contacts were increasingly used to promote officers without respect for time in grade or other factors. Competition for appointments through exams was introduced, but was only relatively effective in the lower ranks.

the insurrection of 1917, see "Civil War in Cuba," Independent, (February 26, 1917), p. 344.

The National Police

By 1917 Cuba had an effective police force in the capital and outlying districts. The police force in Havana had been formed in 1899, under the auspices of the American Provisional Government of the island. Veterans of the Cuban Army of Independence were hired and trained by American officers, including a Mr. McCullough, who had served as a police officer in the United States. Under his direction, four inspection districts were created in Havana. Each district was divided into 11 precincts commanded by a captain, four lieutenants and four sergeants. The force had a detective bureau and managed the city jail.

Under the administration of General Ludlow (U.S. Army), a police manual was prepared for the force. General Mario García Menocal was named to the post of Chief of Police. Several U.S. Army officers served as Superintendents of Police between the time the force was created in 1899 and the departure of the United States on May 20, 1902. They were Captain Pitcher, Major Louis V. Caziart and Captain Foltz. After a short tenure as Chief of Police, García Menocal resigned and was replaced by General Rafael de Cárdenas.

After independence the police were reorganized. The force had a Chief, a Deputy Chief, who also performed the task of Police Inspector, two District Inspectors, 23 captains, 61 lieutenants, 62 sergeants, 100 police privates first class and 1,283 police privates. Several captains were employed in administrative positions, which included those of Paymaster, Director of the Police Academy, two were physicians, and three were employed as assistants to the City Mayor, the Secretary of Government (Interior), and the Chief of Police. The city was divided into three districts and each district had a number of stations and substations.

The Detective Bureau was reorganized as the "Secret Police," and the entire department was placed under the Secretariat of Government (Interior). The regulations published under Military Orders 156 and 181 of 1901 were ratified on August 18, 1913. After Mario García Menocal and Rafael de Cárdenas, who ran the force until 1906, several other veterans of the Army of Independence served as Chief of Police. They were: General Armando Sánchez Agramonte, Colonel Manuel Piedra, Colonel Charles Aguirre, General Armando J. Riva, General Armando Sánchez Agramonte for a second term, and Colonel Julio R. Sanguily y Echarte.

It became normal for officers of the Armed Forces to be detailed to the position of Chief of Police or other duties in the police force. In fact, in future years, the Rural Guard

and the Permanent Army were to be only an extension of the police. All members of the Armed Forces were required to carry a gun at all times and to act as police officers in the presence of a crime. By the same token, the police were also viewed as an integral part of the Armed Forces.

Cuba in WWI

Cuba declared war on Germany and its allies on April 7, 1917, becoming the first country in Latin America to do so. This was understandable considering the close relationship between the United States and Cuba and the importance of Cuban sugar production to the war effort. As a result of the world conflict and internal circumstances in Cuba, the Army was reorganized in 1916 and the Congress passed a law creating a universal compulsory service system. The military draft, however, was never put into effect, although registration of young men was carried out. The population did not accept the concept of conscription, because among other things, it would have forced the middle class and the wealthy to participate in what was becoming a profession for the poor.

Cuban participation was limited to providing protection to Cuban and allied shipping near the Cuban coasts against German submarines. Cuba did not provide combat troops to participate directly in the war.

President Menocal created a Defense Commission to direct the Cuban war effort. The National Defense Board of the United States sent Henry Morgan to Cuba in 1917 to study the Cuban economic situation, particularly in reference to the war economy and Cuba's contribution to the allied effort. Morgan's report was not very positive due to his assessment that Cuban workers were not as productive as they could be in the sugar harvest and would not work as hard as imported temporary workers from neighboring islands such as Jamaica and Haiti. Morgan returned to Cuba in 1918 as a commissioner of the War Trade Board. The problem he investigated this time were the frauds in the Cuban customs with the import and export permits. It seems that critical goods were being imported by Cuba, particularly food, and were being re-exported to other countries at tremendous profits. Some of the goods reached Germany and its allies by way of Spain.

The size of the Cuban military was increased as a result of the war and also due to internal conflicts in Cuba. President Garcia Menocal had just faced an insurrection when he ran for reelection and possibly he expected more problems in the future. By 1919, the size of the Army had been increased from 10,927 in 1915, to 17,178, of which 687 were officers and 2,964 sergeants. One of every 165 Cubans was in uniform and the budget of the military was increased to \$13.8

million. An Air Force Service was also added to the Army. The Cuban Navy consisted of 21 ships, most of which were small coast guard units. The Chief of Staff of the Army was Brigadier General José Martí y Zayas Bazán, son of the Cuban patriot who had led the movement for independence.

Elections of 1920

Elections were held once again in 1920, in part at the insistence of the United States, which was increasingly concerned about the turmoil in Cuba, as well as the corruption which had picked up during and after WWI. General José Miguel Gómez, the former president, ran again for office on the Liberal Party ticket. Alfredo Zayas dropped out of the Liberal Party and formed the Popular Party to run for the office of president. With the support of the Conservatives, Zayas finally managed to get elected to the presidency, a job he had been seeking since 1905. The elections took place under the watchful eyes of General Enoch Crowder, who had been sent to Cuba by the U.S. Government to "assist" the Cubans in getting their house in order. The Liberal Party at the last minute dropped out of the race claiming that the elections were rigged.

An Adventure in North Africa

As if Cubans did not have enough problems at home, a group decided to go to the aid of Spain in her war in North Africa in 1921, against Moroccan Riff tribesmen.³ A veteran of the War of Independence, Santiago Espino Rodríguez, remembering that his mother was Spanish, decided to form a Cuban legion to fight this time on the side of Spain. In a matter of a few weeks he was able to form a legion, which consisted of

3 For almost twenty years Spanish troops fought against Moroccan Riff tribesmen who wanted to obtain their independence from Spain. As the war in North Africa dragged on and the casualties increased, other problems seriously affected the economic and political situation in Spain. Labor unrest, unemployment, political assassinations, regionalism, and a never-ending stream of political intrigue led to a coup d'état led by General Primo de Rivera, who formed a military dictatorship. Under his personal direction, the Spanish forces were reorganized and a group of new military leaders including Varela, Sanjurjo, Moia, Muñoz Grandes and Franco, brought the war to an end in 1926, when they captured Abd-el-Krim, the principal leader of the rebellion.

Cubans, Puerto Ricans and Spaniards. They left from Havana on September 21, 1921. It included a priest, medical doctors and nurses in addition to would-be-combatants.

They reached North Africa but did not participate in combat. The Spanish had placed them under the command of Colonel Vara del Rey, the son of the Spanish General who had fought in the Cuban campaign and had died while heroically resisting larger American forces at El Caney in 1898. Needless to say the Spanish officer and his Cuban troops did not get along. The Cubans wanted to fight under the command of their own leader, Captain Santiago Espino Rodríguez, but the Spanish would not allow it. Finally, most of them returned to Cuba, where their leader died a peaceful death in 1934 in Guantánamo. Two years later, in 1936, another group of Cubans volunteered to join the International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War against the forces of General Francisco Franco, who interestingly enough had commanded Spanish forces in North Africa during the war that raged through the 1920's.

The Insurrection of 1924

Another insurrection took place in 1924, this time led by a strange combination of veterans of the War of Independence and militants in several leftist organizations that had been formed in Cuba after the October Revolution in Russia. The movement started in August of 1923, at the Maxim Theater in Havana during a meeting of veterans demanding payment of their military retirement. The leader of the group was General Carlos García Velez, who had been serving as Cuban Ambassador to Great Britain. A few days later, on August 29th, another meeting was held at the Martí Theater in Havana and a list of demands was drafted to be presented to President Zayas by a commission composed of General José Manuel Capote and Senator Aurelio Alvarez.

In the meantime several members of the group went to the United States and began to purchase weapons, including one airplane to organize an expedition to overthrow the Cuban Government. Calixto García Velez, Rubén Martínez Villena⁴ and José A. Fernández de Castro were arrested by American authorities and the weapons intercepted before they reached Cuba. But despite this setback, an insurrection started on April 30, 1924, under the leadership of Colonel Federico Laredo Bru in the vicinity of Cienfuegos. However, before any combat took place, leaders of the insurrection met with President Zayas and arrived at a compromise. A presidential decree was issued that pardoned the insurgents.

⁴ Rubén Martínez Villena later became one of the principal leaders of the Communist Party. He died of tuberculosis in Havana on January 16, 1934.



General José Martí y Zayas Bazán was the son of José Martí, the leader of the Cuban struggle for independence. General Martí joined the Cuban Army of Independence in March of 1907 and fought in several battles of the war. He served as adjutant to General Calixto García. In 1902, he won by examination the rank of captain and joined the Artillery Corps. He rose through the ranks to Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces in October of 1915. General Martí was born on November 2, 1878.



Maj. Gen. Pablo Mendieta was a veteran of many of the most important battles of the War of Independence. After the war he served in the Cuban Diplomatic Corps and was elected to the Havana City Council. In 1909, General Mendieta was appointed to the new Permanent Army with the rank of colonel by President J. M. Gómez. Mendieta took part in the campaign against the black insurrection of 1912, and commanded the Army in the battles of Yarayabo, Loma del Mamey, Jarahueco and Mícaro. He was promoted to Major General in December of 1915 and retired in 1917.



Colonel Julio Morales Coello graduated with honors from the Spanish Naval Academy and spent time studying teaching methods at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md. He served as Captain of the Port of Havana and as Aide-de-Camp to President Gómez. During his tenure in this last position, he met and married the President's daughter. Col. Morales received several awards and honors from Spain, Venezuela and other countries.



Colonel Juan A. Laza y del Río served in the Cuban Army of Independence, arriving in the "Hawkins" with Maj. Gen. Calixto García. He fought in many important battles of the war, earning the rank of lieutenant colonel. After the war, Colonel Laza joined the Armed Forces, serving in both the Rural Guard and the Artillery Corps. At the start of WWI, Col. Laza was studying cavalry tactics in Europe. Upon his return, he was appointed Commander of the First Regiment of Cavalry, Fifth Military District (Havana).



General Mario García Menocal
President of Cuba
1912-1916 and 1916-1920



General Gerardo Machado
President of Cuba
1925-1933

XII. General Machado's Dictatorship 1925-1933

The political campaign for the general elections of 1924 was very violent, in the tradition of the previous ones. The Conservatives nominated their leader, General Mario Garcia Menocal, once again for the Presidency. The Liberal Party nominated General Gerardo Machado. As the campaign moved closer to the elections, backers of both veterans of the War of Independence clashed repeatedly, resulting in many dead and wounded from multiple gunfights. One of the worst incidents took place in Camagüey, where only the intervention of the Tercio Táctico separated backers of both men and obtained the release of Colonel Desiderio Rangel, commander of the Army regiment stationed in the province. He had been detained at a hotel by backers of General Garcia Menocal after a gun battle with local supporters of General Machado. Garcia Menocal was not popular in Camagüey due to the way in which the Army had persecuted the participants in the insurrection of 1917, in which several people from the province had been killed.

General Machado was born in 1861, in a suburb of Santa Clara, the provincial capital of Las Villas. When he was a young boy, his father joined the Cuban Army during the Ten Years War, and had reached the rank of major. When the War of Independence started in 1895, Machado followed his father's footsteps and joined the Cuban forces, fighting mostly in the 4th Corps,¹ under Major Generals Serafín Sánchez and Francisco Carrillo.

After independence, Machado served as Mayor of Santa Clara and as Minister of Gobernación (Interior), under President José Miguel Gómez.² He also participated in the uprising of the Liberal Party in 1917, together with José Miguel Gómez. But despite his active political life, he had spent most of the previous ten years prior to the elections working in the private sector and had become wealthy. His principal employment was with the American Foreign Light and Power Company.

Machado won the elections with a platform that called for the construction of new roads, new schools and water distribution systems. He took office on May 20, 1925, to serve a four-year term. His administration has been characterized by most historians as a dictatorship from the first day he took office, although technically, he did not become one until

¹ General Serafín Sánchez was killed in combat on November 18, 1896 and was replaced by General Francisco Carrillo.

² President Gómez was also a brigadier in the 4th Army Corps during the War of Independence.

after 1928. His administration has also been characterized as efficient and one in which major public works were carried out according to what he had promised during the elections. He cleaned up the cities, improved sanitation, built a new capitol building in Havana and completed a major portion of the central highway which runs from east to west along the entire length of the island. Under his leadership the police cut down on prostitution and illegal gambling. The police were also used repeatedly to break up strikes and persecute labor leaders.

Army Reorganization of 1926

A new law reorganizing the Army and Navy was passed by Congress on March 2, 1926. The Army, according to the new law was composed of:

- The General Staff
- The Artillery, Infantry, and Cavalry
- The Engineering Corps
- The Signals Corps
- The Aviation Corps
- The Medical, Auditor, and Veterinary Services
- The Military Schools
- A militia unit (if one is organized)
- The Cavalry, to be composed of the Tercio Táctico³ and the Rural Guard

The General Staff, Military Schools, Infantry, Cavalry, Artillery, and the Signals and Engineering units had 12 colonels, 12 lieutenant colonels, 33 majors, 145 captains, 202 first lieutenants and 98 second lieutenants. The Military Schools had 75 cadets and 90 officer cadets. The enlisted men consisted of 136 first sergeants, 219 second class sergeants, 679 third class sergeants, 1,057 corporals and 9,439 privates.

The officer corps of the Cavalry consisted of 19 majors, 91 captains, 128 first lieutenants, and 60 second lieutenants. The Artillery, Infantry, Signals and Engineer units had an

³ As in the past, the regiments stationed in each province maintained one battalion under the command of a major at the regimental headquarters. This unit, which was to remain on the alert in case it was needed anywhere in area within the jurisdiction of the regiment, was called Tercio Táctico, or tactical one third of the regiment. The other two battalions were stationed throughout the province in units ranging from company size to two-man patrols, mostly in rural areas.

officer corps consisting of 14 majors, 54 captains, 74 first lieutenants and 58 second lieutenants.

The Medical Service was commanded by a colonel, two lieutenant colonels, nine majors, 22 captains and nine first lieutenants, all medical doctors. The Dentistry Section was commanded by a major, and consisted of three captains, and seven first lieutenants. The Pharmaceutical Section consisted of one major, one captain and one first lieutenant. In addition, the unit had 50 sergeants and 280 privates and corporals.

The Veterinary Service was commanded by a lieutenant colonel and consisted of two majors, nine captains, and 13 first lieutenants, all of whom were veterinary doctors. In addition to the officers, the service had 31 sergeants and 130 privates and corporals.

The Auditor Corps consisted of one colonel, two lieutenant colonels, one major, four captains, and four first lieutenants. The unit was complemented by 20 enlisted men. The band of the General Staff was directed by a captain and a first lieutenant. (For many years the band was directed by Luis Casas Romero, who joined the service earning the rank of first lieutenant by competition and in 1933 became director of the band with the rank of captain. He had fought in the War of Independence and was the composer of many Cuban tunes, such as "El Mambi," "Soy Cubano" and "Carmela.")

The composition of the Army during the administration of President Gerardo Machado was as follows:

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Officers</u> | <u>Sergeants</u> | <u>Soldiers</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|----------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 1924-25 | 723 | 2,060 | 8,283 | 11,066 |
| 1926-27 | 814 | 2,141 | 9,612 | 12,567 |
| 1929-30 | 904 | 2,228 | 9,825 | 12,957 |
| 1930-31 | 911 | 2,230 | 8,782 | 11,923 |
| <u>1933-34</u> | <u>970</u> | <u>2,235</u> | <u>8,690</u> | <u>11,895</u> |

The number of men in the military per inhabitant declined during these years. In 1924-25, there was one soldier for every 302 people and by 1933 the numbers had declined to one soldier per every 345 people in the island. This was a remarkable decline from 1918, during WWI, when the ratio reached a high of one soldier per every 165 inhabitants.⁴

⁴ The breakdown of the composition of the military was part of the decree No. 1,100 of the Secretariat of War and Navy and was published in the Gaceta Oficial. The figures were analyzed in depth in Federico Chang's book El Ejército Na-

The Air Force

The Army Air Force which had been formed during WWI had 119 men, as of 1925. It was commanded by a captain, and had six first lieutenants and 11 second lieutenants. All the officers were pilots. In addition, the unit had 15 sergeants, 11 corporals and 44 privates. The Navy also had a small air wing. The availability of equipment was minimal, consisting of only a few WWI planes. However, by 1929, the size of the Air Force had been increased by the purchase of several new planes. According to very limited data, it seems that the Air Force had the following equipment:

| NUMBER | PLANE | MOTOR | PURPOSE |
|-----------------|----------|----------------|---------------------|
| 2 | Curtis | | |
| 4 | DH | 400 HP Liberty | Observation, bomber |
| 8 | PT | 200 HP Wright | Training |
| 6 | Vought | 400 HP Wasp | Observation, attack |
| 4 | Waco (2) | 200 HP Wright | |
| | (2) | 90 HP OX5 | |
| 6 | Corsairs | | |
| Total 24 | | | |

Despite the small size of the unit, several pilots had been trained in the United States and Europe and had managed to make a name for themselves venturing out to fly to Haiti and other nearby islands. Captain Guillermo Martull, the head of the unit, was also an accomplished parachutist who even managed to establish a new world record by jumping from 4,000 feet. Small landing strips were located in all provincial capitals with regimental headquarters of the Rural Guard.

The Navy (Marina de Guerra)

The Navy had seen better days. By 1929, the Navy had a total of 149 officers and 1,014 enlisted men. The organization had not changed from when it was created by President José Miguel Gómez in 1909. It had two districts, North and South, and several bases around the island. The headquarters was located at the old La Punta castle, at the entrance of the harbor in Havana, across the Morro Castle, on the city side. The Naval Academy was located at Mariel. The headquarters of the Northern District was in Havana and the headquarters for

cional en la República Neocolonial, 1899-1933. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1981).

the Southern District at Cienfuegos. Of all the ships that had been acquired between 1902 and 1912, only 12 remained:

| | | |
|--------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Cruiser: | Cuba | (2,055 tons) |
| School Ship: | Patria | (2,200 tons) |
| Gunboats : | Baire | (500 tons) |
| | Yara | (300 tons) |
| | 10 de Octubre | (200 tons) |
| | 24 de Febrero | (200 tons) |
| | 20 de Mayo | (150 tons) |
| | Enrique Villuendas | (125 tons) |
| | Pinar del Rio | (90 tons) |
| | Habana | (90 tons) |
| | Matanzas | (90 tons) |
| | Villas | (90 tons) |

National Police and Secret Police

The National Police had been increased over the years to a strength of 2,143 men. It had a chief, a deputy chief, and eleven inspectors with the rank of major, who performed administrative duties. Three of the inspectors were physicians. The force had 16 captains, 68 lieutenants, 155 privates first class and 1,818 privates. They had good weapons and equipment, including cars and motorcycles. Their principal duties continued to be providing police services to the capital and suburbs.

The Secret Police had a chief, a deputy chief, six inspectors, ten sub-inspectors, 20 detectives first class and 30 detectives second class. It operated with a total budget of about \$ 4.635 million pesos. (The peso and the dollar were of equal value at the time.) The Secret Police was the security organ of the Secretariat of Government. Both the National Police and the Secret Police were part of the Secretariat of Government and of the Government of the Capital (Havana).

Machado's Reelection

Machado's government took a turn for the worse in 1927 as a result of a congressional move to reform the Constitution of 1901, to allow for the term in office of the president to be expanded to six years with no reelection possible. The architect of this reform was Senator Clemente Vázquez Bello, a young man who had become Machado's possible successor. His youth prevented him from running because he did not qualify by reason of his age to run for the highest office. The extension of the term in office may have been his idea to

postpone the elections long enough to qualify.⁵ The tenure of office in Congress was also extended and the position of vice president eliminated. The Secretary of State took over the function of the vice president.

The constitutional amendments were passed despite strong popular opposition. Elections were held in November of 1928 and Machado, who had promised that he would not run for re-election did so, and was elected. In the tradition of 1901, 1905 and 1920, the opposition did not present a candidate and thus Machado ran unopposed. The political turmoil that was caused by this move was further complicated by the economic turmoil which resulted from the crash of the stock market in New York in 1929. He governed through the use of martial law from the time he was reelected to his overthrow in 1933.

Birth of the Cuban Communist Movement

The organization of the first Communist groups in Cuba is clouded by the secrecy of the organizations, as well as the biases of most authors on the subject. To date none has done a thorough academic study on the subject. With the declassification of many documents in the National Archives of the United States, new documents that have not been used before by researchers on the subject have come to light and show a large foreign participation in the initial organization of Communist groups.

According to Jorge García Montes and Antonio Alonso Avila in their book Historia del Partido Comunista de Cuba, the formation of the first Communist organization in Cuba dates to August 16, 1925, when the first in a series of organizations was formed at a meeting in Havana. They name as some of the first members: José Miguel Pérez (Spaniard, born in the Canary Islands), Alejandro Barreiro, José Peña Vilaboa, Carlos Balifo, Emilio Rodríguez, Miguel Valdés, Alfonso Bernal, Julio Antonio Mella, Berardo Valdés, Venacio Rodríguez, Yoska Grimberg, Miguel Magidson, Jacobo Gurvich, Yunguer Semovich, and (first name unknown) Vasserman. Present to provide assistance to the group was one of the Flores Magón brothers

⁵ Senator Vázquez Bello was assassinated before he could see his dream come true. General Loynas del Castillo, a respected veteran of the War of Independence, member of the Cuban Foreign Service for many years and a respected figure in Cuban politics, often told friends that Senator Vázquez Bello was responsible for the tragic events that followed the reform of the constitution.

(either Jesús or Enrique), from Mexico, but they were more Anarchists than Communists. ⁶

García Montes and Alonso Avila claim that the party was supported from Mexico and the United States by the Communist Parties of these countries. They also mention the arrival of Dora Vainstock from the Soviet Union in 1925 and other foreigners, who were mostly political exiles from other Latin American countries.

Diplomatic correspondence from the United States Embassy in Cuba, declassified in 1963, shows that Cuban Intelligence had penetrated the Communist Party and that a substantial degree of information had also been obtained from Cuban intelligence operations abroad about foreign influence in the Communist groups in Cuba.

For example, on May 25, 1926, Ambassador Enoch H. Crowder wrote to the Secretary of State in Washington (Despatch No. 1437) that President Machado had told him that he was convinced that Soviet agents were operating in the United States and Cuba. The Cuban Secretary of the Interior, Major Rogelio Zayas Bazán, wanted to send to the United States, with the prior approval of the U.S. Government, an informer named Miguel Stein, who had penetrated a Jewish Communist front receiving aid from the United States. Stein was to continue his "research" in the United States with assistance from the U.S. Government, to obtain further leads on Soviet activity. The Communist front that Stein had penetrated was the Hebraic Cultural Union, located at Calle Sol, Number 60, Havana. The president of the organization was said to be a Polish immigrant named Katlan and the secretary a man named Magdason.

In another communication with the Department of State in Washington dated June 15, 1926, Ambassador Crowder observed that:

...there is no well developed radical party in Cuba, and that the character of the people does not make the Island a fertile field for the advancement of Communist ideas. The Cubans are easily led on political issues and may even resort to the violence of revolution on those grounds. Such issues are, however, local ones, and generally speaking, the people do not think in terms of internationalism...

⁶ Jorge García Montes and Antonio Alonso Avila, Historia del Partido Comunista de Cuba (Miami: Ediciones Universal, 1970), pp. 57-77.

⁷ E. H. Crowder to Secretary of State, National Archives Building, Washington, D.C., Despatch No. 1437, May 25, 1926.

Although Ambassador Crowder's comments were based on the situation as he saw it in Cuba in 1926, he could not have been any further from a true assessment of the Island as a fertile field for the advancement of Communism.⁸

Again on April 11, 1927, Ambassador Crowder informed Washington that he had met with the Cuban Secretary of State, Rafael Martínez Ortiz, on April 5th, and had been given several documents intercepted by Cuban Intelligence in Paris giving instructions for Soviet penetration in Cuba. The documents were to be examined in Washington, and verified as to their authenticity per request of the Cuban Government. The documents included a letter from the Secretary General of the Comintern, Latin American Section (Zalkind), to the President of the Bureau of the Comintern in Paris (Daftian), in which he draws attention to Cuba, as a base for activities of the Communist International in the United States and in South America. It orders that two experienced agents be sent to Cuba to assist in the overthrow of the government and the creation of a Communist state.

Another document, also signed by Zalkind, and dated January 18, 1927, directs Comrades Conballo Miguel (sic) and Garcia Enrico (sic) to go to Havana and contact the Communist party and present their credentials as representatives of the Comintern. The original of the document is in French and was translated into English by the U.S. Government. The instructions read:

You will in particular fully acquaint yourself with the activities of the Communist Party of Cuba and of the conditions in which it is with regard to preparing the revolution. You will give your whole attention to: 1) the connection between the sectors, 2) the arming of the fighting cells, 3) preparing the professional organizations and the possibility of local general strikes particularly on the railway lines 4) propaganda in the Army and fleet of the Republic of Cuba, 5) the sentiments of the chiefs (officers) for the existing regime, 6) the position taken by the democratic group in Parliament.

After this preliminary work you will immediately commence action. To that end: a) you will organize the most effective members of the Communist Party of Cuba into a terrorist section, b) you will mobilize the communist cells of the professional organizations and the railway systems, c) you will

⁸ E.H. Crowder to Secretary of State, National Archives Building, (File 837.00 B/8), Despatch Number 1473, June 15, 1926.

intensify propaganda in the Army and Navy and endeavor by using corruption to draw the largest possible number of soldiers, d) you will establish close connection with the group of anarchists by bringing about the admission into that party of some members of the Communist Party so as to coordinate the common activities both before and after the revolution. e) before the revolution you must learn how far the present government is intending to go in making preparations against a revolt so as to paralyze them, f) at time of the revolution you must remain in Havana and direct the movement in person....you will establish a close connection with the representative of the U.S.S.R. in Mexico and keep him posted about your doings. You will send all correspondence through that representative and receive also through him the directions from the Comintern....The representatives of the U.S.S.R. in Mexico will be informed of your arrival and will have his party do all that may be necessary to establish contact with you.

Garcia and Ceballo were instructed to go to Cuba from Moscow via Boulogne and Veracruz, Mexico, and were expected to arrive in Havana at some time in February of 1927. Another document turned over to the American Embassy by the Cuban Secretary of State, signed by Boukarine, President of the Comintern and Zalkind, Secretary General of the same organization, directed all the Communist organizations in Cuba to abide by the orders of "Comrade Conballo Miguel." A similar document was issued to Enrico Garcia.⁹ Both documents have a picture of each individual attached.

The Department of State in Washington forwarded copies of the documents to J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the American Embassy in Paris and to the Bureau of Eastern European Affairs, in an attempt to determine if the individuals mentioned in the documents and the signature of Soviet officials matched information in the possession of the United States Government. On May 11, 1927, the Department of State wrote to Ambassador Crowder informing him that the Department had not been able to verify the authenticity of the documents. An individual named Zalkind, was known to have been Acting Chief of the Law Department of the Commissariat for Foreign Relations of the Soviet Union in 1922 and his signature was available on at least one document. It did not match the signature on the document turned over by the Cuban Government. No information was

⁹ E. H. Crowder to Secretary of State, National Archives Building, Washington, D.C. (837.00b/10), Despatch Number 1951, April 11, 1927. Attached are the ten documents intercepted by the Cuban Government and turned over to the American Embassy for verification.

available on an individual named Zalkind in the Secretariat of the Communist International. The French Foreign Office had assisted the American Embassy in Paris to determine if Davtian existed. They reported that a Jacques Davtian was a Counselor of Embassy of the Soviet Union in Paris. It could not be determined if the "Dativian" and "Davtian" were the same individuals named in the documents obtained by the Cuban Government.¹⁰

Although the documents may not have been authentic and may have been part of a campaign of disinformation of the Cuban Government to obtain support from the United States or Soviet disinformation documents for some unknown purpose, they are nevertheless interesting. They show what seems to have been an attempt to foment an insurrection within the Cuban Army and also mentioned the strategic importance of Cuba due to its geographic location to support Communist insurgency in the United States and South America. The names of the people in the documents do not seem to match those of prominent Communists in Cuba at the time.

These documents are mentioned here particularly because a military insurrection did take place in Cuba in August of 1933, which led to the overthrow of Gerardo Machado. But the leaders of this insurrection were acting under the influence of the American Ambassador and not the Soviets. Within a month, another insurrection, this time led by sergeants, against the officer corps also took place on September 4, 1933. There is no information available at this time to connect these documents mentioned above with these insurrections. However, the Communist Party did participate in the campaign to overthrow Machado, although they seemed to be more interested in increasing their leadership position within the organized labor movement in Cuba.

Without a doubt foreign influence and direction was present in the Cuban Communist Party from the time it was started. Several organizers were Jews from the United States and had connections with Communist and Jewish organizations in the United States. Others had been born in Spain and had migrated to Cuba like thousands of their compatriots looking for employment. In addition to the Americans and Spaniards, many Latin American revolutionaries living in Cuba as political exiles also participated with Cuban Communists in political meetings and conspiracies. Mexican influence in the Cuban Communist movement in particular was substantial. Mexican Communists went to Cuba to assist in the organization of the Communist Party and several Cuban Communists went to Mexico seeking shelter from persecution by Machado's police.

¹⁰ Secretary of State to Enoch H. Crowder, National Archives Building, Washington, D.C. (837.00B/10), No. 969, May 11, 1927.

The Opposition to Machado

Several revolutionary groups were formed from the extreme left to the extreme right and conspiracies to overthrow Machado multiplied. The principal groups were the ABC, which was formed by students and young professionals, and several Communist groups of one or another persuasion. The main tactic these groups used was urban terrorism, including bombings and assassinations of prominent figures in the government, soldiers and policemen. Among the government figures killed was Chief of Police Estanislao Massip.¹¹ Machado counteracted urban terrorism with terrorism of his own at the hands of several henchmen in the police and the Army. In addition, a group of thugs which called themselves "la porra" or the "bludgeon party," was used to beat up and/or eliminate members of the opposition. They killed without regard to the social or economic status of the families of many young students who were opposed to the dictatorship. Among them were the sons of Congressman Freyre de Andrade (Gonzalo, Leopoldo and Guillermo), who were killed in cold blood in 1932 by Arsenio Ortiz, chief of the military police in Havana.¹² They were killed as a reprisal for the assassination of Senator Clemente Vásquez Bello on September 28, 1932.

Several uprisings also took place throughout the island. For example, in 1931, Colonel Carlos Mendieta and General Mario García Menocal, and their followers attempted to start an uprising in Pinar del Rio but were spotted and arrested by the Army at Rio Verde before their plans could move forward. General Peraza, another veteran of the War of Independence also gathered several followers in Pinar del Rio and fought

¹¹ Among the leaders of the ABC were: Carlos Saladrigas, Francisco Ichaso, Joaquin Martínez Sáenz, Jorge Mafach and Emeterio Santovenia.

¹² Ruby Hart Phillips, Cuba: Island of Paradox, (New York: McDowell, Obolensky, 1959), p. 15. Readers may remember that Arsenio Ortiz had killed Pedro Ibonet, one of the leaders of the black party during the 1912 race war. He rose in rank through the years until becoming military supervisor in Oriente, where he built a reputation as a murderer, because of the atrocities he committed against opponents of Machado. Public protests led to his arrest and court-martial and conviction. Machado's controlled Congress pardoned him, and Machado further rewarded him with the job of chief of the military police in Havana, where he continued his brutal killings. He managed to escape in 1933 after the overthrow of Machado.

with the rural guard. But they were pursued by the Army, spotted at their encampment at Loma del Toro and killed. Two other colonels, Roberto Méndez Peñate and Aurelio Hevia organized an insurrection in Matanzas and were also routed by government forces. Another incident took place at the port of Gibara, where an invasion force formed by Cuban exiles landed and captured this small port town. The expedition had been organized in New York City by José Bosch with the participation of Carlos Hevia, Sergio Carbó and Lucilo de la Peña. The military commander was former lieutenant Emilio Laurent. But within three days the Army routed them.

Communist-led groups were also active in rural areas, particularly in the eastern provinces, where they were able to develop a following among sugar cane workers, and in the capital, where they carried out many acts of sabotage. One of their principal tactics was to organize strikes with the aid of labor unions under their control. They clashed with Machado's forces, as well as with the leadership of the other opposition groups including the ABC, which they called Facist and anti-Communist.

Even within the Armed Forces there were many conspiracies at all levels against Machado. Those who were discovered plotting were quickly eliminated by the dictator's henchmen. The level of violence increased until in 1932 the United States decided to intervene. Ambassador Guggenheim was replaced by Sumner Wells, who arrived with instructions to convince Machado to step down.

The Fall of Machado

As Ambassador Sumner Wells made efforts to solve the crisis in Cuba, Colonel Erasmo Delgado, the commander of the Army barracks at La Cabaña led an insurrection starting on August 11, 1933. He was able to capture most of the area in the old section of the capital around the port facilities. President Machado left the Presidential Palace, which was only a few blocks away from the areas under Colonel Delgado's control and went to Camp Columbia in an attempt to organize a counterattack with the bulk of the forces stationed at the Columbia barracks. The officer corps, including Major General Alberto Herrera, Chief of Staff of the Army, were not willing to fight to help Machado retain power. Machado was forced to resign and was allowed to escape by plane with several aides to the Bahamas. From there he moved to Miami, Florida, where he died in 1939.¹³

¹³ Army Captain Torres Menier is said to have been the officer who told the dictator that the Armed Forces no longer supported him. The story of the incident was vox populi in

Before departing, Machado named General Herrera Secretary of State so that the constitutional order would be maintained. General Herrera then named Carlos Manuel de Céspedes y Quesada to the position of Secretary of State and turned over power to him.

Carlos Manuel de Céspedes was a member of a prominent Cuban family and the son of the patriot who had started the struggle for independence in 1868 (Ten Years War). He was also a veteran of the War of Independence and had reached the rank of colonel. After independence in 1902 he had served as Secretary of State and as Cuban Ambassador to Washington. Céspedes was able to obtain the support of several of the groups that had been fighting against Machado, including the ABC, Unión Nacionalista, OCRR and Acción Republicana. The more radical groups, including the Communist Party, Conjunto Revolucionario Cubano, Ala Izquierda Estudiantil, and Directorio Revolucionario Estudiantil did not accept the transfer of power.

Mobs went into the streets as soon as it was learned that Machado had fled and his followers and sympathizers were hunted down by mobs and killed and dragged through the streets. Rioting and looting spread throughout the entire country. The Army and police were sent into the streets to control the situation but many members of the Armed Forces joined the revolutionaries in their search for Machado's supporters and assisted in their capture and mob execution.¹⁴ Among those killed by the mobs, which included soldiers, was Colonel Antonio Jimenes (sic), who had been one of the prominent members of the "porra."

Cuba at the time. Mario Kuchilan confirms it in Fabulario: retrato de una época, (La Habana: Instituto del libro, 1970), p. 110.

14 "Successful bloodless revolt by Army; Machado's resignation demanded," New York Times, (August 12, 1933, p. 1, Col.5; "Machado asks for leave of absence and flees with aides in plane; Céspedes made President; Ferrara flees to Miami; elections to be delayed; War Sec. Herrera stays to aid; 18 killed as mobs avenge murders; riots, looting and sacking," New York Times, (August 13, 1933), p.1, Col. 5.

OFFICERS OF THE CUBAN ARMED FORCES
1930



General Alberto Herrera
Chief of Staff Army
Ejército Permanente



Capitán de Navio Oscar Quevedo
Chief of Staff Navy
Marina de Guerra



Brigadier Lores
Chief of Management
Army
La Fuerza Castle



Brigadier José Semidy
Chief of Administration
Army
San Ambrosio Fort



Major S. Trujillo
Chief of the Secret Police



Colonel Guerrero
Chief of the Military Hospital
Camp Columbia

XIII. The Era of Fulgencio Batista Zaldivar

Sergeants Revolution

While the street disorders continued through August of 1933, sergeants in the Armed Forces, together with some corporals, privates and friendly junior officers, were conspiring to stage their own insurrection. Sergeants Pablo Rodriguez, Fulgencio Batista y Zaldivar, Manuel López Migoya, José Eleuterio Pedraza, Juan Estevez Maymir, Corporal Angel Echeverria and privates Mario Alfonso and Cruz Vidal were among the principal leaders of the movement which had started with a set of demands for reforms within the military to improve the lot of the enlisted men.¹ The demands included job security, a fixed salary without deductions for retirement and an end to the posting of enlisted men to work as aides (servants) for officers; leather spatterdashes or leggings for enlisted men similar to those used by officers; and two more buttons for the military blouses of enlisted men to match those of officers (enlisted men's blouses had five and the officers' had seven).

On September 4, 1933, the sergeants took over the barracks and deposed the senior officers, who decided not to fight against the rebellious troops. About half of the approximately 970 officers in the Army were replaced by Batista with his fellow sergeants and corporals. Exceptions included several officers who had supported the enlisted men,

¹ The four principal leaders of the sergeants insurrection were stationed in the following posts on September 4th, 1933:

Pablo Rodriguez: Quartermaster Sergeant, 3rd Company, 1st Infantry Battalion at Camp Columbia.
(Became a major after the insurrection).

José E. Pedraza: First Sergeant, 1st Company, 1st Infantry Battalion at Camp Columbia.
(Became a colonel after the insurrection).

Manuel López Migoya: Quartermaster Sergeant, 2nd Company, 1st Infantry Battalion at Camp Columbia.
(Became a lieutenant colonel after the insurrection.)

Fulgencio Batista: Sergeant Major for Columbia Military District)
(Became a colonel after the insurrection)

including Lieutenants Francisco Tabernilla, Seigle, Santana and Benitez. Several of them became senior officers in the Armed Forces within a short period of time.

Sergeant Batista became the leader of the insurrection. He had been born in Oriente in 1901, of a poor family, and had joined the Army in 1921. He became a typist and stenographer, rising in rank to sergeant major. With his skills he obtained a job in the office of the General Staff of the Army and had access to the telegraph and other forms of communication available to send and receive messages from barracks throughout Cuba. He also had access to all classified military communications in the country. From this privileged position, he was able to take a leadership position in the insurrection, despite the fact that there were other strong personalities in the group, such as sergeant José Eleuterio Pedraza.²

The officers who were removed from their positions were replaced by 512 of Batista's supporters. This group included 363 sergeants, 26 corporals, 32 privates, 28 warrant officers and 63 civilians. In addition to the sergeants, corporals and privates, 112 officers, who were for the most part lieutenants and captains, joined the insurrection. For example, the First Artillery Battalion and Army Aviation Corps, including the officers, joined the insurrection.

² Batista was born in 1901 in Veguitas, in the municipality of Banes, in the province of Oriente. His mother was Carmela Zaldivar, who registered her son as Rubén Zaldivar, a name he used to enlist in the Army in 1921. Upon his reenlistment two years later he changed his name to Fulgencio Batista. His father had been named Belisario Batista, but it seems he never recognized his son officially. During his first enlistment, Batista served in the 4th Infantry Battalion at Camp Columbia. After learning typing and shorthand, he worked at La Cabaña fortress, where the Artillery Corps was headquartered. Later he moved to Camp Columbia, where he worked under Lieutenant Ricardo Gómez, who was Chief of Machado's Secret Service. He also worked as a stenographer for the General Staff of the Army. Several books have been published about Batista, one of the most famous being Edmund Chester's A Sergeant Named Batista (New York: Holt, 1954). The New York Times published several articles on the events in Cuba, giving readers outside the island the first accounts of this previously unknown sergeant inside and outside of Cuba: "F. Batista, leader of revolt, Army court stenographer," New York Times (September 6, 1933), p.3, col. 6; and "President de Cespedes and Cabinet overthrown by Army and Navy," New York Times, (September 6, 1933), p.1, col.1.

In addition to the grievances of the non-commissioned officers, many of the officers who had graduated from the military academy since 1912 were frustrated by a system which did not provide opportunities for advancement. Without an up-or-out system, the upper ranks were monopolized by veterans of the War of Independence and those with political connections. As Louis A. Pérez has pointed out in his Ph.D. thesis, Army Politics in Cuba 1898-1968 (University of Pittsburgh, 1976), graduates of the Cuban Military Academy from the classes of 1913, 1914 and 1915 were still lieutenants in 1933.

The insurrection of the sergeants was supported by the Directorio Revolucionario Estudiantil and other civilian groups. Civilian revolutionary leaders and the leaders of the sergeant's insurrection then formed a federated presidency composed of five prominent civilians who shared power. They were named "la Pentarquía" or pentarchy.³ These five men were: Dr. Ramón Grau San Martín, a professor at the University of Havana, and fellow professor Guillermo Portela; banker Porfirio Franca, and writers Sergio Carbó and José Miguel Irizarri. Carbó, the editor of a newspaper and an active revolutionary against Machado, named Batista Colonel and Chief of the General Staff of the Army on September 8, 1933, without consulting the other four members of the pentarchy.⁴

³ The civilian and military leaders issued a public statement: Proclama de la Agrupación Revolucionaria de Cuba, which was dated September 4, 1933. It outlined the goals of the civilians but not the specific goals of the sergeants. These goals included a program for economic development, firings and trials of members of the Armed Forces who had been involved in political crimes during the dictatorship of Gerardo Machado, reorganization of the government, a call for a constitutional convention, and the formation of a temporary government until new elections could be held. The document was signed by:

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Carlos Prio Socarrás | Ramiro Valdés Daussá |
| José Morel Romero | Emilio Laurent |
| Rafael García Bárcena | Roberto Lago |
| Justo Carrillo Hernández | Gustavo Cuervo Rubio |
| Guillermo Barrientos | Guillermo Portela |
| Juan A. Rubio Padilla | Ramón Grau San Martín |
| Laudelino H. González | Sergio Carbó |
| José M. Irizarri | Julio E. Gaunaud |
| Oscar de la Torre | Fulgencio Batista |
| Carlos Hevia | |

⁴ Kuchilan, op. cit. p. 79. The decree issued by Sergio Carbó was given the number 1538. Carbó lived to regret his move. He was born in 1896, graduated from the University of Havana and became one of Cuba's leading newspapermen. Carbó

The United States refused to recognize the new government and/or Batista. The United States Embassy, as well as right-wing elements in Cuba, viewed them as Communists. The Communists and other radical leftist revolutionary groups also refused to recognize the new government and continued to agitate and to carry out terrorist acts, including bombings in the cities, taking over small Rural Guard posts in the countryside, burning sugarcane fields, and declaring strikes against many large- and medium-sized employers. The divisions between the many groups which had fought against Machado became sharper as they struggled to capture political power.

On September 10, the leadership of the Directorio Estudiantil Universitario and other revolutionary groups who had participated in the events of September 4th, met at the Presidential Palace and decided to name Dr. Grau San Martín as President. The collegiate form of government they had attempted during the previous week had not obtained wide public support, and in fact it had not been accepted by anyone.⁵

The Turmoil Continued

President Grau San Martín, Batista and his fellow co-conspirators continued to face a political situation that bordered on anarchy. Communists and other radicals continued to push for a large-scale social revolution. One of the largest clashes between the government and the Communists took place on September 29th, when the Secretary of Gobernación (Interior), Antonio Guiteras, did not authorize a Communist demonstration. They had brought back to Cuba from Mexico the ashes of one of their leaders, Julio Antonio Mella, who had been assassinated while in exile in Mexico during Machado's dictatorship. They were marching to deposit the ashes at a monument built to honor him in downtown Havana. Despite not having a permit, they went on with their plans and clashed with Army, Navy and police units. There were several dead and wounded as a result of the clash.⁶

was editor the of El Día, El Figaro, La Prensa, El Herald and La Semana. He was also the founder of Prensa Libre in 1941. His newspaper career brought him into conflict with Batista for many years.

⁵ "Grau San Martín sworn in as President," New York Times, (September 11, 1933), p.1, col. 7.

⁶ Guiteras was possibly the most respected revolutionary of his time and despite this incident, Cuban Communists have claimed him as one of their own. Guiteras was killed months after this incident in a gun battle with the Army while try-

Revolutionary organizations which had fought against Machado organized bands of armed youths who fought each other in the schools and the streets. Antonio Guiteras himself had led an armed group in Oriente in the last days of the dictatorship and continued to have armed followers. The Communists formed their own groups and the two fought over who were the true "revolutionaries." Labor unrest continued and many sugar mills and other major industries were taken over by workers and students waving red flags.

Hotel Nacional Incident

After the overthrow of President Carlos Manuel de Céspedes by Batista and the civilian revolutionaries who were for the most part members of the Directorio Estudiantil Universitario, the displaced officers began to gather at the Hotel Nacional. By the end of September, over 400 officers had entered the hotel and turned it into a stronghold. U.S. Ambassador Sumner Wells resided in the hotel, which may have been one of the reasons why the site was chosen; perhaps with the idea that the ambassador's presence would somehow offer them some degree of protection. Another possible reason is that the leader of the officers, General Sanguily, was recovering from surgery at the hotel. The administration of the hospital where he had surgery had asked him to move out to a hotel to finish his recovery because the many visitors he had were disrupting the peace and quiet which the hospital was attempting to maintain.

The hotel is located on a small hill on the shoreline of the capital, where in colonial times an artillery unit had been located for the defense of the city against attack. While in

ing to escape from Cuba. He was born in Bala Cwynd, Montgomery County, a suburb of Philadelphia, on November 22, 1906. His parents were Calixto Guiteras-Gener, a Cuban immigrant to the United States and Theresa Holmes, an Irish-American. During his childhood Antonio Guiteras lived both in the United States, and in Cuba where he graduated from high school. He returned to the United States as a teenager and went back to Cuba to study Pharmacy at the University of Havana, where he graduated in August of 1927. He was very active in revolutionary groups opposed to Machado and was arrested several times. When Machado was finally overthrown in August of 1933, Guiteras was leading a guerrilla band in the mountains of Oriente. He remained in the mountains until the September 4th insurrection, and was offered the position of Minister of the Interior (Gobernación) by the new government. During Grau San Martín's short administration, Guiteras authored several progressive pieces of legislation, including the eight-hour work week for Cuban workers.

the hotel, Dr. Horacio Ferrer, Secretary of War of the deposed government, as well as several prominent deposed officers, met frequently with Ambassador Wells, presenting him with their plans for taking back power with the support of loyal troops. They tested the will of the United States to send in marines to support their move to retake power. Batista on the other hand,⁷ was meeting with Ambassador Wells, also seeking his blessing.

Batista and his men ordered the officers out of the building. On October 1st, Sergio Carbó, Antonio Guiteras, Fulgencio Batista, Pablo Rodríguez and others met to discuss their alternatives for dealing with the officers in the hotel. Captains Raimundo Ferrer and Manuel Benites are credited with presenting the option to attack, which was adopted by the group. When they refused to come out Batista ordered his men to open fire. They used field artillery and naval artillery from two gunboats of the Cuban Navy, the Patria and Baire. Casualties among the attackers were very high. The officers were in high ground and were expert marksmen, many of whom were veterans of the War of Independence. Despite heavier fire power, the enlisted men attacking the hotel sustained over 20 dead and over 100 wounded in the first few hours of the combat, while the officers in the hotel had only a dozen wounded.⁸

After about 48 hours of combat, the officers decided to surrender, since the United States' intervention they had hoped for never materialized. When the officers surrendered and moved to an open area in front of the hotel, they were attacked by several civilians who had participated in the assault. At least one officer was killed and several wounded. Batista and his men had managed to survive this first attempt to drive them out of power.

November 8th Attempted Coup

Within a month of the confrontation at the Hotel Nacional, members of the ABC, one of the leading revolutionary organi-

⁷ The internal communications between the U.S. Embassy and the U.S. Department of State have been declassified for some time and the documents published in U.S. Foreign Relations of the United States, Vol. V, 1933.

⁸ Several accounts of the incident at the Hotel Nacional have been published. For more information see Bohemia (October 15, 1933), pp. 42-46; R. Adam Silva's La Gran Mentira, (La Habana: 1947); H. Ferrer's Con el rifle al hombro, (La Habana: 1950), and Mario Kuchilan's Fabulario, op. cit. pp. 164-172.

zations, and members of the military attempted to take power. Several popular officers of the "old" Armed Forces, as well as enlisted men who did not want to serve under Batista, organized the insurrection. Most of the principal leaders were members of the small Army Air Corps, headquartered at the military airfield at Camp Columbia. They included Captain Guillermo Martull and Lieutenants Collazo, José Barrientos and Aguero, all of whom were pilots. They had obtained the support of officers and men at several military installations around the capital, as well as at several police stations. They also had some followers at Camp Columbia.

One of the centers of this military insurrection was the San Ambrosio barracks, where the quartermasters headquarters for the Army was located. The infantry company stationed at San Ambrosio took over the barracks under the direction of Major Ciro Leonard and Lieutenant José Ovares. They distributed the large supply of weapons stored at this installation to civilians, many of them members of the ABC. San Ambrosio is located at the waterfront, by the main commercial docks in Havana's harbor. As soon as their action was known, the flagship of the Navy, the cruiser Cuba, positioned itself in front of the barracks and opened fire with naval artillery. The rebel troops at the barracks returned fire with heavy machine guns and forced the ship to withdraw.

Police Headquarters, which were about a block from the Presidential Palace, were also taken over by most of the policemen who decided to join the coup attempt. Within a short period of time a battle between them and the palace guards started, with at least one artillery piece firing from the palace and heavy machine guns being used by both sides, in addition to rifle fire.

Other installations taken over included the Dragones barracks and many police stations and government buildings in downtown Havana. The armories were looted and weapons passed out to hundreds of civilians who joined the rebellious troops. While this was going on in the downtown area of the city, at Camp Columbia, several miles west of the city, the Air Corps took over the airfield and several fighter planes loaded with bombs piloted by the officers named above took off to attack Camp Columbia barracks were troops loyal to Batista were preparing a counterattack.

After a day-long battle through the 8th of November, the insurrection began to fail. The Air Force failed to cause the expected damage to Batista's forces and the airfield was recaptured after a skirmish that left over 20 dead in the field. The planes had to find other places to land and the pilots decided to escape from certain reprisals of the government.

The battle in downtown Havana moved to the colonial fortress overlooking a hill in the southeast corner of the city, known as Castillo de Atarés. This fortress has a commanding view of the bay and a large section of the city. The fortress was the headquarters of the elite 5th Squadron of the Rural Guard and a presidential guard unit, which had joined the coup attempt. Several hundred soldiers and civilians decided to use it as a stronghold, possibly hoping for an American intervention to end the fighting.

Troops loyal to Batista and the government, under the command of Captain Gregorio Querejeta, a black officer, moved from Camp Columbia to the downtown area, recapturing the military barracks and police stations one by one. By the 9th of November, Querejeta and his men had surrounded the fortress and prepared a massive attack. The Navy assisted Querejeta with naval fire from the Cuba and the Patria. But the naval gunfire and regular artillery did not do much damage to the thick walls of the fortress. The attackers were receiving most of the casualties. Finally, with the use of mortars, Querejeta was able to land shells right into the courtyard of the old fortress and the rebels began to take heavy casualties. They finally surrendered, after Colonel Leonard committed suicide.

In the two days of the coup attempt, hundreds were killed and substantial damage was inflicted to government buildings. But with the defeat of the revolutionaries, Batista and his followers became even stronger than before.⁹ Querejeta was promoted to major by Batista for his actions.

A New Arrangement with the United States

Ambassador Jefferson Caffery was sent to Cuba as a special representative of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. He could not be named to replace Ambassador Summer Wells because this action would have implied recognition of the government headed by Grau San Martín. Ambassador Wells, who had not been able to exert any positive influence on the events in Cuba, had been named Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs. Ambassador Caffery upon his arrival met with Colonel Fulgencio Batista and other members of the government to pass word that the United States would not recognize a government under Grau. U.S. naval units had been sent to Cuban waters and thousands of Marines were being readied in case they had to be sent in. But Mexico,

⁹ Cuban newspapers and magazines published descriptions of the two-day battle. One of the most interesting accounts of this bloody incident is included in Kuchilán's book Fabulario, op. cit., pp. 196-212.

Argentina, Brazil and other Latin American countries made strong representations in Washington with President Roosevelt to avoid direct intervention and the landing of Marines. President Roosevelt himself had admonished his envoy, "no marines."¹⁰

Ambassador Caffery, with the assistance of Mexican chargé d'affaires Octavio Reyes Spindola, gained Batista's confidence and arrived at an understanding with him. Grau San Martín was forced to step down January 16, 1934, by the military. Carlos Hevia was named to replace him as President, but in less than four days, Hevia was also forced out by Batista and his men, who placed Colonel Carlos Mendieta Montefur in the Presidency on January 18, 1934, with the backing of the Conjunto Nacional Revolucionario, Accion Republicana and the ABC. Antonio Guiteras and his followers, which included many enlisted men in the Navy, made a futile attempt to organize a general strike and oppose Batista's moves. The United States recognized the new government and moved to assist it to bring back some degree of economic and political order. Batista and his men in command of the Armed Forces began to enforce order with strong-arm measures.

On May 29, 1934, a new treaty was signed between the United States and Cuba and the Platt Amendment was revoked. In September of 1934 a new commercial reciprocity treaty was signed between both countries, giving Cuba many commercial advantages over other suppliers to the U.S. market. These changes helped the economy of the island to recover from very difficult years.¹¹

Military Reforms

One of the long-lasting complaints of the members of Armed Forces had been their exposure to civilian courts. As far back as 1902, President Estrada Palma and members of the Armed Forces had discussed the need to define on what grounds members of the military should be tried in civilian or military courts. The regulations under which the military operated, outlined in Guia de Consejos de Guerra y de Procedimiento, (Orden Militar of April 28, 2902), were not very clear. Violations of common law were under the juris-

¹⁰ Philip F. Fur, "Conditions for Recognition," Foreign Service Journal (September, 1985), pp. 44-46.

¹¹ The concept of "most favorite nation" treatment, which lowered U.S. duties on products imported from friendly countries, is based on this treaty between the United States and Cuba. Cuba was the first country to be granted special trade concessions by the United States.

diction of civilian courts. The jurisdiction of military courts was ill-defined. The military demanded the creation of a military tribunal or "fuero militar," because they held that the very nature of the job as law enforcement officers, exposed them to retaliation by civilians.

Batista granted the military its wish. A decree was issued on February 28, 1934, creating a military tribunal or "fuero militar." Two years later, in April of 1936, two more decrees, Numbers 803 and 804, created the Codigo Penal y Ley de Procedimiento Militar and the Ley de Procedimiento en la Jurisdiccion de Guerra. These decrees defined which violations of the law were under the jurisdiction of military courts and which violations were under the jurisdiction of civilian courts. These decrees together with the modification and enhancement of a retirement plan for members of the Armed Forces endeared Batista to the troops.

Batista Behind the Throne

Batista became, without a doubt, the strongman in Cuba and from his position as Chief of Staff of the Army maintained control of the government. Political agitation, particularly from the Communists and other far left groups, continued in the form of labor strikes. Finally on March 9, 1935, they called for a general strike, which was violently repressed by Colonel Jose Eleuterio Pedraza, who had become Chief of Police. He became the new "enforcer" and leader of the government's new law and order group. The Armed Forces took over the buses and trains and forced store owners at gun point to open their doors. Prominent political leaders such as Antonio Guiteras were forced to leave Cuba or were shot. Guiteras was killed in a gun battle with the Army while trying to leave Cuba by boat from Matanzas.¹²

President Mendieta lasted until December 10, 1935, when he resigned and was replaced by Secretary of State José A. Barnett Vinageras. Elections were held in January of 1936, with some of the old political figures once again seeking to become president. Miguel Mariano Gómez, son of ex-President

¹² During 1935, several prominent newspaper reporters, radio commentators, leftists, Communists, and many citizens who opposed Batista were arrested. Among them were:

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Guillermo Martínez Márquez | Julio Cesar Fernández |
| Juan Marinello | Lorenzo Frau Marsal |
| José Manuel Valdés Rodríguez | Levy Marrero |
| José Chelala Aguilera | Guillermo de Zéndegui |
| Regino Pedroso | Raul Primelies |
| Miguel Angel Quevedo | |

José Miguel Gómez was elected with Laredo Brú as his running mate and took office on May 20, 1936. Things seemed to be going back to normal. But by December of 1936 he had been impeached by Congress after he vetoed legislation which had been favored by Batista. Laredo Brú replaced him as President. Batista, however, was the man in power.

The Spanish Civil War

Again in 1936, a group of Cubans decided to participate in Spanish political life. This time Cuban radicals, both Communists and non-Communists, decided to join the International Brigades in Spain, fighting on the side of the government of the Spanish Republic against a right-wing insurrection of the military led, by General Francisco Franco.¹³

¹³ In an attempt to prevent the outbreak of civil war, Spanish King Alfonso XIII, had gone into exile in April of 1931, as different political groups fought for control of the country. Upon his departure a Republic was proclaimed with substantial popular support. Socialists, Communists, and other radical leftist groups were able to win control of Parliament in elections held in June of 1931. Their election was followed by widespread rioting, looting and burning of property owned by the Catholic Church and members of other conservative elements. Labor unrest led by Anarchist unions and Communists plunged the country into chaos. Anti-clerical measures taken by the government and the generally chaotic situation resulted in loss of popular support for the government. When new elections were held in 1933, right-wing elements were able to win back control of Parliament and abolished many of the reforms of the previous government. But as the economic and political tensions grew worse, a military insurrection started in July of 1936.

General Francisco Franco led the insurrection, which spread from the Canary Islands to Spanish Morocco, and from there to the mainland. Cadiz, Algeciras and Sevilla were taken by Franco. Other military barracks in the country joined the insurrection and the leftists in the government fought back by organizing a militia and calling on international help. The Soviet Union and Communist parties from throughout the world sent in assistance. Socialists and Anarchists, as well as many other revolutionary groups, also provided international assistance to their friends in Spain. Soon the conflict became internationalized with Germany and Italy providing close to 100,000 troops and weapons to Franco and his Nationalist forces.

Cuban Communists and other adventurers set up an office in New York City under the auspices of the Communist Party of the United States to sign up Cubans to fight alongside the American Abraham Lincoln Brigade. Rodolfo de Armas was one of the founders of the Abraham Lincoln Battalion (XV International Brigade). This unit was composed of Americans, Canadians, British, Irish and Cubans. Rodolfo de Armas reached the rank of lieutenant colonel and died in the battle for Madrid on February 23, 1937, at the age of 25. He had organized the "Centuria Guiteras." At least 50 and possibly as many as 150 Cubans signed up and went to Spain to fight against Franco. By November of 1936 the International Brigades were fighting in Spain and managed to contain Franco's advance. But by December of 1938, Franco's forces had started a final campaign to defeat the Republicans. The two major strongholds, Barcelona and Madrid, fell and by April of 1939 Franco had won the war.

Several Cubans were killed in the conflict, but even more significant was the fact that many managed to return to Cuba. Several became gangsters who gravitated from the right to the left and from the left to the right of the political spectrum. Some became common criminals. Two of the most prominent gangsters in the group were Emilio Tró and Rolando Masferrer. At age 20, Masferrer commanded the 401 Battalion of the 101 Brigade, 46th Division, of the Spanish Republican Army, and had been wounded in combat several times. Tró was killed in a gun battle in September of 1947, involving several rival members of the police force during the administration of President Grau San Martín 1944-48. (See next chapter for details.)

After breaking with the Communist Party, Masferrer formed his own political organization and became an enemy of the Communists. Later he became one of Batista's henchmen and organized a private Army under the name of "Masferrer's Tigers." After being a Communist militant he became a gangster. His days ended in Florida in 1975 when his car blew up when he turned on the ignition. He had been living in Florida since the overthrow of Batista in 1959, and was



Antonio Guiteras



Col. José E. Pedraza

possibly killed as part of gang warfare in the United States.¹⁴

Constitutional Convention

With Batista's support, a call was made in 1938 for a constitutional convention to draft a new constitution before the next general elections in 1940. Batista, in the meantime, carried out several programs to obtain popular support. For example, he organized a new teacher corps with sergeants in the Rural Guard to set up schools in remote rural areas (Sargentos Cívico-Militares). He used other resources of the military, such as the medical unit to deliver services to the poor. He also sought to make peace with organized labor, including most of the Communist-led trade unions. Batista and the Communist Party arrived at a working relationship in exchange for support for his ambitions to become president.¹⁵

¹⁴ Among the Cuban members of the International Brigades were:

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Agostini, Jorge | Morales, Mario |
| Alvarez, Leleio | Novas Calvo, Lino |
| Alvarez Izquierdo, Mario | Raigorosky, Moises |
| Arias de la Rosa, Rodolfo | Rivero Setien, Manuel |
| Bofill Lora, Jaime | Romero Padilla, Manuel |
| Candum, Policarpo | Sobrado, Mario |
| Cárdenas, Cuchifeo | Soria, Rolando |
| de Armas, Rodolfo * | Tró, Emilio |
| de la Torriente Brau, Pablo* | Vasallo, Ramón |
| Fajardo Boheras, Pedro | Meruelo, Homero* |
| Feria, Armentino | Rivero, Luis |
| Fernández, Eufemio | |
| Galán Vázquez, Gilberto | |
| González Lanuza, Andres | * killed in battle in Spain |
| Lahera, Santiago | |
| Masferrer Rojas, Rolando | |

Source: Jorge García Montes and Antonio Alonso Avila, Historia del Partido Comunista de Cuba (Miami: Ediciones Universal, 1970), pp. 212-213.

¹⁵ During Batista's term as President from 1940 to 1944, two Communist leaders were appointed to his Cabinet. They were Juan Marinello and Carlos Rafael Rodríguez. Forty years later in 1986, Carlos Rafael Rodríguez is a member of the Politburo and Central Committee of the Communist Party and one of Cuba's Vice-Presidents.

Batista allowed the Communists to take control of the labor movement. Lazaro Pena, a Communist leader, became the head of the newly formed Confederacion de Trabajadores Cubanos (CTC). With the support of the Ministry of Labor, the Communist-led trade unions were able to obtain many reforms and took control of the largest unions.

In December of 1939, Batista retired from the Army to run for office in the general elections of 1940. The Constitutional Convention was held and a new progressive constitution was drafted in 1940. Batista formed a coalition under the name of Democratic-Socialist Coalition, with the support of the Liberal Party, Conjunto Nacional Democratico, Unión Nacionalista, Revolucionario Realista, Popular Cubano, and Unión Revolucionaria Comunista to run for office. He defeated Dr. Ramón Grau San Martín, who ran against him with the support of the ABC, Partido Revolucionario Cubano Auténtico and Acción Republicana. The elections were held under the old constitution due to the fact that the implementation of the new one did not start until October 10, 1940. The old constitution did not provide for a direct vote for the presidency. The members of the House of Representatives elected the President. The old arrangement favored Batista because he had the support of a large coalition of parties with larger representation in Congress. Batista took office as President on October 10, 1940, the anniversary of the start of the Ten Years War in 1868.

World War II

In Cuba, as well as in the United States and other countries in the Americas, most people favored staying out of the conflicts in Europe and Asia. But the position of neutrality could not be maintained as different political groups changed their opinions about the war. The Communist Party, for example, was actively promoting a "peace movement" as long as Germany and the Soviet Union were allies. Upon Germany's invasion of Soviet territory, the Communist Party became a strong advocate of war against the Facists.

In the months preceding the outbreak of WWII, many changes took place in the Cuban Armed Forces. The problems started in February of 1941, with the resignation of the Chief of Police Lieutenant Colonel Bernardo García. The Chief of Staff of the Army, José Eleuterio Pedraza, took command of the police while a new chief was named. But almost immediately it was announced that Pedraza, as well as Lieutenant Colonel Angel A. González, the Chief of Staff of the Navy, had also resigned, and President Batista had taken personal

control of all the Armed Forces and was temporarily suspending civil rights granted by the constitution.¹⁶

Batista signed a decree to implement sections of the new Constitution of 1940, which gave several functions of the government back to civilian control. The Treasury, Public Works and Agriculture Ministries were to take control over lighthouses, the merchant marine and the maritime police. García, González and Pedraza objected to Batista's decree. These and other institutions had been in the control of the military for several years and the chiefs of the services resisted giving them back to civilian authority. Batista fired García, and had the latter two arrested on charges of sedition.

Batista moved quickly to retain control of the Armed Forces, placing sand bags and machine gun nests around the Presidential Palace and personally took control of the Armed Forces at Camp Columbia headquarters. In the tradition of 1933, Batista took his tie off, put on a leather jacket, grabbed a gun and went to the headquarters of the Armed Forces and contacted all military installations throughout the island to ascertain the loyalty of the commanding officers at each garrison.

Batista appointed Lt. Col. Manuel Benitez as Chief of Police and Lt. Col. Jesús Gómez Casas as Chief of the Navy, the following day. Benitez had been Chief of the Matanzas Military District prior to his appointment as Chief of Police. Gómez Casas had been Second Chief of the Navy. Lt. Col. Gutiérrez y Velázquez, who had commanded the Military District of Oriente, was also fired. He was replaced by Major Oscar Díaz. The next day, Batista appointed Colonel Manuel López Migoya as Chief of the Army. Prior to his appointment, López Migoya had been the Inspector General of the Army.¹⁷

Pedraza and his family and several close followers were allowed to leave the country and fly to Miami. The new Army Chief of Staff went to the airport with Pedraza and his entourage; possibly to guarantee their safe departure. Pedraza was generally hated by the population for his strong-arm tactics to put down political enemies. Men under his command had been guilty of savage acts against opposition groups. The

¹⁶ "Economic Program Offered by Batista," New York Times (February 2, 1941), p. 14, col. 4. Also: R. Hart Phillips "Cuban Army, Navy, Police Chief Dropped by Batista; Suspends Civil Rights," New York Times (February 4, 1941), p. 4, col. 1.

¹⁷ López Migoya joined the Army as a private and rose to become Chief of Staff. He was born in Cabañas, in Pinar del Rio Province, on May 30, 1900.

group included Lt. Col. Bernardo García, Major Juan Serrá, and Captain Owen Parr.¹⁸ With the departure of these men, a power struggle within the group of sergeants that had staged the rebellion of September 4, 1933, came to an end with Batista as the victor. The rank and file of the Armed Forces backed Batista over Pedraza.

The incident was over within 72 hours and Batista was seen as the hero who had saved "democracy" in Cuba. None other than Juan Marinello, leader of the Cuban Communist Party issued a statement praising Batista as "the savior of democracy in Cuba" and asked members of the Party to continue supporting him. U.S. Ambassador George S. Messersmith also went to the Presidential Palace to congratulate Batista on the measures he had taken to preserve a stable government in Cuba.

A month later, Col. Jesús Gómez Casas also resigned as Chief of the Navy. On March 7th, Batista replaced him with Col. Julio Diez Argüelles. Prior to his appointment, Diez Argüelles had been a personal aide to Batista at the Presidential Palace. Then rumors began to circulate that López Migoya, the new Chief of the Army had also resigned, despite denials issued by the government to that effect.¹⁹

Armed Forces Increased

On December 9, 1941, two days after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the Cuban Congress declared war on Japan. On December 11th, the Congress also declared war on Germany and Italy when these countries declared war on the United States. A national state of emergency was declared a few days later and this was followed by a decree establishing compulsory military service. Cuba once again was discovered as a strategic geographic location for the control of important trade routes in time of war. Coastal blackouts were ordered

¹⁸ "Col. M. López Migoya appt. Army Chief; Pedraza, Family and Aides leave for Miami; Lopez accompanies to plane," New York Times, (February 5, 1941), p. 1, col. 6. (Owen Parr was an American who fought in Cuba during the Spanish-American War as a member of the U.S. Army. After the war, he married a Cuban lady and decided to remain in Cuba. He joined the Rural Guard and served in the force for over 40 years. He was known for spending a lot of time helping to promote sports in Cuba among young people.)

¹⁹ "Col. J. Gómez Casas resigns as Navy Chief," New York Times (March 8, 1941), p. 5, col.3. Also: "Batista appts. Col. J. Diaz Argüelles," New York Times (March 9, 1941), p. 13, col. 2.; and " Army Chief of Staff M. López Migoya rept resigned," New York Times (March 14, 1941), p. 6, col. 6.

and negotiations were opened for granting Cuban military bases to the United States. Two important aircraft surveillance facilities were built at San Julian in Pinar del Rio and at San Antonio de los Baños in Havana. From these airfields antisubmarine warfare and pilot training programs were conducted by the United States.²⁰

The concept of mandatory military service met with strong resistance in Cuba during WWII, as it did during WWI, despite the fact that the war against the Axis Powers had the support of the vast majority of Cubans. In March of 1942 a compulsory military registration decree was signed. Voluntary enrollment for military drill was started in April at police stations and Army posts. But participation in this voluntary training did not provide an exception from registering for the draft.²¹ The compulsory military service law registration was started in August for 18-to-25-year-old-males.²² About 300,000 men in this age bracket were expected to register. In September Batista authorized the formation of the first infantry regiment of draftees.²³ A women's Civil Defense Corps was formed in 1942, and an Emergency Volunteer Military Service Corps was formed in January of 1943. Registration of males for military service continued through 1943. However, the first group of draftees was not inducted until January of 1944, when 1,400 men were called to enter the Armed Forces. Batista also recalled to active duty 48 former officers who had left the service or who had been ousted after the 1933 revolt.²⁴

Cubans in the United States Armed Forces

While many people objected in Cuba to the concept of compulsory military service, several hundred Cubans volunteered or

²⁰ Both of these facilities are now used by the Soviet Union for intelligence operations against the United States. The airfields were given back to Cuba in 1946.

²¹ "Compulsory Military Training Registration Decree Signed," New York Times (March 12, 1942), p. 7, col. 6. Also: "Voluntary enrollment for military drill begins," New York Times (April 2, 1942), p. 15, col. 2.

²² "Compulsory Military Service Law registration to start," New York Times (August 1, 1942), p. 9, col. 8

²³ "Batista authorizes 1st infantry regiment of draftees," New York Times (September 25, 1942), p. 4, col. 2.

²⁴ "Emergency Volunteer Military Service Corp," New York Times (January 5, 1943), p. 5, col. 5.

were drafted into the Armed Forces of the United States. Obviously, Cubans living in the United States as Resident Aliens were subject to the Selective Service System in that country. But many Cubans also went to the United States to voluntarily enter the Armed Forces.²⁵

In one month alone, in May of 1943, the Diario de la Marina, the leading conservative newspaper in Cuba, published the pictures of several Cubans and Cuban-Americans who were serving in the U.S. military. Among those listed in this newspaper was Essi Arnaz, the Cuban band leader and actor, whose picture was published on the front page of the newspaper being sworn into the service in Los Angeles by Captain Watterson. Other Cubans who were listed included Francisco Rueda Calvo, stationed at Fort Bliss, Texas, who had just graduated from training in Kansas and had become a "marksman" with machineguns; Sergeant Armando Lopez, also rated as a "marksman"; and Tony Jurado, who was receiving training in New Jersey and was about to be sent to California for additional training.

An interesting note was that Cuban women were also listed. Miss Victoria Mercedes Lagos-Besteiro was listed as having received a commission as a lieutenant in the U.S. Army. She was stationed at the time in Temple, Texas, and was a member of the Army Nursing Corps. The author does not know what ever happened to these men and women, but they represent an example of how Cubans have for generations served in the military of other countries and particularly in the United States.

Armed Forces Reorganization

A new bill to reorganize the Armed Forces was passed by Congress in 1942, which allowed for an increase in the personnel of the Armed Forces. In addition, the Chief of Staff of the Army was given the rank of major general, which was made retroactive to all previous holders of that position. Thus, Batista once again was given a promotion from retired colonel to retired major general. While in the service he never held the rank of general, since the highest rank in the military was that of colonel. In the Navy the rank of commodore was also created for the Chief of Staff of the Navy.

²⁵ Please note that by Cuban-Americans it is meant either Cuban immigrants who have become United States citizens or native Americans whose parents or grandparents were born in Cuba. Cubans holding only a U.S. residency permit continue to be Cuban citizens and, as such, they are referred to as Cubans.

In addition to the decrees creating a military court system, an improved retirement system for members of the military, and other legislation which improved benefits for the military, Batista also launched a very extensive building program. Hundreds of new buildings for barracks, schools, clubs, movie theaters, military academies, power plants, hangars, sports fields, hospitals and first aid stations were built between 1933 and the start of WWII. Many of the facilities used by the military prior to the sergeants' insurrection of 1933 had been inherited from the Spanish after their departure in 1898. Others had been temporary facilities built by the United States between 1898 and 1902. Most of them were old and obsolete. These new facilities made the life of the soldier more bearable.

For example, at Camp Columbia, the largest military base in Cuba, the following projects were completed:

- a new print shop
- new library building
- new school for children of enlisted men
- new barracks
- new club for enlisted men
- new movie theater with capacity for 2,300 people
- 32 new houses for corporals and soldiers
- 63 new houses for sergeants
- new stables
- new guard house and prison facility
- new building for signals corps
- new school for teaching illiterate soldiers to read and write
- new garage facilities
- new roads within the compound
- new wall around the compound
- new hangars for planes and improved runway at the military airport
- new building for the veterinary service
- new building for tank company

Throughout the island all military installations were improved. In addition to the new buildings, Batista made an effort to improve the image of the soldiers. For that purpose several new monuments to Cuban military heroes were built and a new pantheon for the military completed at the graveyard in Havana. Included in these new monuments was one for Sergeant Miguel A. Hernández, who had been killed during the Machado dictatorship for speaking out in support of the demands of the enlisted men. One of the largest building projects was a huge six-story military hospital at Camp Columbia with over 19,000 square meters. Batista was determined to maintain the loyalty of the military at any cost.

Army and Navy Air Services Increased

In March of 1941, the Naval Aviation Service only had four airplanes (three Wacco and one Lock-head). With the start of WWII a number of new planes were added to the force and the airport facilities at Punta Gorda, next to the Mariel Naval Academy were improved. The new planes included Gruman hydroplanes, Curtiss-Kingfishers, Vough-Sikorskys and Curtiss-Seagulls. These planes were used to patrol the Cuban coasts during the war.

The Army Air Force was also expanded considerably. The airfield (Teniente Buigas Airfield) at Camp Columbia was expanded and new hangars were completed. The government purchased the Almendares Hotel and converted it into barracks for 600 officers and enlisted men and for offices of the headquarters of the Army Aviation (Cuerpo de Aviación del Ejército). The pilot training school, which had been improved and expanded after the 1933 insurrection, was once again improved and expanded. Pilots were also sent to the United States for additional training. New AT-6 planes were acquired to replace older planes.

Counterintelligence Activities

In January 1942, Batista signed a decree to detain German and Japanese citizens and to seize their properties in Cuba. A concentration camp for Japanese and German prisoners was set up at the Isle of Pines. Several suspected German spies were arrested. At least one German spy was captured by Cuban authorities in what became a famous case. Heinz August Lüning was arrested and sentenced to death by a firing squad for operating in Cuba as a German spy and being responsible for the sinking of several U.S. and Cuban ships by German submarines.²⁶

²⁶ Heinz August Lüning, a native of Bremen, had been one of the espionage students of Paul Kraus and trained at the Hamburg Gestapo Spy School. He arrived in Cuba on September 11, 1941, on the liner Villa de Madrid, under the assumed name of Enrique Luni, claiming to be a Honduran-born Jew and represented himself as a refugee. He spoke Spanish well and could pass as a Spaniard with his looks. Lüning set up a fashionable women's apparel shop and took an apartment on Teniente Rey street in Havana, and began to report on ship movements in and out of the harbor using a low power radio transmitter. Lüning frequented bars patronized by sailors and even managed to pick up a Cuban mistress who worked at one of the bars as a singer and lady of the evening. British

In 1942, General Manuel Benitez, Chief of the National Police, created the Office of Investigations of Enemy Activities (Oficina de Investigación de Actividades Enemigas) with the assistance of the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation. The purpose of the organization was to track down German spies in Cuba and prevent sabotage of the Cuban economy by friends of the Nazi-Facists war effort. There were many people in Cuba, particularly Spanish immigrants, who were friendly to the Fascist cause and who engaged in sending goods through Spain to Germany. The German Embassy in Cuba prior to the war, had operated a school in Havana and had also obtained many followers.

Brigadier General Manuel Benitez and Captain Mariano Faget travelled to Washington to coordinate activities with the United States to combat Axis espionage in Cuba. General Benitez visited with J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, who praised the efficiency of the Cuban police under General Benitez. Hoover called the arrest of Luning a magnificent piece of police work. He further called the Luning affair the outstanding spy case of the Americas and praised the excellent scientific identification methods of the Cuban police.²⁷

United States-Cuban Cooperation

A supplementary military and naval cooperation pact was signed between the United States and Cuba in February of

and American postal sensors began to suspect the presence of a spy in Cuba and Luning became a suspect. The Cuban Intelligence Service was notified by the Federal Bureau of Investigation of the suspected activity of a German spy in Cuba. Before long Captain Faget, who headed the Cuban counter espionage unit, raided the Luning apartment and store. His radio was found in the cellar of the store by Captain Faget. Luning was arrested and made a confession, in which he stated that he had served under contract by German Admiral Canaris. He was sentenced to die by firing squad by the Cuban Supreme Court. His execution was carried out at the Castillo del Principe in Havana. For more information on Luning, see: Kurt D. Singer's Spies and Traitors of World War II, (New York: Prentice Hall, Inc. 1945).

²⁷ "Brig. Gen. M. Benitez Capt. M. Faget authorized to confer in Washington on combating axis espionage; Benitez and Hoover conf.," New York Times (November 1, 1942), p. 20, col. 1.

1943.²⁸ As has already been mentioned above, several American military installations were opened in Cuba to assist in the defense of the region, as well as for training pilots for the U.S. Army and Navy. A new military airport was built at San Antonio de los Baños (named Batista Airfield), which became a base for B-29's and B-50's. The airfield at Camp Columbia was expanded to become a base for B-24's. Another military airport was constructed at San Julian in Pinar del Rio. The pace of activity at Guantanamo also increased as an important base for antisubmarine warfare.

The small Cuban merchant marine was several times the victim of German submarines. For example, on June 6, 1942, a German submarine sunk the Cuban schooner Lalita. At least one Cuban sailor was wounded and the schooner sank. To help the Cuban Navy protect Cuban and other allied shipping near Cuban waters, several ships were transferred to Cuba from the U.S. Navy. On March 22, 1943, Commodore Julio Diez Argüelles received 12 submarine chasers which were transferred to the Cuban Navy from the United States so that Cuba could increase its participation in the war effort. Cuban naval cadets were also given training in the United States. A group of 50 cadets went to the United States in July of 1942 for training.²⁹

The small Cuban Navy proved to be efficient, and was able to achieve a new world record that stands to this day, when it sunk the German submarine U-176 in May of 1943, only two months after receiving the new subchasers. CS-13, an 83-foot subchaser, sank the U-176 in the Old Bahamas Channel. This kill not only established a new world record but the CS-13 was also the only small craft of any Navy to kill a submarine in American waters.³⁰

²⁸ "Supplementary Military and Naval Cooperation pact," New York Times (February 2, 1943), p.10, col.7.

²⁹ "50 Naval Cadets to U.S. for Training," New York Times (July 13, 1942), p. 3, col. 6.

³⁰ This incident is mentioned in Samuel Eliot Morison's The Two Ocean War: A short History of the United States Navy in the Second World War (Boston: The Atlantic Monthly Press Book, 1963), pp 119. Morrison also states that "Cuba was our most useful ally in North America excepting Canada. Her fleet of small gunboats took care of her coastal traffic and helped to escort the Florida-Havana seatrains."

Relations with the Soviet Union

After Germany invaded the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, even the Cuban Communists who had taken a pacifist position in relation to the war in Europe changed their tune. The committees which had been created under the scheme of "Pro Cuba fuera de la Guerra Imperialista" were quickly changed to agitation in favor of support for the war effort against the Facists. Diplomatic relations were opened with the Soviet Union and after a short visit of the Soviet Ambassador to the United States, Andrei Gromyko was named as the first Soviet Ambassador to Cuba in late 1943. This was followed by a strong Soviet public relations campaign in Cuba, which included the showing of films about the Soviet military and its achievements. Included were such films as Red Tanks, The Red Army in Action, Moscow Returns the Punches, and The Defense of Tsaratsin.

Prior to the opening of the Soviet Embassy, Cuban Communists maintained relationships with Soviet officials through their diplomatic missions in other countries. The Soviet diplomatic mission in Mexico was the most widely used. However, the Soviet embassies in Washington and Paris, as well as the Communist Party of the United States, were also frequently used to maintain relations with the Communist International and the Soviet Government. The opening of the embassy in Havana made it simpler to obtain support for the movement in Cuba.

It should be noted that the Soviet Ambassador, Andrei Gromyko, went on to become an important and long-lasting figure in the Soviet Union. He held the position of Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union for many years. His familiarity with Cuba may have been a very valuable asset to the Soviet Union after the Revolution of 1959.

Changes in Military Commands

President Batista continued to make changes in the command structure of the Armed Forces as the presidential elections of 1944 approached. In December of 1943, J. Aguila Ruiz replaced Commodore Julio Díaz Argüelles as Chief of the Navy. In June of 1944, within four months of the end of Batista's administration, Brigadier General Manuel Benítez was forced to resign and was replaced by Col. Antonio Brito, who had been the Assistant Chief prior to his appointment. The forced resignation seems to have been triggered by the discovery of a revolutionary plot involving Benítez and other officers. According to a statement issued by Army Chief of Staff López Migoya and Brig. Generals Francisco Tabernilla,

Ignacio Galíndez and Abelardo Gómez, Benítez wanted to use the power of the military to help the government party to win the elections of 1944.³¹ Benítez was arrested and allowed to go into exile in Miami.

Benitez was arrested as he returned from Miami in November of 1944, and was charged with murder and misappropriation of government funds. His replacement, Col. Antonio Brito, was arrested in March of 1945, as a co-conspirator with former Col. José E. Pedraza and others for trying to overthrow President Ramón Grau San Martín. A few months later, on November 28, 1945,³² Col. Brito was gunned down in Havana by unknown assailants.

Elections of 1944

Although few people expected Fulgencio Batista to give up power, general elections were held on schedule in 1944. Batista backed Carlos Saladrigas for the presidency, while the opposition parties once again nominated Dr. Ramón Grau San Martín, who went on to win the elections with an impressive majority of the vote. To everyone's surprise, the military did not interfere in the elections as had been promised by Batista and his Minister of Defense Sosa de Quesada. The era of Batista seemed to have come to an end, with a potential for a workable democratic system under the Constitution of 1940.

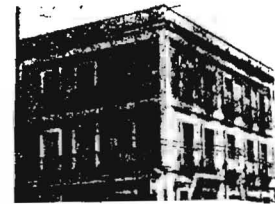
³¹ "Brig. Gen. M. Benitez resigns as National Police Chief; replaced by Col. A. Brito," New York Times (June 11, 1944), p. 46, col. 2. Also: "Benitez resignation caused by revolt plot," New York Times (June 14, 1944), p. 8, col. 2.

³² "Col. A. Brito, former Chief of Police Killed," New York Times (November 29, 1945), p. 5, col. 6.

CUBAN ARMED FORCES BUILDINGS
Circa 1935



La Fuerza Castle
Secretariat of War and Navy
General Staff of the Army



Office Building of the
General Staff of the Army



Secret Police Headquarters
Havana



Naval Academy Building
Mariel



Police Headquarters
Havana



Atarés Castle
Havana

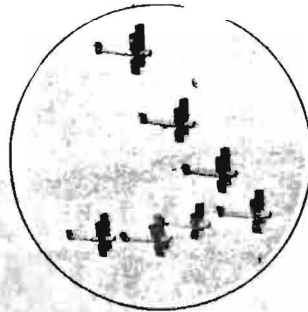


Fifth Regiment Headquarters
"Captain Hernández Ruda"
23rd Avenue and 30th Street
Vedado, Havana

CUBAN ARMY AND NAVY AIR CORPS



Cuerpo de Aviación del Ejército
Planes and Camp Columbia Field
Circa 1926



Flying in Formation
Circa 1926



Cuerpo de Aviación del Ejército
AT-6's Flying in Formation
Circa 1942



Formation of Vultees
Circa 1942



Naval Aviation
Gruman
1942



Naval Aviation
Kingfisher
1942



Naval Aviation
Curtiss-Seagull
1942

20 DE MAYO DE 1943

CUBAN WORLD WAR II POSTER
(Published in the Diario de la Marina on May 20, 1943)



EN LA UNION ESTA LA FUERZA.
Y EN LA FUERZA EL TRIUNFO



DEFIENDA A CUBA DE ESTOS AGRESORES

CUBAN PRESIDENTS 1936-1958



Col. Carlos Mendieta Montefur
1934-1935



Dr. Federico Laredo Brú
1936-1940



Sergeant/Colonel/General
Fulgencio Batista Zaldívar
1940-1944
1952-1958



Dr. Ramón Grau San Martín
1944-1948



Dr. Carlos Prío Socarrás
1948-1952

XIV. President Grau San Martín's Administration

On October 10, 1944, Dr. Ramón Grau San Martín was sworn in as President of Cuba. Several years of military rule under Machado and Batista came to an end as one of the leaders of the reform movement of the 1930's took office as President. The people expected improvements in the standard of living and greater respect for individual rights. They also hoped that the corruption that had been experienced in the previous years would come to an end, or at least be reduced. But most of the hopes of the population did not materialize.¹

President Grau's administration built new roads and schools, as well as many other public works. The economy improved despite inflation and shortages that resulted from the effects of WWII. At the same time that the economy was improving, public peace was increasingly disturbed by groups of gangsters and psychopaths who fought over territorial rights in the traditional rackets such as gambling, prostitution, drugs, etc.

¹ Please note that this book concentrates on the Cuban military and not on general economic issues. Other publications should be consulted for an overall view of President Grau's administration. A recent biography is Antonio Lancis, Grau: Estadista y Político: Cincuenta Años de la Historia de Cuba, (Miami: Ediciones Universal, 1985), 160 p. Dr. Grau San Martín was born on September 13, 1882, in La Palma, in the province of Pinar del Rio. His parents were Francisco Grau Viñas and María del Pilar San Martín. Both parents were immigrants from Spain. The father was Catalán and the mother was Asturiana. During the War of Independence the Grau family moved to Havana, where Ramón Grau San Martín completed secondary education and studied Medicine at the University of Havana. He was known as a very good clinical doctor and became professor of Physiology at the University. During the Machado dictatorship, Dr. Grau was arrested and sentenced to prison. In 1930, he was able to leave Cuba and went to the United States where he lived as a political exile. Although Dr. Grau himself may not have been directly involved in corruption, his family - Paulina, Pancho, Polita, Monchi and Nenita - were involved in many cases of graft and corruption. Dr. Grau was a bachelor, who though never married vox populi in Cuba, had a long-lasting affair with his sister-in-law. This was alleged the reason why his brother took his own life. He was also somewhat effeminate and his life-long bachelorhood was questioned in the "macho" Cuban society. However, this did not prevent him from developing a large following. He died on July 28, 1969, in Cuba. He was one of the few prominent Cuban political figures who refused to leave the island after the 1959 revolution.

The relaxation in government controls and greater degree of respect for the rights of individuals soon was translated into disregard for law and order. Several political organizations and political leaders became no better than gangs of outlaws and many of the young men who had been involved in political reform movements in the 1930's became gangsters. Assassinations became an increasingly frequent way of doing away with political rivals. Government jobs became a way of obtaining personal fortunes at the expense of the country. Money became a test of morality and friendship. The only sin was not to have wealth.

Relations with the United States

After his victory in the elections of 1944, Dr. Grau San Martin visited the United States, where he met with President Roosevelt and made statements to the effect that he wanted to continue good relations between the two countries. He was obviously trying to avoid the problems he had experienced in 1933 when the United States had not provided him support to hold the presidency. During his visit he repeated everywhere his desires for good relations and the need for the United States to maintain a presence in Cuba at the military bases built for the war effort.²

At a press conference at the Blair-Lee House across from the White House, Dr. Grau San Martin stressed the strategic importance of Cuba for the defense of the Americas. At another press conference in New York, at the Hotel Plaza, he again stressed that he did not want the U.S. to completely abandon its military bases in Cuba. He expressed his desire that the bases be maintained jointly by Cuba and the United States and pointed out that these bases were important to protect the Panama Canal and important trade routes in the Caribbean.³

Germany surrendered on May 7th and Japan on August 15, 1945. With the end of WWII the need for U.S. military bases in Cuba came to an end. As per the treaty signed between Cuba and the United States, preparations were made to vacate the bases within six months of the end of the war, despite Cuban efforts to keep the bases open, as they provided jobs and economic prosperity to the areas where they were located.

² "President Elect Grau San Martin urges that US-used bases be used to guard Americas after war," New York Times (September 3, 1944), p.18, col. 2. Also: "Urges US share mil. bases after war," New York Times (September 8, 1944), p.21, col.5.

³ Ibid.

The U.S. Navy urged retention of the Guantanamo Naval Base, but the airfields in Havana and Pinar del Rio were returned to Cuba. The San Julian airport was returned in January of 1946. The others were returned at a formal ceremony on May 20, 1946, the anniversary of Cuban Independence in 1902.

The Soviet newspaper Pravda had published at least one article in March of 1946, claiming that the United States was planning on holding on to the military bases in Cuba against the will of the Cuban people. Members of the Communist Party in Cuba also used the issue to agitate against the United States. But many Cubans who had worked at the bases or received indirect benefits from their presence had hoped to see them remain open. As already mentioned above, the San Julian and San Antonio de los Baños airfields are now used by the Soviets for spying on the United States.

President Grau and the Military

As soon as Dr. Grau took office on October 10, 1944, he began to make changes in the military commands to make sure that he had officers loyal to him in all positions of authority. At least 187 officers were dismissed in November of 1944. Many of the officers forced to retire left Cuba and went to live in Mexico. More officers were retired in December. Among them were Brigadier General Francisco Tabernilla and four of his aides at the La Cabafia Fortress. Colonel Gregorio Querejeta was appointed to replace Tabernilla.

This old fortress is a very strategic installation in the capital, located on high ground behind the Morro Castle, across the entrance to the harbor from Havana. From La Cabafia one can see a magnificent view of the city and of the Presidential Palace which is about one mile away across from the entrance to the harbor and a park. This installation housed several hundred soldiers and a section of the artillery unit of the Army.⁴

Starting in November 1944, rumors had been circulating that General Francisco Tabernilla was conspiring to stage a coup d'etat. His aides were rumored to be trying to convince him to do so. Tabernilla, himself, began to act in a suspicious manner; failing to obey orders. Tabernilla denied that he was conspiring but his close association with Batista was of

⁴ "Officers 187 dismissed by President Grau," New York Times (November 23, 1944), p. 12, col.2. Also: "President Grau San Martin relieves Brig. General Tabernilla and Four aides of Cabana Fortress commands and orders their retirement; appoints Col. G. Querejeta to replace Tabernilla," New York Times (December 30, 1944), p.4. col. 8.

concern to many members of Grau's administration. These concerns may have had solid foundations, since a little over seven years later, on March 10, 1952, he participated with Batista in a successful coup, taking over his old command at La Cabafia.

Autenticos vs. Batistianos and Communists

The hatred between the leadership of the Partido Revolucionario Autentico and Batista and his followers was deep. It went back to the 1930's, when Batista and revolutionaries who had participated in the anti-Machado movement clashed over control of Cuban politics. Within two months of Grau San Martin's take over his Minister of Labor, Carlos Prio Socarrás, made public his intentions to prosecute Batista and several members of his administration for misappropriation of government funds.⁵

Members of the Communist party who had been supporters of Batista also came under fire from the Autenticos, who for years had fought with them over control of the labor movement. Although Communists and Autenticos managed to find ways of cooperating with each other, particularly prior to the Congressional elections of 1946, they were on a collision course. When Dr. Grau took office as President, even the United States Embassy coached the new president to maintain a working relationship with the Communists and allow them to continue in important positions of leadership in the labor movement. But as soon as WWII was over, the politics of the Communist Party changed under directions from the Soviet Union. The United States became once again the "imperialist enemy" and a target for political action. In domestic politics, Communists moved away from the politics of national unity to a more militant role in opposition to the government.

When the Autenticos won a large victory in the congressional and local elections of 1946, they became even more militant in their purges of Batistianos, Communists and other members of the opposition from government jobs. In the labor movement in particular, an effort was made to take leadership positions away from Communists. The showdown came in 1947 at the Fifth Meeting of the Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC). The Communists were forced to give up their control of the labor movement to Autenticos, as well as to other non-Communists labor leaders. A new leadership of the organized labor movement developed gradually under Eusebio Mujal with

⁵ "Dr. Socarras asks court to prosecute former Pres Batista; charges misappropriation of funds," New York Times (December 17, 1944), p.23, col. 1.

the support of the Auténticos, particularly that of Carlos Prío Socarrás.

Military Conspiracies

On February 28, 1945, General Manuel López Migoya resigned as Army Chief of Staff and was replaced by Colonel Genovevo Pérez Cámara. Within a few days, on March 18th, former Colonels José Eleuterio Pedraza, Antonio Brito, and 41 former and current members of the military were arrested for plotting to overthrow the government. The plan had called for the assassination of General Pérez Cámara, the new Chief of Staff of the Army, as well as President Grau San Martín.

Former President Fulgencio Batista was quick to denounce the plot organized by his old rival, José Eleuterio Pedraza. A quick trial was held starting on March 26th, with the accused pleading "not guilty." Within days, 14 of the 41 who had been arrested were released. Finally, Pedraza and five other former officers were convicted and sentenced to jail. (This incident is known in Cuba as the "Cepillo de Dientes" conspiracy.)

But the plots and counterplots, as well as rivalries involving former and active members of the military, continued. On April 24, 1945, the Chief of the Secret Police, E. Enriquez, was gunned down. On November 28th, former Chief of Police and co-conspirator with Pedraza, Antonio Brito, was also gunned down by unknown assailants. In December weapons were found at a farm owned by Lt. Col. E. Menéndez, a close aide to former President Batista. Menéndez was arrested and charged with possession of weapons of war.

Another plot was discovered in the military in May of 1946 by an intelligence unit under the direction of Army Chief of Staff General Pérez Cámara. This time the leader of plot seems to have been a corporal named F. Díaz Rodríguez who was arrested, tried and convicted, together with several followers.

Gangsterism

As already mentioned above, many of the idealistic young men of the 1930's who had participated in the revolution against Machado or who had fought in the Spanish Civil War became gang leaders in the late 40's. These were the so-called

"grupos de acción."⁶ For example, Rolando Masferrer and Eufemio Fernández, veterans of the Spanish Civil War and Communist activists broke away from the Communist Party and formed their own organization. They formed the Movimiento Socialista Revolucionario and became bitter enemies of their old comrades. From the pages of the newspaper El Tiempo they began to expose the corruption and immorality of prominent leaders of the Communist Party. At the same time, they formed their own private army and progressively deteriorated into behavior that would make the old Chicago gangs in the United States look like Boy Scouts. In addition to Masferrer's MSR, there were two other large groups: Unión Insurreccional Revolucionaria (UIR) and Acción Revolucionaria Guiterras (ARG).

Gangsterism Within the National Police

One of the most significant developments of the administration of Grau San Martín was the development of rival gangs, within the ranks of the police, who behaved increasingly like common criminals. On March 4, 1947, Lt. Col. Fabio Ruiz Roja was named Chief of Police to replace General A. Gómez. On September 15, 1947, a factional battle within the police led to a heavy gun battle in a suburb of Havana. The incident involved the UIR and the MSR.

In the early afternoon of Monday September 15, 1947, several members of the Servicio de Investigaciones e Informaciones Extraordinarias (SIIE), led by Major Mario Salabarría Aguilar, knocked on the door of the home of Major Antonio Morín Dopico, located near the corner of 8th street and Columbia Avenue, in the Marianao suburb of Havana, near Camp Columbia. Majors Salabarría and Roberto Meoqui with several members of the SIIE and several civilian gangsters led by Orlando León Lemus, "El Colorado," were carrying an arrest warrant signed by Judge J. M. Riera Medina for another gangster named Emilio Tró, as well as several of his followers.⁷

⁶ To this day there are some Cubans who believe that the members of these action groups were not gangsters. They claim that these groups were made up of young professionals who were idealistic and wanted to bring about social reform. They were often employed as body guards by elected officials and politicians in general. In this role they often became implicated in violent acts, according to Cubans interviewed by the author. They deny that they were involved in the rackets, etc. The author does not endorse these views and believes they were gangsters.

⁷ Emilio Tró was, like Masferrer and Eufemio Fernández, a veteran of the Spanish Civil War.

The warrant was issued in connection with the assassination a few days earlier of Captain Raul Avila Avila, who was the Chief of the Public Health Service Police Department (Policia del Ministerio de Salubridad).

The police raid was met with gunfire from Major Antonio Morin Dopico's residence, where Emilio Tró, Maurin Dopico and several other men were hiding. A machine gun battle ensued which lasted over two hours, and ended only when the Army sent tanks from Camp Columbia to put an end to the fighting. Six people, including the pregnant wife of Major Morin Dopico, were killed and at least twelve wounded, including Morin Dopico's small daughter.

Police investigation of the incident and depositions given in court revealed substantial information on the amount of corruption in the police, and particularly in the SIE.⁸ The Havana Post, in its edition of October 5, 1947, carried information given by Second Lieutenant Armando Correa Morales in his deposition to the judicial panel investigating the case. He claimed that Major Salabarría had asked Jesús Dieguez Lamaya and Emilio Tró to assassinate well known newspaperman Ramón Vasconcelos.⁹ When they refused, Salabarría promised to take revenge. According to Lt. Correa Morales, Dieguez and Tró had met with President Grau and had given him a list of all the gambling dens controlled by Major Salabarría and Chief of Police Fabio Ruiz. According to Correa Morales, Tró was informed that the Chief of Police had given Salabarría several machineguns to be used to hunt him down. He claimed that Tró had told him that he had sought refuge at the home of Major Morin Dopico.

To illustrate the level of violence during this incident, Major Morin Dopico asked for a halt in the fighting and came out of the house unarmed, holding his wounded small daughter (Miriam) over his head, and ran to his car to rush her to the Columbia Military Hospital a few blocks away. His pregnant wife followed him out of the house concerned about their daughter. As Morin Dopico entered his car, Major Salabarría

⁸ This intelligence unit was the result of the reorganization of the old Servicio de Investigación de Actividades Enemigas, which was led during WWII by Major Mariano Faget, and had been responsible for the arrest of German spy Luning.

⁹ Dieguez, a close friend of Emilio Tró, was the Secretary General of the Organización Insurreccional Revolucionaria, one of the several allegedly "revolutionary" groups that existed at this time. Tró himself was a member of Joven Cuba, another similar group. Readers may remember that Emilio Tró had been a member of the International Brigades and had fought in the Spanish Civil War. His background was as a leftist and Communist.

was quoted as having screamed to Major Meoqui "do not let him get away alive." Gunfire resumed and Mrs. Morin Dopico was shot. A black policeman walked over to her and discharged his Thompson machinegun into her as she lay on the sidewalk.

Emilio Tró was killed by Juan Valdés Morejón. Police Lieutenant Mariano Puertas, "Yeyo," was killed by the brother of known gangster Orlando León Lemus ("El Colorado"), whose men were fighting alongside Salabarrías. Among the wounded were Morin Dopico's driver and maid. Among the policemen wounded were Martín Soto Rodríguez, Mario Sánchez Barnet and Sergeant Felipe González Armas.

General Ruperto Cabrera, Chief of Staff of the Army, called the Chief of Police during the gun battle and told him to put an end to the fighting or he would send in his own men to do the job. When the fighting did not stop, Cabrera sent tanks and men to arrest all the participants. Army Lt. Col. Landeiras personally arrested Major Salabarría and several other police officers. Major Morin Dopico was arrested at Camp Columbia. Within hours other police officers were arrested for investigation, including Benito Herrera, the Chief of the Secret Police. The SIIIE was disbanded by order of President Grau. Among the officers who investigated the incident for President Grau was Lt. Col. Antonio Díaz Baldoquin, who seems to have had a personal interest in combating the gangsters.

Within a week Colonel Enrique Hernández Nardo was named as the new Chief of Police, with instructions to reorganize the department. Captain José M. Rego Rubio was named to reorganize the SIIIE under a new name, under the direct orders of Col. Hernández Nardo. Over 15 members of the police department were arrested and court-martialed for their participation in the factional fight.¹⁰

¹⁰ For additional information see: "Disuelto el SIIIE mediante Decreto," Diario de la Marina, (September 30, 1947), p.1., col.1. ; "Para evitar reacciones traté de que no Exhibieran la film de los sucesos de Marianao," Diario de la Marina, (September 18, 1947), p. 1., col.2. ; "El ejército vigilará por el orden público," Diario de la Marina (September 18, 1947), p. 1., col. 2. "Los Graves Sucesos de Ayer en el Reparto Benitez," Diario de la Marina (September 16, 1947), p.1. and several other pages throughout the newspaper, including several pictures. The Havana Post also carried the story on page 1, on the edition of October 5, 1947. The New York Times also carried several articles on this incident. "Attempted arrest of 2 police majors for complicity results in factional police battle," New York Times (September 16, 1947), p. 15, col. 5.; "Army authorities round up groups," New York Times (September 19, 1947), p. 8, col. 8.; "Ct.

Major Salabarría was sentenced by an Army court-martial on March 8, 1948, to thirty years imprisonment for murder and a year and a day for public disorder. Major Morin Dopico was sentenced to serve a year and a day for public disorder. A captain, a lieutenant and five policemen were given sentences ranging from six months to 25 years.¹¹

Cayo Confites Incident

Within days of the gun battle in Marianao, another famous incident took place in Cuban history. Police and Army investigators working on the factional fighting between gangsters in the National Police found large quantities of weapons at a farm (finca "Americas") in the municipality of Calabazar in the province of Havana. Several men were arrested at the farm, as well as at the Rancho Boyeros Airport and surrounding vicinity. This was the main civilian airport that provided service to the capital.

In the process of investigating the source of the weapons and their intended use, they discovered that a large force, of as many as 1,500 men, was undergoing training for an invasion of the Dominican Republic to overthrow dictator Rafael L. Trujillo. Army, Navy and Police units throughout the country were given instructions to arrest all the people involved in this conspiracy.

The chief organizer turned out to be Rolando Masferrer. The invasion force consisted of three battalions, under the command of other veterans of the Spanish Civil War, including both Cubans and Spaniards. Among the Spaniards were Carlos Gutierrez Menoyo, Daniel Martín Lavandero and Ignacio González, all former officers in the Spanish Republican Army. One of the recruits was a student at the University of Havana named Fidel Castro.¹²

martial of police involved in September gun fight opens," New York Times (December 2, 1947), p.4, col. 6.

¹¹ "Police Leader is Jailed," New York Times (March 9, 1948), p. 11, col.6.

¹² Carlos Gutierrez Menoyo was killed on March 13, 1957, leading an assault on the Presidential Palace in an attempt to kill Fulgencio Batista. He had arrived in Cuba in 1947, months before the Cayo Confites incident. Daniel Martín Lavandero was a veteran of the Spanish Civil War and an activist in the International Socialist Movement. He arrived in Cuba in 1943. In 1950, two years after Cayo Confites, he went to Guatemala to participate in another plan to overthrow Trujillo. After 1952, he began to take part in anti-Batista

The Cuban Navy sent several frigates and smaller gunboats to several small keys along the north coast of Cuba, to pick up the main group of would-be invaders. Over 1,300 were arrested between September 20th and October 1, 1947. Some were intercepted on board ships, as close as eight miles from the Dominican coast. Others were arrested at Cayo Confites, which had been the location of the main training camp. Training sites in Oriente, Camagüey and Las Villas provinces were found and arrests made, although some of the men managed to escape. (A famous story about Fidel Castro's early days in politics says that, rather than facing capture, he swam across shark-infested Nipe Bay with a machine gun on his back). The members of the force, including the leaders, were charged with violating Articles 141 and 143 of the Penal Code.

According to multiple press accounts on the "Cayo Confites" incident, Cuban Government officials, including President Grau and Army Chief of Staff Genovevo Pérez Dámera, had known of the conspiracy to invade the Dominican Republic and had provided considerable assistance to Masferrer and his men. General Pérez Dámera and other officials were said to have visited the camps and Cuban military aircraft to have been used to deliver food and other supplies to the training camps.

The titular civilian head of the invasion force was a Dominican millionaire and ex-member of the diplomatic corps, "general" Juan Rodríguez. Juan Bosch, a Dominican poet and writer who had been living in Cuba, was also named as one of the leaders of the group.¹³ But the vast majority of the men

activities. Finally, in July of 1956, he was arrested by Chief of Police Salas Cañizares, and was caught after escaping from the Castillo del Príncipe prison on December 30, 1956, and killed by police. Masferrer became a supporter of Batista in the 1950's and ran a private army that hunted down revolutionaries opposed to the regime.

¹³ Juan Bosch is one of those strange men often found in Latin American politics. He was born in the Dominican Republic in 1909 and was forced into exile by dictator Rafael L. Trujillo. Bosch became famous as a poet and writer of short stories in which the life of Caribbean-area, poor farmers is depicted. In Cuba he came under the protection of the Partido Auténtico, which provided him sinecures in the Cuban Ministry of Education, so that he could spend his time in anti-Trujillo politics. He also received assistance from Fulgencio Batista. One of his sons participated in the training for the Bay of Pigs invasion, although he never took place in the landing. Upon Trujillo's assassination in 1961, Bosch returned to the Dominican Republic to run for president. With the help of several Cuban politicians,

were young Cubans who had been recruited to participate in the adventure with vague promises made by Masferrer and his followers. Once they arrived at the camps they were mistreated and placed under very strict military discipline. One of the interesting aspects of the training camps is that the men let their hair and beards grow more or less in the same fashion as the guerrilla units fighting against Batista did in the 1950's.

The invasion conspiracy could not have taken place without government knowledge. At least twelve military planes, including P-38's, had been obtained in the United States and were flown to Cuban airfields by American and British pilots who were veterans of WWII. They had several ships and large quantities of new weapons, including anti-tank guns, mortars, bazookas, heavy machine guns, and millions of rounds of ammunition. Several members of the Cuban military were also active in the conspiracy, including Captains Eufemio Fernández and Isaac Araña. Some of the men arrested, when interviewed by the press, were even able to give the numbers of Cuban Navy planes that had been used to carry supplies to them (numbers 106 and 107). Dominican Government officials even charged that Ernest Hemingway had provided assistance to the international brigade which had been formed to invade the Dominican Republic.¹⁴

About a month before the conspiracy to invade the Dominican Republic was "discovered," the Dominican Government had requested the assistance of the Inter-American Peace Committee

including Diego Vicente Tejera and Santiago Rey, he was elected President in 1963. He had made a deal with anti-Castro Cubans to let them use his country as a base to prepare an invasion of Cuba to overthrow Fidel Castro, as well as to pay back for all the years of protection he had received from them in Cuba. But after his election, Bosch would not let them use the Dominican Republic as a military base. He did, however, provide them with sugar quotas and other ways of earning money. But without the support of the more militant Cuban exiles, he was overthrown by right-wing Trujillista military officers within nine months of his election. Since then, Bosch has moved through a rainbow of political definitions, and is now on friendly terms with Fidel Castro, and proclaims himself a Marxist. He probably wants to forget about his affiliation with gangsters such as Rolando Masferrer.

14 "Acusado Hemingway de alentar a la invasión de Santo Domingo," Diario de la Marina (September 30, 1947), p.1, col. 7. Hemingway had participated in the Spanish Civil War and was a well-known supporter of leftist groups. He was living in Cuba at the time. Considering the large number of veterans of the Civil War involved in the conspiracy it is possible that he was involved.

to ward off an invasion being prepared in Cuba. The Inter-American Peace Committee had been created in 1940, on the eve of WWII, at the Second Meeting of Consultations of Foreign Ministers from the Western Hemisphere, held in Havana. However, the Committee had never been used before. The Dominican request was presented on August 13, 1947. As a result of this Dominican action, the Cuban Government was under international pressure to put an end to the plans.

The Cayo Confite incident was not isolated. It was part of a movement of "revolutionaries" in the Caribbean Basin designed to overthrow dictatorial regimes in the region. The movement, known as the "Caribbean Legion," had as one of its leaders President Juan José Arévalo (1945-50) of Guatemala. Although an "army" or a "legion" never did exist, the loose organization was able to assist José Figueres in Costa Rica to put an end to a move by revolutionaries with possible Communist sympathies to prevent the inauguration of a legally elected government headed by Otilio Ulate in 1948. Figueres, like many other members of this movement, was a Socialist but also an anti-Communist, who wanted to overthrow Latin American dictators. They included followers of Romulo Betancourt in Venezuela and Juan Bosch of the Dominican Republic. There was a strong affinity between the leadership of the Auténtico Party in Cuba, most of whom were formed in the struggle against Machado in the early 1930's, with members of other non-Communists political groups in the region who talked about bringing about social change. But as the assortment of different individuals who participated in the Cayo Confite incident shows, the group was very amorphous.

It is unclear whether the invasion force was ever intended to be used inside Cuba to overthrow the administration of President Grau San Martín. Press reports quoted several young Cubans, arrested for their participation in the conspiracy, who said that Masferrer had ordered them to open fire on the Cuban Navy and make every possible attempt to reach Dominican territory, or die in the process. They are quoted as having refused to fight against the military of their own country even under threats of death by Masferrer and his lieutenants. Masferrer may just have been trying to accomplish his goal of reaching the Dominican Republic. But he also may have been involved in a secret agenda with members of the Cuban military.¹⁵

¹⁵ For additional information on the Cayo Confites incident see: "Al fracasar la invasión contra Santo Domingo sus dirigentes intentaron entonces emplear las armas y hombres contra el gobierno de Cuba," Diario de la Marina (September 30, 1947), p.1. col. 1; "Libertan a un grupo de expedicionarios," Diario de la Marina (October 3, 1947), p.1. col. 3; "Detenido en Miami el piloto que trajo a Cuba un caza P-38,"

Gangsterism at the University of Havana

The University of Havana, instead of concentrating on producing professionals to guide the country into the future, produced gangster apprentices. One of the principal student leaders was Manolo Castro, who had been elected President of the Federation of University Students (FEU) with the support of young Communists. Upon the end of his term and at the start of the 1947-48 school year, a power struggle developed to take over the FEU.¹⁶

Manolo Castro, with support of the Communists, backed Isaac Araña to become the new President of the FEU. Other candidates were Fidel Castro and Humberto Ruiz. Fidel Castro was forced out of the race when he failed to win the presidency of the Law School. The forces of the right and the left were fairly evenly matched. In the end two slates were formed with Enrique Ovares, José Luis Masó and Alfredo Guevara representing the leftists. Humberto Ruiz Leiro, José Ignacio Rasco and Fidel Castro formed the opposition slate representing more moderate and perhaps even right-wing elements. Ovares, Masó and Guevara won the elections with the support of Manolo Castro. Before long, Manolo Castro was slain in downtown Havana, on February 22, 1948.

Each school within the university was controlled by its own student organization, which often acted as mini-dictators

Diario de la Marina (October 3, 1947), p.1, col. 3; "Felicitado el ejército por su actuación," Diario de la Marina (September 28, 1947), p.1, col. 2; Dominican Expeditionary Force, "The Havana Post" (October 5, 1947), p.1, col. 7; The New York Times carried articles on the following dates on this incident: September 19, 1947, p. 19, p.8, col. 8; September 20, 1947, p. 4, col. 7; September 21, 1947, p. 47, col. 8; September 22, 1947, p. 7, col.1.; September 24, 1947, p. 8, col.3; and September 27, 1947, p. 6, col. 6.

¹⁶ Manolo Castro was also involved in the Cayo Confites incident. He was arrested in Jacksonville, Florida, on October 2nd, 1947, by U.S. Customs and charged with exporting weapons to Cuba. He was released on \$5,000, and was to appear in court on November 24, 1947. At the time of his arrest he held a "job" in the Cuban Government as "Sports Director." Also arrested in connection with the smuggling of weapons to Cuba was Arthur Roscoe, of Hollywood, California, for piloting a P-38 to Cuba on August 15, 1947, and being one of the foreign pilots involved in the September 24, 1947, Cayo Confites incident. "Detenido en Miami el piloto que trajo a Cuba un Caza P-38," Diario de la Marina (October 3, 1947) p. 1. col. 2.

with strong hegemony over everything in their respective schools. Disputes often ended in assassinations. For example, two of these young gangsters, Orlando León Lemus ("El Colorado") and Policarpo Soler, killed Justo Fuentes, a Vice President of the FEU.

At least two attempts were made to kill Rolando Masferrer within one year. The first attempt was early in 1948. The second known case was in September of 1948. He accused Fidel Castro of being involved in the attempted assassination. Masferrer also believed that Castro had been implicated in the assassination of Manolo Castro and other gangland killings.¹⁷

Fidel Castro also surfaced in 1948, as a participant in a preliminary organizational meeting in Bogota to hold a Latin American Congress of University Students, which was being funded by Peronist and Communist elements. This meeting was held at the same time as the Second Pan American Conference, organized to form the Organization of American States to replace the old Pan American Union as a regional organization within the United Nations. While these meetings were taking place, a popular Colombian Liberal Party leader, Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, was assassinated. The assassination triggered major rioting throughout Bogota, in which hundreds were killed. (It is estimated that about 1,300 people were killed in Bogota and about 300 more throughout Colombia. Damages were estimated at \$500 million.) Castro and other Cuban students sought refuge at the Cuban Embassy and were returned to Cuba under the protection of Cuban authorities. It has been alleged that Fidel Castro participated in the street riots and may have been one of the prime instigators of the violence.

Political Gangsterism

Political violence and gangster-like behavior was common in the politics of the time. For example, the Chief of the Secret Police, E. Enriquez, was assassinated in April of 1945.

¹⁷ Fidel Castro has been implicated by several authors in criminal acts during his student days at the University of Havana. Castro is said to have shot a rival student, Leonel Gomez, in the abdomen. He has also been implicated in the assassinations of Manolo Castro and Fernández Casals, who was a sergeant in the police security force of the university. However, he was never prosecuted for these incidents and this author has not found any convincing proof that he did participate in these incidents. No evidence has been uncovered to suggest that he did not participate in these incidents either.

In September of 1945, Congressmen Cremata and Urquiza fought a duel. Two months later in November, Senator Casanova and Dr. N. Pinango fought a duel over criticism in a political article which appeared in the press. Liberal Congressman Cuevas Rivero was killed in Manzanillo by R. Sánchez in April of 1947. Secretary of Labor Carlos Prio Socarrás resigned his position and fought a duel at the National Capitol in July of 1947, with rival politician Senator Eduardo Chivás. After the duel, Prio was given his job back by President Grau. Dueling, it should be pointed out, was illegal in Cuba. The month before in October, A. Vinent Juliá was killed by Senator Cañas Milanés.

These are only a few samples of the degree of violence in Cuban society in the late 1940's. In addition to all the assassinations and gun battles in the streets between rival politicians and bands of gangsters, other forms of terrorism were practiced. Bombings of public buildings or the homes of political enemies were also very common. Labor strikes also lead to clashes between the Armed Forces and workers in which casualties were suffered by both sides. As different political groups fought to take control of the organized labor movement, clashes between armed bands supporting the different groups were also common.

Elections of 1948

The two main political issues for the elections of 1948 were public order and political corruption. All candidates made promises to put an end to the disturbances of public order and gangsterism. They promised political reforms to put an end to wholesale graft and corruption in the country. Carlos Prio Socarrás, Grau's Secretary of Labor, received his endorsement and the Autenticos were put back in power with a majority in Congress. Prio and his running mate, Guillermo Alonso Pujol, were elected with 905,108 votes.

Running against Prio Socarrás were Ricardo Nuñez Portuondo and Gustavo Cuervo Rubio who had the backing of a Democratic/Liberal Coalition. They came in second with 599,364 votes. Eduardo Chivás and Roberto Agramonte ran under the banner of the Partido Ortodoxo, and received 324,634 votes. The Communist Party was not able to form a coalition with other parties, as in the past, and put forward its own candidates, Juan Marinello and Lázaro Peña. They came in last with 142,972 votes.

The elections of 1948 were also significant due to the fact that former President Fulgencio Batista was elected to the Senate, thus reentering Cuban politics. He was already testing the waters for running again for President in the

future. Four years later he took power by means of a military coup d'état.



El ex presidente GRAU.



El presidente PRIO.

Former Presidents Ramón Grau San Martín and Carlos Prío Socarrás, Carteles, Nov. 5, 1950



Jurando ante el Tribunal.

Major General Genevevo Pérez Dámara

Major General Genevevo Pérez Dámara being sworn in as Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces on March 7, 1945, at the Tribunal Superior de la Jurisdicción de Guerra. Present at the ceremony were Generals Abelardo Gómez Gómez, Colonels Gregorio Querejeta y Valdés, Ruperto Cabrera, Otalio Soca Llanes and Lieutenant Colonels Pedro Norat Buttari, Morales y Patiño and Enrique Hernández Nardo.

MILITARY LEADERSHIP DURING PRESIDENT GRAU'S ADMINISTRATION



General Ruperto Cabrera



Commodore José Aguila Ruiz



General Enrique Hernández Nardo
Chief of the National Police



General Gregorio Querejeta
Military Chief of La Cabaña

XV. President Carlos Prio Socarrás' Administration

President Carlos Prio Socarrás carried out many of his promises for economic reform and produced relative economic prosperity in Cuba during his administration. The prosperity was in part induced by the Korean War. The start of the war in 1949 contributed to increases in the world price of sugar and other important Cuban exports. During his administration several laws were enacted to continue the process of implementation of the provisions of the 1940 Constitution. The legislation created new institutions, including the National Bank, the Tribunal of Accounts, the Chamber of Constitutional and Social Guarantees and the Bank for Agricultural and Industrial Development. New universities were formed in Santa Clara and Santiago de Cuba. New schools were built throughout the country and the percentage of children attending school was increased substantially, despite frequent scandals, as a result of corruption in the Ministry of Education. Graft and corruption continued at almost the same pace as in the previous administration. Public order continued to be affected by bands of gangsters who fought over political differences.

An example of President Prio's involvement in the general lawlessness is the following anecdote. Colonel Antonio Díaz Baldoquín, an attorney who worked as counsel for the National Police, took over temporarily as Chief of Police. He had been a personal friend of President Prio since student days when both were studying at the University of Havana and were members of revolutionary groups fighting against the dictatorship of Gerardo Machado. Baldoquín attempted to put an end to gangsterism and spent several days and nights in hot pursuit of several of the most prominent leaders such as Orlando Leon Lemus "el Colorado" and "Jinjaume." He was able to arrest several of them and police killed others in

¹ President Carlos Prio Socarrás was born in Bahía Honda, a town located in Pinar del Rio, on July 14, 1903. His parents were Antonio Prio and Mónica Socarrás. He was a member of the Directorio Revolucionario Estudiantil after 1930, and was active in the efforts to overthrow the Machado dictatorship. He graduated from law school in 1934 and became very active in politics. In 1939, he was a member of the Constitutional Assembly and was elected to the Senate the following year. He served in the Senate from 1940 to 1948, while at the same time he also served as Prime Minister in 1945 and as Secretary of Labor in the administration of President Grau. Prio took his own life in Miami, Florida, on April 5, 1977. Readers should remember that the general thrust of this book is the military. For a more thorough analysis of President Prio's administration readers should consult other publications.

shootouts. But Baldoquin was tired, had not had much sleep, and wanted to be relieved of his duties and have a new chief appointed.

Baldoquin went to La Chata, Prio's country home, to explain his predicament and ask for his relief. He was surprised to find President Prio having lunch with one of the most notorious gangsters. The population was fed up with this kind of corruption and general lack of public order in the country.²

Relations with the United States

A few months after taking office as President, Carlos Prio Socarrás was invited to Washington for an official visit. In December of 1945 he visited the White House and met with President Truman. Prio was given the United States Legion of Merit and pledges of economic assistance. Prio in turn made statements in support of continued good relations with the United States. During the visit the President signed, as a representative of the Cuban Government, the Rio de Janeiro Pact. The pact provided for the joint defense of all states in the Americas in case of aggression against any of them from within the continent, or by forces from outside the Western Hemisphere.

² Colonel Díaz Baldoquin's claim to fame was based on his participation in a famous incident during Machado's dictatorship. He had participated in a student demonstration outside of the University of Havana, and had wrestled with a policeman who had attacked a fellow student, Rafael Trejo. The policeman's gun discharged and Trejo was killed. He thus became a martyr for the revolutionaries. A famous picture of the incident, showing Trejo, Baldoquin and the policeman wrestling was published in all the leading papers of the time, making Baldoquin a "hero" for his participation in the incident. Baldoquin was an honest policeman, who died in Cuba in the 1970's, living on his retirement pension. Trejo's parents for many years, even after the 1959 Revolution, lived off the death of their son, obtaining sinecures with practically every administration. Orlando León Lemus was killed in a gun battle with police in February of 1955. A few hours before Fulgencio Batista was due to be inaugurated as "President" on February 24, 1955, police raided the home of "el colorado" after being informed that he was involved in a conspiracy against Batista. León Lemus had been involved in anti-Batista activities in the 1930's and 40's and rewarded by becoming a government-coddled racketeer during administrations of Grau and Prio. A sizable arsenal was found by police at his home. (For additional information see: "Cuba: Love & Bullets," Time (March 7, 1955), p. 44.

Prio Socarrás was a strong anti-Communist and played a key role as Secretary of Labor to reduce Communist control of the organized labor movement in Cuba. He was also viewed by Cuban Communists as a dangerous enemy. The Communist Party had made major efforts to prevent Prio's election to the presidency. His anti-Communism made him a close friend of the United States.

Relations with the United States had been strained a few months before Prio's election, as a result of an incident on March 12, 1949, when three drunken U.S. sailors from the minesweeper U.S.S. Rodman climbed on the statue of José Martí at a park almost across the street from the Capitol building in downtown Havana. A mob came close to lynching them for profaning the statue and they were saved only when the police arrested them. The incident led to anti-American demonstrations sponsored by the Communist Party and other radical groups. U.S. Ambassador Butler placed a wreath on the statue and read an apology to the Cuban people.

It has been claimed that the incident was fabricated by members of the Communist Party who took advantage of the drunken state of the sailors to get them to climb up the statue. Reporters happened to be nearby with their cameras and pictures were taken and printed in all the newspapers the next day in Cuba and abroad. There is no evidence that the incident was fabricated. The statue is located in a popular park at the end of the Paseo del Prado, an avenue several blocks long, with a park in the median strip. It starts at the entrance to the harbor and ends at the National Capitol building. Many residents of Havana went for walks in the park in the evenings or sat in the benches to enjoy the breezes in the warm evenings. It would not have been unusual for someone to be nearby with a camera to take pictures. But whether the incident was prompted by Communists or not, they did take advantage of the situation to agitate against the United States with strong popular support. But despite the incident, Prio was elected on a strong anti-Communist platform which also favored continued good relations with the United States.³

³ During Prio's administration the Communists lost control of the organized labor movement. Under the leadership of Eusebio Mujal, an ex-Communist and ex-Trotskyite, the Auténticos were able to take control of the Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC).

President Prio and the Military

President Prio appointed Santiago Curti as his Minister of Defense in June of 1949 and immediately began to reorganize the top commands of the Armed Forces. Major General Genovevo Pérez Damera was replaced as Chief of Staff of the Army by Brigadier General Ruperto Cabrera on August 23, 1948. President Prio claimed that Pérez Damera was attempting to isolate him from members of the Armed Forces. He went to Camp Columbia about 1:00 a.m., gathered several key officers and advised them of his decision to remove Pérez Damera. Prio then phoned General Pérez Damera, who was at his farm in Canagüey, and told him that he was being retired. At noon, President Prio addressed the nation by radio to explain his actions. In addition to General Pérez Damera, two colonels and two lieutenant colonels were retired.⁴ A month later, Gen. José Manuel Caramés was replaced by General Quirino Uria as Chief of the National Police.⁵

The replacement of the Chief of Police was part of an effort to stop gang warfare among so called "revolutionary" organizations. Several police officials were replaced by Army officers. Soldiers were placed on guard duty at police stations and sent out with police on radio patrol cars. These actions were possibly due to the fact that the police were considered a branch of the Armed Forces, thus allowing for the detail of an Army general to head the police. Within days, at least 28 gang members were arrested. General Quirino Uria served as Chief of Police until he was replaced in April of 1951 by Col. Pérez Alfonso. Pérez Alfonso served as Chief of Police until February of 1952, when he was replaced by Colonel Consuegra Valdés. Throughout this period, however, gangs continued to operate in the country and the police was unable (or unwilling) to eradicate them.

Gangsterism

The "grupos de acción" that had been formed during the previous administration continued to struggle for control of the

⁴ "Cuba Forces Ouster of Army Staff Chief," New York Times (August 24, 1949), p. 3, col. 6. Also: "Pres. Prio Socarras continues Reorganization," New York Times (August 25, 1949), p. 12, col. 5.

⁵ "Cuban Police Chief Quits," New York Times (September 24, 1948), p. 6, col. 8; "Cuban Police Revised," New York Times (September 25, 1948), p.22, col.1.

traditional rackets, as well as for control of the Federation of University Students and other political organizations. The appointment of General Quirino Uribe as Chief of Police on September 23, 1949, was the result of this gang warfare and the inability of the police to put an end to the disorders. These are just some examples of the level of violence that existed in the country.

On Friday, September 16, 1949, an assassination attempt against "revolutionary" gang member Rolando Masferrer was carried out on the grounds of the National Capitol building. One woman was killed and five men were wounded. The police arrested six gang members for complicity in the assassination attempt. A few days later on September 20th, Gustavo Mejia, President of the student body at the School of Social Sciences at the University of Havana, was assassinated. As he was leaving a beach house of the University of Havana, located in the Miramar suburbs of Havana, a rival gang riddled him with bullets. The police arrested thirteen members of the "Socialist Revolutionary Movement" for complicity in the killing. The university was shut down for a 72-hour for a period of mourning.⁶

Five months earlier, on April 19, 1949, another student leader, J. Fuentes, had also been assassinated in the same way. On June 23rd, one gunman was killed and three persons wounded in a morning gun battle in a midtown shopping area in Havana between police and gang members. Passers-by were wounded when they were caught in the gun battle. The police reported that the⁷ gang members were in the process of committing a robbery.

Finally, on October 28, 1949, a court decision declared two of the most prominent "revolutionary" gangs to be illegal; the Movimiento Socialista Revolucionario (MSR) and the Unión Insurreccional Revolucionaria (UIR). Rolando Masferrer was the principal leader of the MSR. Other members of the MSR included Eufemio Fernández and J. Salabarría. Emilio Tró had been one of the principal leaders of the UIR. Another prominent gang leader was Orlando León Lemus, "el Colorado." The court decision did not mean the end of the gangsterism. Gangsters continued to operate with impunity.

Gang warfare was not the only source of incidents of violence. Prominent politicians continued to fight duels, which were illegal, thus setting a very poor example for the

⁶ "Six held in Havana Shooting," New York Times (September 17, 1949), p.2, col. 8.; "Cuba seizes 13 Gangsters," New York Times (September 22, 1949), p. 14, col. 4.

⁷ "One killed, 3 hurt in Cuban Fight," New York Times, (June 24, 1949), p.26, col. 8.

rest of society. For example, one of President Prio's cabinet ministers, Rubén de León fought a duel, in which he was hurt, with undersecretary Castellanos on August 17, 1949. On October 20, 1949, Senator Pages was hurt in a duel with a member of the House of Representatives. The President could not provide leadership to stop this behavior when he himself had engaged in similar acts while being a member of the cabinet during the previous administration.

Graft and Corruption

During Prio's administration, despite the fact that graft and corruption continued, steps were taken to prosecute officials of the previous administration who had been involved in illegal acts. In June of 1950, former President Grau was indicted on misappropriation of government funds. In July gunmen stole documents related to the case. He was cleared of the charges in January of 1951, by Judge Federico Justiniani. But in March of 1951, Grau and 11 other former members of his administration were indicted by Judge Justiniani on a 40-million dollar fraud case.

Former President Grau San Martín called his prosecution on fraud charges unjust and unfair, as well as politically motivated. Grau claimed that he was about to form a new opposition party under the name Cubanidad Auténtica, and President Prio and his followers were taking steps to discredit him. He also defended his former Minister of Education, José Manuel Alemán, who was charged with stealing over \$38 million together with other officials of the ministry. Grau was charged with "principal responsibility" in the corruption, graft and fraud that took place during his administration. Investigations conducted by Judge Justiniani revealed that at least \$174 million had been stolen during Grau's administration.⁸ The judge's house was bombed.

Corruption in Prio's administration, as well as in the previous one took many forms. In one famous case, about 11 million pesos (the exchange rate at the time was one peso equals one U.S. dollar) in old bills which had been taken out

⁸ Former Minister of Education José Manuel Alemán was famous for having backed a truck into a government vault and taking millions out. He was said to have flown directly to Florida, where he bought several important real estate landmarks with the money. When he died in March of 1950, he left property in Florida and Cuba worth between \$50 and 150 million dollars. For additional information on Grau's indictment see: "Cuba Ex-President Under Indictment," New York Times (March 19, 1950), p. 1, col.2; "Cuban Ex-President Scores Graft Case," New York Times (March 20, 1950), p. 12, col.6.

of circulation and replaced with new bills were not burned as certified in government documents. The money was pocketed by government officials. Another common form of corruption involved customs officials. Demand for imported goods was high but so were import duties. Contraband, with the assistance of government officials, generated millions of pesos in profits and resulted in losses to the treasury. Friends of the President and his brother Antonio were rewarded with jobs in the Aduana, so they could line their pockets and share the ill-acquired wealth with their political friends.

The Korean Conflict

Toward the end of WWII, the Soviet Union declared war on Japan and sent large numbers of troops to fight the Japanese on the Asian mainland. At the end of the war, Soviet troops and Korean Communists controlled the northern part of the Korean Peninsula to the 38th parallel. On October 1, 1949, the Peoples' Republic of Korea was created and from that point on conflicts started with South Korea, until on June 25, 1950, troops from the north invaded the south.

The Soviet Union had walked out of the United Nation's Security Council over the question of whether the representative of Nationalist Chinese in Taiwan or the new People's Republic of China should occupy the permanent seat in the Security Council. Due to the absence of the Soviets in the United Nation's Security Council, the People's Republic of Korea was declared at fault and member nations were asked to provide military assistance to South Korea to repel the invasion. The United States and several other members of the United Nations sent troops to Korea to repel the Communist invasion within a few days.

Cuba played a very important rôle in the actions taken by the United Nations in Korea. Cuba and Ecuador were members of the United Nations Security Council on June 25, 1950. Their vote in favor of the resolution calling for the withdrawal of North Korea above the 38th parallel was needed to obtain passage. The United States would not have been able to obtain the necessary support to defend South Korea against the Communist invasion.

In Cuba the Korean War became a hot political issue. The Cuban Communist Party immediately organized an anti-war movement and accused the United States of being responsible for the war. The leadership of the Ortodoxo opposition party, although not in favor of joining the conflict, declared its support of the United Nation's action and the military intervention of the United States. The government of Prio Socarrás, as well as the other parties represented in

Congress, including Batista's PAU, supported the war effort of the United Nations in Korea, but stopped short of sending troops. A newspaper poll showed that 70.2 percent of the people of Cuba were opposed to sending troops to fight in Korea.⁹

Members of the Communist Party and other anti-war groups circulated a rumor that Cuba would have to contribute thousands of men to the Korean War and even Raul Castro, the present Minister of the Cuban Armed Forces, published an article in March of 1951, in which he claimed that the Cuban Government was training an Army company to fight in Korea.

Cuba once again contributed with its agricultural production to the Korean War and the Cuban economy also benefited from the increase in the world price of sugar and other commodities exported by Cuba. As a result, the standard of living in the island improved within a few months of the start of the conflict.

Although Cuba did not participate directly in Korea, many Cubans fought as part of the United States forces. Many were casualties of the war. Cuban newspapers periodically reported on Cuban dead and wounded in Korea. For example, Miguel Pérez Crespo was killed in combat in 1952 and Jesús Arbitre Perea, a Cuban physician in the U.S. Army, was wounded while performing his duties that same year.

The Opposition and the Elections of 1952

The leader of a splinter group of the Autentico Party, Eduardo Chivás, formed a new political party in 1946, the Partido del Pueblo Cubano (Ortodoxo). Chivás was a bitter enemy of President Prio. Readers may recall that in 1946 the two men had fought a duel at the National Capitol Building when President Prio was serving as Grau's Secretary of Labor and Chivas was a member of the Senate. Chivás, who was again elected to the Senate in 1950, continued strong criticism of the corruption in the governments of both Grau and Prio. He carried out his campaign to the public in a weekly radio broadcast on Sunday evenings on the station CMQ, in which he pointed out specific cases of corruption, until in 1951 he committed suicide during one of his radio broadcasts. Chivás had charged Prio's Minister of Education, Aureliano Sánchez Arango, with corruption and claimed to have evidence to prove his charges. When he was unable to back his claims, Chivás shot himself in the abdomen during the course of his radio address.

⁹ John Lloyd Meham, The United States and Inter-American Security, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961), p. 431.

Chivás had been able to attract a substantial following particularly among young people, who viewed him as a leader of a movement for social and economic reform. One of these young people was Fidel Castro, who had graduated from the University of Havana and was planning on running for the House of Representatives in 1952, under the banner of the Orthodox party.

But Chivás was not the only opponent of the regime. Restlessness in the military began to show up early in his administration. A conspiracy is said to have taken place at the Superior War College involving both civilian professors and some military officers. The removal of Major General Pérez Dámera in August of 1948, may have been triggered by this conspiracy. Among the officers who were said to have been involved were Colonel Ramón Barquin, Captain José E. Monteagudo and Lieutenant Colonel Enrique Borbonet. However, there is no evidence to substantiate these charges.

As the general elections of 1952 approached, the Auténticos, who had been in power for close to eight years, were under strong attack and divided as the followers of Grau and Prío clashed over corruption charges and over the leadership of the party. The Ortodoxos, after the death of their leader, nominated Dr. Roberto Agramonte, a professor at the University of Havana, for the presidency. Former President Fulgencio Batista, who had been elected to the Senate in 1948, was also running again for the highest office. But Agramonte was expected to win, according to the results of several polls taken as the elections approached.



Statue of José Martí in downtown Havana that was climbed by three drunken U.S. sailors from the minesweeper U.S.S. Rodman on March 12, 1949, triggering street disorders and anti-American demonstrations. U.S. Ambassador Butler placed a wreath on the statue and read an apology to the Cuban people. Capitol building can be seen in the background.

PROMINENT ARMED FORCES OFFICERS 1933-1952



Ignacio Galindez Román



Manuel Alvarez Margolles



Armando Suárez Suquet



Manuel López Migolla

XVI- The Batista Dictatorship 1952-1958

The Coup d'Etat

On March 10, 1952, Fulgencio Batista and 27 co-conspirators led a coup d'etat against President Carlos Prío Socarrás. Batista was allowed into Camp Columbia by one of the conspirators and with the help of several officers summoned the troops to formation about 3:00 a.m. They were asked to support the coup in order to carry out a set of political and economic reforms. Several retired and former officers who were part of the conspiracy entered other key military installations in a similar fashion and duplicated the events at Columbia. Navy Captain José E. Rodríguez Calderón went to the headquarters of the Navy at La Punta, an old Spanish colonial fortress at the entrance of the harbor in Havana, and took over the facility. Retired Colonel Francisco Tabernilla took over the La Cabafia barracks. Police Lieutenant Rafael Salas Cañizares took over the headquarters of the motorized section of the police department in Havana. While this was taking place, President Prío was at his ranch (La Chata) several miles away.¹

Upon learning of the insurrection, President Prío and several close aides went to the Presidential Palace, located only a few blocks away from where Batista's men had already taken important military installations. An attempt was made to obtain support from other barracks to launch a counterattack, but Prío did not offer the leadership necessary to fight against the rebellious troops. Colonel Alvarez Margolles mobilized his regiment in Oriente and attempted to fight against the coup, but without national leadership he was unable to resist Batista's supporters.²

¹ According to vox populi in Cuba, President Prío may have been under the influence of alcohol and/or narcotics on the evening of Sunday, March 9, 1952. When Batista entered Camp Columbia about 2:45 a.m., on Monday, March 10th, President Prío was unable to react fast enough to gather support against the coup d'etat. However, the author has not been able to find any undisputable evidence that this was the case. President Prío, however, became a prominent leader in the struggle to overthrow Batista and contributed a considerable amount of time and money to the cause.

² According to Colonel Ramón Barquín, Colonel Margolles told him in an interview that he had called President Prío and informed him that he was prepared to fight Batista. He is quoted as having told Prío, "Here we have the people, weapons and mountains." Ramón Barquín, El Día Que Fidel Castro se Apoderó de Cuba: 72 horas trágicas para la libertad en las Américas (San Juan, P.R.: Editorial Rambar, 1978), p.3.

Student and labor leaders offered to fight against Batista and his followers. A general strike was declared and civilian leaders asked for weapons from the armory at the Presidential Palace. Some members of Congress and leaders of the Auténtico party attempted to obtain support from Army barracks in Matanzas and other provincial capitals but could not move with the necessary speed to counteract similar moves by officers loyal to Batista. Colonels Eduardo Martín Elena, José de la Fuente and Manuel Álvarez Margolles had already been relieved of their commands in Matanzas, Camagüey and Oriente respectively.

President Prío elected to go the Mexican Embassy in Havana seeking political asylum while Batista moved in without much bloodshed.³ Labor and student leaders were arrested and troops moved into the University of Havana, labor union headquarters and all important centers of political activity. Congress was dismissed, the general elections which were to have taken place in a few weeks were suspended and all political parties were outlawed. The 1940 Constitution was replaced with the infamous "Estatutos del Viernes de Dolores."⁴ To consolidate his power Batista replaced all military leaders with men loyal to him, most of whom had participated in the 1933 sergeants rebellion or had served under him when he was President.

³ President Prío was joined at the Mexican Embassy by several members of his Cabinet, including Aureliano Sánchez Arango (State), Rubén de León (Defense), Segundo Curti (Interior). Several other members of the administration also sought refuge at the Mexican Embassy, including Dr. Rafael Trejo (father of the student killed during the Machado dictatorship). Juan Bosch, the Dominican writer who had been involved in the Cayo Confite incident in 1947, sought political asylum at the Venezuelan Embassy. He had been blessed with sinecures by the Auténticos for several years. "Espérase que el Dr. Prío deje hoy la embajada de México para embarcar," Diario de la Marina (March 12, 1952), p.1, col.8.

⁴ Batista replaced the Constitution of 1940, with a series of ordinances or laws, which the people nicknamed the Good Friday Statutes. They were made public by Batista on Good Friday, five days after the coup, which took place on Monday, March 10th, the start of Holy Week. Fulgencio Batista had come back to power with experience he had lacked in September of 1933. This time he was not sharing power with others. In his own personal life, Batista was also a new man. He had divorced his first wife, Elisa Pilar Godínez Gómez, with whom he had four children (Mirta, Rubén, Elisa and Aleida) and married Martha Fernández Miranda. From this second marriage he had two children, Carmela and Jorge.

The excuse given for the coup was the general graft, corruption and lawlessness in the country. Batista claimed that President Prío and his followers were planning a coup d'état, because they thought that they were going to lose the elections and did not want to give up power. Batista promised to bring back law and order and new social programs to help the poor. He had a following particularly among blacks. They saw him as one of their own who had "made it big."

On Tuesday, March 11th, Batista gathered the 6th Infantry Regiment "Alejandro Rodríguez," at the parade grounds of Camp Columbia. He was accompanied by General Francisco Tabernilla, who had just been named the new Chief of the General Staff. Both men called on the troops to support the coup and provided their reasons for their actions ... for the Republic, the Fatherland, etc. They also made promises to improve the living conditions and the perks of the military.

Organization of the Military in 1952

The organization of the Cuban military in 1952 was somewhat different than in most other countries. The total strength of the Army, Navy and Police was about 20,000 men. All branches performed police functions. In other words, a member of the Army or the Navy could and was expected to assist in police matters, carried side arms at all times and could arrest common criminals. The police forces at the same time were militarized and were prepared to perform tasks that would normally be expected of the Army or the Navy. The Army was composed of 8 regiments, which were located in the provincial capitals. The exception was Oriente where one regiment was headquartered at Santiago de Cuba and a second one at Holguín. By the same token, two regiments were stationed in Havana, one at the capital and the second throughout the province.

Each regiment was commanded by a colonel. At each regimental headquarters a battalion was stationed. These battalions were normally referred to as the "tercio táctico." The battalions were under the command of a major. Also located at regimental headquarters were the different auxiliary services including the inspector general's office, medical services, transportation corps, engineer corps, and the signal corps. The regimental headquarters were presided over by the "plana mayor" which included the four highest ranking officers who were the colonels of the regiments, an Army

⁵ The 6th Infantry Regiment was named in honor to the first Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces after independence in 1902. "Arengó Batista al Regimiento 6 en la Ciudad Militar," Diario de la Marina (March 12, 1952), p.1, col. 3.

lieutenant colonel, who was the inspector of the regiment, the major who commanded the battalion at regimental headquarters and a lieutenant colonel who commanded the police department in the province.

The rest of the regiment was stationed throughout the province or territory under the jurisdiction of the regiment. The largest towns housed "capitanias" of company strength (about 100 men) commanded by a captain. In smaller towns, platoon size units were stationed under a lieutenant and were often referred to as "tenencias." Small rural towns had squads under sergeants or corporals. The smallest unit was the "pareja" or a unit of two men.

The highest rank in the Armed Forces was that of colonel or the equivalent in the Navy (Capitán de Navío). Flag rank was considered temporary and consisted of a major general who was the Chairman of the General Staff and three brigade generals, who performed the tasks of Adjutant General, Inspector General and Quartermaster General. The Chief of the National Police who had jurisdiction, mostly in greater Havana, was nearly always an Army colonel. The colonels in command of the eight Army regiments also performed the task of chief of police within their territory. A police lieutenant colonel performed the task of police inspector at the provincial level. The Navy performed a police role in all the small coastal towns where naval barracks were located.

An Army and a small Navy Air Force existed with several vintage planes dating back to World War II. In addition, a mixed tank regiment and an artillery unit were located at Camp Columbia and La Cabaña. Small tank units were located at regimental headquarters throughout the island. The Navy consisted of several vintage ships and about a dozen small submarine chasers and PT-boats dating from WWII (the cruiser Cuba, the schoolship Patria, three frigates Martí, Maceo and Máximo Gómez, and several small gunboats for coastal defense).

26th of July Movement

The first armed civilian resistance to Batista came on July 26, 1953, in Oriente.⁶ Fidel Castro, a 27-year-old lawyer

⁶ Prior to the attack on the Moncada barracks in 1953 another anti-Batista group had attempted a similar plan a year earlier. The Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR), under the leadership of Rafael García Bárdena, a professor at the University of Havana, attempted to attack the Camp Columbia barracks in April of 1952 but the group was discovered and intercepted before they could carry out their plans.

and a member of a fairly well-to-do family, organized a group of about 170 men to attack the Moncada Army barracks in Santiago de Cuba and a smaller Army camp at Bayamo. The plan consisted of taking over these installations and a radio station and broadcasting a manifesto announcing the start of a revolution to unseat Batista. However, the small group of poorly armed men failed to accomplish their mission and were, for the most part, captured or killed by the Army and police during and after the attacks. The military chief of Oriente, Colonel Rio Chaviano, personally directed the round-up of the attackers. (Castro's plan, in fact, was next to impossible to accomplish since these were well-guarded Army barracks and the attackers were outgunned and faced much larger forces.)

Fidel Castro

Prior to this unsuccessful attempt to overthrow Batista, Fidel Castro was not very well known outside of the university environment in Havana. He did have a police record and there is some evidence that he had participated in several violent incidents during his student days at the university. Castro had been born in Oriente on August 13, 1926, and had attended Catholic schools run by the Christian Brothers and Jesuits. His high school days were spent in the prestigious Colegio de Belén. From there he entered the University of Havana to study law. At the university he participated in student politics and had a following of students although he was unable to become president of the student federation. He had a reputation as a radical, but his political affiliation was difficult to define since he had been a member of several groups with different ideologies.⁷

Upon graduation from the University of Havana in 1950, Castro began to practice law and joined the Ortodoxo Party. In 1952

After the overthrow of Batista in 1959, Dr. García Bárceña was appointed Cuban Ambassador to Brazil, where he died of natural causes.

⁷ As already presented in chapter XIV, Castro had participated in a failed conspiracy known as the Cayo Confite incident in 1947, which consisted of the organization of an expeditionary force to overthrow Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo. About 1,500 men were involved. The group consisted of three battalions commanded by veterans of the Spanish Civil War and several Spanish and Dominican exiles. In 1948, Castro participated in an anti-imperialist congress in Bogota, Colombia, and took part in the violent riots which followed the assassination of a prominent Colombian liberal leader.

he ran for a congressional seat in the general elections which were suspended after the coup d'état. Almost immediately after the coup he began to plan the assault on the Moncada barracks.

When the attack failed, Castro and many of his followers attempted to escape but were hunted down by the Army and the police. Several were rounded up and shot. Castro was able to surrender with the help of the Catholic Archbishop of Santiago Monsenior Pérez Serante (Castro was arrested by Lieutenant Pedro M. Sarria Tartabull, who protected the life of his prisoner when other officers wanted to kill him). He was tried and convicted for insurrection against the constitutional powers of the state. In his defense during the trial, Castro presented a plan for social, political and economic reform that would have been carried out if the movement had succeeded. His defense speech at the trial was later published under the title History Will Absolve Me. No one seemed to pay much attention to what he said at the time and dismissed the document as one more of the typical manifestos so common in Latin America. At the end of the trial he was sentenced to 15 years and was sent with several of his followers to the Isle of Pines Prison.

At the time of the assault on the Moncada barracks, the Politburo of the Communist Party (Partido Socialista Popular) was holding a meeting in Santiago de Cuba. The Batista police rounded up all the leaders of the party to investigate if they were involved in the assault. The police could not come up with any connections and released them. The PSP leadership then issued a statement in which the leaders of the assault were classified as "putchistas" and adventurers. Only five members of the group did not sign the document critical of Castro and were later rewarded with important positions after the victory of the revolution in 1959.⁸

⁸ They were: Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, Isidoro Malmierca, Jorge Risquet, Erarino Terrero and Antonio Pérez Herrero. Rodríguez is currently a Vice-President of Cuba. Malmierca is a member of the Central Committee of the CCP and holds the position of Minister of Foreign Relations. Risquet is a member of the National Assembly and a member of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CCP. Terrero is a representative of Prensa Latina in Nicaragua. Pérez Herrero has been an alternate member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CCP, and one of the leading "ideólogos" of the party. He has also been a member of the People's Government for the municipality of Holguín. More recently (1986), he did not go along with Fidel Castro's moves for "rapprochement" with the Catholic Church and came into disfavor. He was named Ambassador to Ethiopia, possibly to take him out of circulation in Cuba for a while.

In 1954 Batista called for general elections and ran for the highest office. The opposition parties initially participated in the political campaign but withdrew, claiming that the elections were a fraud. Batista was elected President to serve a four-year term. The following year, in May of 1955, Castro and his followers were released from jail under a general political amnesty.

Relations with the Dominican Republic

While the internal political climate in Cuba was slowly reaching the boiling point in 1956, relations between Cuba and the Dominican Republic once again became tense. The relationship between the two countries had not improved much since the 1947 Cayo Confite incident. Both dictators, Batista and Trujillo, had never met and distrusted each other. Dominican exiles continued to enter Cuba and were given assistance by the Cuban Government, as well as by private sources. The investigation of the assassination of one of these political exiles uncovered a substantial penetration by Dominican agents in Cuba. Some of them had passed themselves as political exiles in order to keep a watch on revolutionaries opposed to Trujillo. It was also uncovered that some of these Dominican agents may have been helping Cuban revolutionaries opposed to Batista.

The Cuban Government made public accusations against Trujillo for interference in the internal affairs of Cuba in February of 1956. The Dominican Government in turn charged that the Cuban military was providing assistance to Dominican exiles, including weapons, to overthrow the Dominican Government. General Hermida, Chief of Staff of the Dominican Armed Forces accused General Francisco Tabernilla, his Cuban counterpart, of providing weapons to Dominican revolutionaries. It should be noted that by this time Rolando Masferrer had become a supporter of Batista, and he may have been involved once again in plots against Trujillo.

Colonel Ramón Barquín, who was then Cuban Military Attaché in Washington, was sent by Batista to the Dominican Republic under cover of participating as Cuban Delegate to the Conference on the Continental Shelf to update a study on the military capabilities of the Dominican Republic. Barquín had prepared such a study before the 1952 coup. Batista feared a surprise attack in Oriente by Trujillo's forces.

Barquín was also ordered to visit Haitian President Magloire to propose an exchange of information about Dominican agents.

⁹ Ramón Barquín, Las Luchas Guerrilleras en Cuba (Madrid: Editorial Plaejor, 1975), Vol. 1, pp. 173-174.

He was also to explore the possibility of landing Cuban troops in Haiti to attack the Dominican Republic and the use of Haitian airports by the Cuban Air Force in the event that war broke out with Trujillo.¹⁰

The Cuban Government appealed for assistance from the Peace Committee of the Organization of American States, claiming that the Dominican Government was funding Cuban opposition groups and planning an attack against Cuba. The OAS urged both countries to settle their dispute through negotiations. But by May of 1956 the Dominican Ambassador in Cuba was declared persona non-grata. The Dominicans took similar action against the Cuban Ambassador in Santo Domingo.

The Dominican Republic under Trujillo had created a large military establishment well beyond the needs of this small country. The Dominican Air Force in particular had a large number of bombers and fighter aircraft capable of reaching Cuba and causing substantial damage. Cuba, despite being a much larger country in terms of size and population, and having a stronger economy, did not have the military resources of the Dominicans. Batista himself was responsible for damaging the Cuban military establishment by destroying the officer corps in 1933 and once again destroying the professionalism of the military by promoting his political henchmen after the 1952 coup d'etat. This situation created fears that war could break out between both countries with Cuba suffering humiliation at the hands of Trujillo's men. The situation was further complicated by an increasing level of political violence and terrorism in Cuba directed at the overthrow of Batista.¹¹

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Within two years of this friction between Trujillo and Batista, they made peace. When the United States stopped selling weapons to Batista in March of 1958, Trujillo became an important supplier of ammunition and weapons. Many new Cuban recruits were issued Dominican-made San Cristobal semi-automatic rifles and ammunition. When Batista was finally forced to leave Cuba in the early hours of January 1, 1959, he sought refuge with several of his close followers in Santo Domingo. For additional information on the 1956 problems between both countries see: "Caribbean: Troubled Waters," Newsweek (March 12, 1956), p. 61; "Dominican Gen. Hermida charges Gen. Tabernilla gave arms to Dominican rebels," New York Times (February 15, 1956), p.62, col.3; "Cuban Government charges Dominican Republic plans aggression," New York Times (February 28, 1956), p. 12, col. 5. "Cuban Government declares Amb. Llaverias persona non grata," New York Times (May 15, 1956), p.16, col.6. Additional charges and counter-charges were made in October of 1956 after the

Opposition to Batista Intensifies

In the summer of 1955, after a general amnesty bill was approved by the Cuban Congress, several political exiles, including former President Carlos Prío, returned to Cuba. Prío, as well as other members of the Auténtico party, had been promoting the overthrow of Batista through most of 1954. However, they had failed in their efforts and many prominent figures had been arrested in the United States for violating the U.S. Neutrality Act. Former members of Prío's cabinet, including Diego Vicente Tejera, Segundo Curti, Aureliano Sánchez Arango and Prío himself had been indicted in June of 1954, in New York City, for conspiring to export arms to Cuban revolutionaries.

The release of political prisoners and the return of political exiles did not bring about peace. It had the opposite effect. Police investigators continued to find weapons and to uncover plots to overthrow Batista. Several gun battles ensued between police and some of the "revolutionary" gangsters who had been associated with the Auténticos. Only a few hours before Batista was inaugurated as President on February 24, 1955, Orlando León Lemus, "El Colorado," was killed in a gun battle with police when they raided a house in the Havana suburb of Santo Suárez.

The raid was led by Police Chief Rafael Salas Cañizares and Colonels Ramón O. Vivas, Fernandez Cosa, Lutgardo Martín Pérez, Captain Castellanos and other officers. Colonel Martín Pérez was wounded in both legs by "El Colorado" before he was killed by machinegun fire in the living room of the house. A few hours later in another gunbattle with police, "El Colorado's" chief lieutenant, Angel Fernández Rodríguez "Vitico," was also killed. Two brothers of "el Colorado," Gustavo León Lemus, a physician, and José León Lemus, a lawyer, were arrested. Please note that unlike gangsters in the United States, the members of the so-called "grupos de acción" in Cuba were often professionals.

"El Colorado" had participated in the gun battle near Camp Columbia in September of 1947 that resulted in the death of 12 policemen and civilians (see chapter XIV). He was also implicated in several political murders, including those of the Salazar Callico brothers (Wichy and Noel) and a number of members of UIR. Machine guns and at least 40 rifles were found as part of the arsenal León Lemus had in his house. Time magazine described him as one of the members of the assassination of Col. Blanco Rico, Chief of Cuban Military intelligence.

pistol-happy tribes of government-coddled racketeers which had flourished after Batista left power in 1944.¹²

In June of 1955, Jorge Agostini, who had been Chief of the Secret Police during Prio's administration, was also killed in another police raid in search of illegal weapons. Agostini was a veteran of the Spanish Civil War and had participated in the Cayo Confite incident in 1947 (See chapter XIV). Agostini was a member of the Triple A (AAA), an anti-Batista organization led by Aureliano Sánchez Arango, a prominent former member of Prio's cabinet. In May of 1956, another former Secret Police Chief, Eufemio Fernández was sought by police for participating in revolutionary activities. Fernández was also a veteran of the Spanish Civil War and had been associated with the so-called "revolutionary" groups that engaged in gangster-like activities during the Grau and Prio administrations in the late 1940's.

Starting in November of 1955, and continuing through to April of 1956, several violent confrontations between students and police took place in Havana and Santiago de Cuba. Hundred of students were wounded and others arrested and beaten by police. Schools became regular battlegrounds between students demonstrating against Batista and the police. The University of Havana and surrounding areas in particular, were well known for this type of activity. Several of these demonstrations were broken up with clubs and guns. Some times students fired back at police with guns.

Opposition to Batista was also building up within the Armed Forces. In April of 1956 a major conspiracy, led by Colonel Ramón Barquín, was discovered involving as many as 250 officers and enlisted men. A few days later, on Sunday, April 29th, a group of revolutionaries sponsored by the Auténticos attacked the Army barracks in Matanzas (Cuartel Guicuría) that housed the regimental headquarters in that province. At least 15 of the revolutionaries and four soldiers were killed and many others were wounded. The attack followed a similar pattern to the assault of the Moncada barracks by Fidel Castro on July 26, 1953. This time the Army seemed to have been alerted and the revolutionaries were received by a hail of gun fire. Many were killed as they approached the barracks in a dump truck. The bodies of those slain after the battle were put with those who died in the truck upon approach to the barracks. (Newspapermen who took pictures after the incident was over discovered that the number of bodies around the truck had increased in number as time passed).

¹² "Cuba: Love & Bullets," Time (March 7, 1955), p. 44; "Resultó muerto O. León Lemus al batirse a tiros con la policia," Diario de La Marina (February 25, 1955), p.1, col. 1.

Batista suspended constitutional guarantees for 45 days and former President Prio and other opposition figures were arrested and charged with sponsoring the attack. Prio was released, but a few days later he was dragged out of his house by police and placed in a plane bound for Miami. Upon arriving in Miami, Prio was detained by U.S. Immigration authorities for previous violations of U.S. law and was denied political asylum. His expulsion was halted by a Federal court and he was granted freedom under writ of habeas corpus. He was eventually granted asylum after signing an accord not to violate U.S. laws, in June of 1956.

In the meantime, revolutionary groups continued to conspire to overthrow Batista and terrorism continued to increase. In Havana, the chief of the Military Intelligence Service (SIM), Colonel Antonio Blanco Rico, was gunned down at the Montmatre nightclub on October 27, 1956. Two women in Blanco Rico's party, including the daughter-in-law of the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, were wounded. Two days later, the Chief of Police, General Rafael Salas Caffizares, ordered an assault on the Haitian Embassy to capture several revolutionaries who had sought refuge there. In the gun battle Salas Caffizares was killed by one of the revolutionaries who was lying on the ground wounded. Allegedly, the Chief was using a rifle with a bayonet to finish off the wounded when he was shot in the groin, under his bullet-proof vest.¹³

Newsweek magazine carried a different version of the incident prepared by Hemisphere Affairs Editor Harry B. Murkland. According to Newsweek, several armed revolutionaries forced their way into the Haitian Embassy in Havana. A mysterious call summoned Salas Caffizares to investigate the incident at the Embassy. When he arrived, the revolutionaries inside the building cut loose with a machine gun and shot him seven times. The police then stormed the building and killed all ten revolutionaries who had entered the Haitian Embassy.¹⁴

The killing of Blanco Rico and Salas Caffizares took place while the Inter-American Press Association was meeting in Havana. The conference went on undisturbed by these inci-

¹³ "Military Intelligence Chief Col. Blanco Rico killed by unknown gunmen," New York Times (October 29, 1956), p.6, col. 3. "National Police Chief and 2 other officers wounded," New York Times (October 30, 1956), p.22, col. 4. According to vox populi in Cuba, the killer of Salas Caffizares was Israel Escalona.

¹⁴ Harry B. Murkland, "Death at a Party," Newsweek (November 12, 1956), p. 51.

dents and Batista was forced to allow the press to function without censorship because the international press was meeting. Both incidents may have been staged to give the international press a particular slant on the situation in Cuba. Batista charged that former President Prío and Dominican dictator Trujillo were behind these and other anti-government acts.

During the month of November 1956, student groups in Oriente, led by Frank País, held anti-government demonstrations and clashed with the police repeatedly. País was a close associate of Fidel Castro and a leader of the M-26-7 revolutionary movement. In Havana, university student groups also staged anti-government demonstrations, which were broken up by the police. In the wake of the deaths of Blanco Rico and Salas Caffizares, the police reaction to the demonstrations was more violent than normal.¹⁵

Castro's Landing in 1956

In July of 1955, Fidel Castro left Cuba and went to Mexico to plan a new uprising against Batista. He was met in Mexico City by his brother Raul Castro and several other veterans of the Moncada assault. In Mexico they met Ernesto Guevara, an Argentine-born medical doctor who had fled to Mexico after the overthrow of the Arbens regime in Guatemala. Guevara, known as "Che," joined the Cubans as they made preparations for an expedition to start a guerrilla war in Cuba. They received training from Colonel Alberto Bayo, a Spanish Socialist living in exile, who was a veteran of the civil war.

Funds for the operation were provided by Cuban exiles in the United States, following a pattern established for many generations. Castro visited Cuban communities in New York and Miami in late 1955 and raised money for his plan. He returned to Texas in 1956 and obtained additional support, including that of Carlos Prío and other opponents of the Batista regime. Prío and his followers were back in the United States living in exile and organizing plots to over-

¹⁵ In order to provide non-Cuban readers an insight of Cuban culture, a popular joke at the time is being included here, even if it may not meet "standard" scholarly research patterns. Colonel Blanco Rico's last names mean in a literal translation "rich white." A Cuban would ask a friend, What would you rather be, a rich white person or a poor black? (¿Qué prefieres ser? ¿Un blanco rico ó un negro pobre?) The "rich white," of course, had been riddled with bullets and was dead.

throw Batista. They contributed money and an old yacht to carry the expedition to Cuba.

Despite some problems with Mexican authorities, Castro was able to train a force of 83 men and to embark on the yacht Granma, on November 25, 1956, from the port of Tuxpan.¹⁶ Of these 83 men, 22 were veterans of the assault on the Moncada barracks in 1953. Five were foreigners born in Mexico, Spain, Italy, the Dominican Republic and Argentina. The landing took place on December 2nd, on the southeastern tip of Oriente at Belic, on the Coloradas beach. As the small force was landing they were spotted by a Cuban Coast Guard vessel and came under naval fire.

Air Force fighter planes were summoned and the landing force came under air attack. Ground forces of the Army and naval infantry were sent after them, and on December 5th they were intercepted at Alegria de Pio. The majority were either killed or captured and several were executed after the fact. Twenty-one were killed at Alegria del Pio and twenty-six were captured. Four more were arrested within a month. Another eight managed to escape. Only about 16 members of the group managed to survive and reach the Sierra Maestra Mountains with Fidel Castro. Among those killed was Juan Manuel Márquez, second chief of the expedition. He was captured and shot on December 15th.¹⁷

¹⁶ Castro had been arrested by Mexican police in Mexico City in June of 1956.

¹⁷ The survivors of this expeditionary force became the nucleus of the Rebel Army and were among the closest and most powerful members of the government led by Fidel Castro after the overthrow of Batista. These men were:

1) Fidel Castro, Cuban President; 2) Raul Castro, Lieutenant General, head of the Cuban Armed Forces and Minister of Defense; 3) Ernesto "Che" Guevara; killed in Bolivia in 1967; 4) Camilo Cienfuegos; died in plane crash in 1959; 5) Universon Sánchez, dead or retired; 6) Faustino Pérez Hernández, Member of Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party and Chief of the Office for Servicing Local People's Government; 7) Ciro Redondo García; killed in the battle of "El Uvero" on November 27, 1957; 8) Efigenio Ameijeiras; Served as Chief of Police after the victory of the revolution and was discharged and black-listed, now retired; 9) Julito Diaz González; killed at the battle of "El Uvero" on May 28, 1957; 10) Calixto García, Brigadier General in the Cuban Army and vice-president of the Cuban-Soviet Friendship Society; 11) Ramiro Valdés; was chief of the state security apparatus until 1969 and member of the Politburo, Central Committee, CCP; Vice-President of Cuba and Minister of the Interior until fired in 1986; 12) José Moran "El Gallego", killed by the revolutionaries in 1958 under

Press reports of the landing pointed out many acts of sabotage and terrorism during December of 1956. Buses were set on fire, cars bombed, phone lines cut, trains derailed and many cases of arson were reported. The government in turn arrested hundreds of suspects and bodies began to appear mysteriously about the country. For the most part they were known revolutionaries with a history of anti-government activities. Many had been tortured and shot in the back of the head. At least 21 bodies were found, most of them in Oriente.¹⁸

The group lost most of the weapons and supplies and suffered from hunger, thirst and exhaustion. At first the peasants in the area were reluctant to provide any support and some worked as informers for the Rural Guard, the Army or the Navy. Despite this initial defeat, the small guerrilla force managed to attack the small Navy barracks at La Plata on January 15, 1957 and defeated about 15 sailors stationed there. Two sailors were killed, five wounded and three taken prisoners, the rest escaped. This was the first in a series of successful guerrilla actions which provided new weapons and ammunition to the rebel forces.

The Armed Forces operations to find and capture or kill the member of the expeditionary force had been used by some land

suspicion of being an informer, 13) Juan Almeida Bosque, Cuban Vice President and member of the Politburo and Central Committee of the CCP; 14) Reinaldo Benitez, unknown; 16) Luis Crespo; possibly a Cuban Army officer, intelligence. His actual position unknown, and 17) Rafael Chao, veteran of the Spanish Civil War; present condition unknown.

Two more men have been identified as members of this elite group but their membership cannot be confirmed. They are: Armando Rodriguez, Lt. Col. in the Eastern Army, and René Rodriguez, Director, Instituto Cubano de Amistad con los Pueblos and Member of the Central Committee of the CCP.

Thirty years have elapsed since the 1956 landing and many of the survivors have either died or retired. However, the ones still active in Cuban politics are among the most powerful men today. About 10 members of the Granma expedition are now living in exile: Arturo Chaumont Portocarrero, Jaime Costa Chávez, Gino Donné, Raúl Díaz Torres, Jesús Gómez Calzadilla, César Gómez, Alfonso Guillén Celaya, Rolando Moya, Rolando Santana and Fernando Sánchez Amaya.

¹⁸ "Cuba: Creeping Revolt," Time (January 7, 1957), p. 33.

owners and their overseers (mavorales), to get rid of squatters. With the help of some members of the Rural Guard and the Navy, the homes of several squatters (precaristas) were burned down and several of these poor farmers were killed in front of their families at Palma Mocha. These criminal actions led several of these landless farmers to seek revenge. They found an avenue by assisting Castro's followers. The attack on La Plata was the result of the alliance of Castro and the squatters to punish the men responsible for the Palma Mocha killings. This incident was possibly the reason why Castro was able to survive in the mountains. Before Palma Mocha the peasants had not given aid to rebels.

Another encounter followed a few days later near Arroyo del Infierno in which four soldiers were killed and more weapons captured. These soldiers were attached to a unit commanded by Lieutenant Sánchez Mosquera, one of the few Army officers who ventured to pursue the guerrilla forces deep into the mountains. In the course of a year he was promoted from lieutenant to colonel by Batista. He became famous for his acts of repression against the civilian population. Another Army officer leading the search for the guerrillas was Major Joaquín Casillas who, according to Ernesto "Che" Guevara, sowed terror along his path in the mountains. In fact Casillas was removed by the government from important command positions because he was critical of excessive acts of repression.

Terror was not a tool used only by the Army. It was also a tool of the small rebel Army to maintain discipline and avoid desertion and defeat. Starting very early in the campaign, the guerrilla forces executed informers, collaborators with the Armed Forces, and captured military men who, in one way or another, had participated in acts of vandalism or repression against the peasants and revolutionaries. Despite the executions, desertion was a constant problem for the guerrilla forces of the 26th of July Movement. Not everyone could adjust to the difficult life in the mountains and some found that they did not share the same political views of Fidel Castro and his closest followers.¹⁹

Lieutenant Sánchez Mosquera commanded one of the platoons of an Army company commanded by Captain Manuel Feroso. This company consisted of about 100 men divided into three platoons. It was sent to the mountains by the General Staff

¹⁹ It should be noted that during the Cuban War of Independence strong discipline was maintained by the officers through beatings and executions. Those guilty of major offenses were hung. Lesser offenses, including cowardice in battle, were also punished by beatings with the flat part of the machete blade. (See chapter VI)

under the direct command of Major Joaquin Casillas to give chase to the guerrillas who had attacked La Plata. Casillas formed a command center at La Plata with several men attached to the company headquarters and left Captain Feroso in charge. The rest of the company divided into three platoons commanded by Lieutenants Sanchez Mosquera, Crespo and Soler. They were sent in pursuit of the guerrillas. Major Casillas joined the platoon of Lieutenant Crespo and personally led the search. After this engagement, on January 29, 1957, Colonel Pedro A. Barrera was named by the General Staff to take control of the operations in the mountains against the guerrillas. He failed miserably.

Castro's guerrilla units benefited by publicity received in the United States after an interview, in February of 1957, between Herbert Mathews and Fidel Castro, was published in the New York Times. Other groups were tempted to copy his deeds and organized expeditions to form new guerrilla fronts in Cuba. One such group embarked on the yacht Corinthia under the leadership of Calixto Sanchez, funded by ex-President Carlos Prío. But the landing, in May of 1957, on the north coast of Oriente, was detected and Army units led by Colonel Fernin Cowley, Commander of the Military District of Holguin, proceeded to destroy the entire group. At least 16 men were killed.

Colonel Fernin Cowley, himself, was later killed on November 27, 1957, by a guerrilla unit.²⁰ His killing triggered a strong campaign to avenge his death. Within days many Communist sympathizers were hunted down by the Army in Holguin and elsewhere and killed. Many of these Communists were not actively involved in revolutionary activity, since the Party (PSP) still maintained a guarded attitude toward Fidel Castro and other revolutionary groups.

During 1957 the guerrilla forces in the mountains of Oriente slowly grew in size and the leaders and volunteers increased their military experience. There were many small clashes with the Army which the guerrillas won. An example of a victory occurred on May 27, 1957, when the guerrillas attacked an Army post at El Uvero, a small village by the seashore on the southern coast of Oriente, where a lumber and sugar mill were located. The position was defended by a platoon of soldiers numbering 53 men commanded by a second lieutenant. The guerrillas attacked with 83 men during the night. After a battle which lasted about three hours, the

²⁰ Colonel Cowley was killed in an ambush by William Galvis and Oscar Lucero. Galvis is now a general in the Cuban Army. Lucero was killed in Havana by the police about three months after his participation in this ambush. Col. Cowley had been Military Attaché in Washington in 1955, replacing Col. Barquin after he was arrested for leading a conspiracy to overthrow Batista.

Army surrendered, suffering 14 dead and 19 wounded. Fourteen soldiers were captured and six managed to escape. The guerrillas in turn suffered six dead and 15 wounded. Encounters like this provided the guerrillas new weapons, ammunition, and most of all they gained the respect of the local population and a legend began about their exploits.

Similar encounters took place in the mountains of Oriente toward the second half of 1957. Raul Castro, leading a guerrilla column, attacked the town of Estrada Palma in late July. A few days later "Che" Guevara and another guerrilla column which included Ramiro Valdes (then a guerrilla captain), attacked a small rural guard unit, possibly a squad, at the hamlet of Bueycito. Of the twelve guards, six were wounded and six were captured. The guerrillas suffered one dead and three wounded.

The following month, in late August of 1957, another encounter took place at El Hombrito. This time it was between an Army company commanded by Major Merob Sosa and a guerrilla unit commanded by "Che" Guevara. Fidel Castro, leading another guerrilla, unit captured another government post at Las Cuevas at about the same time. For the rest of the year the fighting in the mountains in Oriente was at a standstill. The government forces would not pursue the rebel units into the mountains and the rebels would not venture out of their mountain hideouts. According to "Che" Guevara's own account, the only Army officer who dared to enter rebel territory in pursuit of the guerrillas was Sánchez Mosquera.²¹

Throughout this first year of guerrilla warfare the Cuban military had obtained mixed results in the war against the revolutionaries. The Navy spotted the landing force led by Fidel Castro. The air force attacked the expeditionaries and ground forces and decimated the group. However, the Air Force was not effective in providing close support to ground troops when they made contact with a guerrilla force. The Army, the Rural Guard and Navy infantry would not maintain contact with the guerrillas when a battle broke out and failed to follow them in hot pursuit when they retreated to the mountains. Instead, the Armed Forces broke the engagements and retreated, failing to take advantage of their superior fire power and numbers. When the guerrillas attacked military outposts, the enlisted men fought back often for a

²¹ According to "Che" Guevara, "This battle more or less marked the moment of the government troops' definitive withdrawal from the Sierra; thereafter it was penetrated, as a feat of daring, only by Sánchez Mosquera, the bravest, the most murderous, and one of the most thieving of all of Batista's military chieftains." Ernesto "Che" Guevara, Reminiscences of the Cuban Revolutionary War, (New York: M.R. Press, 1968), p. 157.

long time and surrendered only after suffering heavy losses. The initiative was almost always on the side of the guerrillas led by Fidel Castro.

Urban Guerrilla Warfare

The opposition forces in urban areas were in many ways more effective than the guerrilla units in the mountains. Underground cells of several opposition groups including Castro's 26th of July Movement (M-26-7), Directorio Revolucionario (DR), Organización Auténtica (OA), Triple A, Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR). Along with other groups, they outmaneuvered the police and Armed Forces. The struggle in urban areas, however, was very costly. Between 1957 and 1958, it is estimated that as many as 1,000 people may have died in the urban war, including the principal leaders of the urban underground.²²

When Batista fled in the early hours of January 1, 1959, most of the leaders of the urban underground had perished. In the political vacuum Fidel Castro emerged as the leader of the Revolution. It should also be noted that the vast majority of the leaders of the urban underground were not Communists. In fact, there is evidence that Communists often acted as police informers. They let Batista's police wipe out the non-Communist opposition leaders.

The most important action organized by the urban underground was the assault on the Presidential Palace in the early afternoon of March 13, 1957. The assault was coordinated by the university students' federation. Its leaders operated under the banner of the Directorio Revolucionario Estudiantil. The leaders of the assault were Menelao Mora and Carlos Gutiérrez Menoyo.²³ The goal was to rush the guards at the palace and move quickly upstairs and kill Batista before the large numbers of soldiers stationed in the building

²² Estimates of the number of casualties of the revolution against Batista range from only a few hundred to as high as 20,000. The author checked press accounts inside and outside of Cuba for this two-year period and could find no figures to account for more than 2,000 casualties.

²³ Carlos Gutiérrez Menoyo was born in Spain and fought with the French underground in WWII against the German Army together with other veterans of the Spanish Civil War. He received several medals from the French Government for his performance in the war against the German forces in France. In 1947, Gutiérrez Menoyo went to Cuba and participated in the Cayo Confites plot to overthrow Dominican dictator Rafael L. Trujillo. (See Chapter XIV for more details.)

could react. They came very close to accomplishing that goal. However, due to hand grenades which failed to detonate they were unable to complete the mission.²⁴

Elsewhere in Havana another group, headed by the president of the Federation of University Students, José Antonio Echeverría, took over an important radio station (Radio Reloj) and broadcast an appeal to the population to take arms against the dictatorship. Echeverría then headed for the University of Havana, located a few blocks away. He was intercepted by a police patrol and killed in a gun battle.

Other leaders and participants in the assault, including José Machado Rodríguez, Fructuoso Rodríguez, Juan Pedro Carbó Serviá and Joe Westbrook, were hunted down by police and killed in gun battles. These four young men were killed at an apartment on #7 Humboldt Street, in Havana, by the police. An interesting point is that some of these young people were turned over to Batista's police by informers who were members of the Cuban Communist Party known then as Partido Socialista Popular (PSP). (One of these informers, Marcos Rodríguez, was arrested in 1964 by the Revolutionary Government, tried and later executed as the informer who told the police that revolutionaries were hiding at the #7 Humboldt Street apartment.)²⁵

One of the few who survived the assault and the aftermath was Faure Chomón. He later formed part of a new guerrilla front in the mountains of central Cuba known as the Escambray Mountains and reached the rank of Major. Chomón was later appointed by Fidel Castro as Cuba's first Ambassador to the Soviet Union.

Perhaps the most prominent and effective leader of the urban underground was Frank País, a member of the urban underground of the M-26-7, who commanded the guerrilla units in Santiago

²⁴ A total of 27 attackers and 5 soldiers died in the assault on the Presidential Palace.

²⁵ Also indirectly implicated in this case in which PSP members acted as police informants were Joaquín Ordoqui and Edith García Buchaca. Edith García was the former wife of Carlos Rafael Rodríguez Rodríguez, a prominent leader of the PSP and currently a member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party and Vice President of Cuba. She was discovered having an extramarital affair with Joaquín Ordoqui, who was also married at the time. All three were members of the national leadership of the PSP and held important positions in the organization. As a result of the incident García Buchaca and Rodríguez divorced and she married Ordoqui. They were married when the Humboldt Street incident took place.

de Cuba. He directed the demonstrations prior to the landing of Fidel Castro in November of 1956 and fought numerous battles with police and Army troops. He was killed on July 30, 1957, by Colonel José María Salas Cañizares, Chief of Police in Santiago de Cuba and several followers.²⁶

Government Terror Tactics

To counteract the urban guerrilla movement and urban terrorism, Batista called on a group of officers who led the ruthless government effort to defeat the revolutionaries. Their tactics included counterterrorism such as leaving the bodies of revolutionaries who had been arrested, tortured and killed at street corners in some of the principal intersections in urban areas. This group of men included General Rafael Salas Cañizares, Chief of Police in Havana until he was killed in action; Lt. Colonel Esteban Ventura Novo, a member of the police in Havana, who captured, tortured and killed a large number of members of the underground; and Colonel Jacinto Menocal, who led the government anti-guerrilla units in Pinar del Rio. Other henchmen included Major Aza, Lieutenants Despaine and Heredia and Sergeant Beitia, who participated in the persecution of the revolutionaries in Oriente. They were captured and executed by firing squad in 1959 after the revolutionaries gained power.²⁷

The principal organizations that carried out the anti-revolutionary activity were the Servicio de Inteligencia Militar (SIM), the Naval Intelligence Service and the Buró Represivo de Actividades Comunistas (BRAC). The BRAC was commanded by Colonel Mariano Faget, who had made a name for himself during WWII as the commander of the old Servicio de Investigaciones de Actividades Enemigas and was responsible for the arrest and execution of German Spy H. A. Lüning (see chapter XIII for more details). During 1958 the SIM was under the command of Colonel Leopoldo Pérez Coujil and Lieutenant Colonel Irenaldo García Baez. After the death of Brig. Salas Cañizares, Colonel Hernando Hernández was named Chief of

²⁶ A black informant named "Randisch" pointed Frank Pais out to the police. He was later killed by the revolutionary underground. The actual killer of Frank Pais may have been Ignacio Basóls, a member of the Naval Intelligence Service, which was commanded by Captain Laurent. Source: Interview with Vilma Espín, Raúl Castro's wife, as published in Carlos Franqui, Cuba: el libro de los doce (Mexico: Ediciones Era, S.A., 1966), p. 158.

²⁷ About 400 former members of the Armed Forces and police were executed for war crimes in 1959. More details are provided in the following chapter.

Police. Hernández was replaced in March of 1958 by Brigadier Pilar García, who was the son of Lt. Col. García Baez, deputy chief of SIM. Technically, these intelligence organizations came under the jurisdiction of the Directorate of Intelligence (G-2) of the General Staff of the Army, headed by Major General Aristides Sosa de Quesada.

In addition to the activities of the organizations listed above, Batista also counted on the support of civilian paramilitary organizations. For example, Rolando Masferrer offered, in February of 1958, to lead his private Army into the mountains to fight against Fidel Castro's M-26-7 guerrillas. Masferrer, who was then a member of the Senate, had a private Army known as "Masferrer's Tigers." This organization was a new version of the old Movimiento Socialista Revolucionario, one of the "grupos de acción" of the 1940's. Masferrer, as has been explained in previous chapters, was a personal enemy of Fidel Castro, and was well aware of what would happen to him if Castro took power in Cuba.

Opposition to Batista Within the Armed Forces

Within the Armed Forces there was opposition to Batista, particularly among officers who had graduated from the military academies and considered themselves professional soldiers. In April 1956, several months before Castro's expedition, a group of officers led by Colonel Ramón Barquín attempted a coup but the group had been penetrated by military intelligence (Servicio de Inteligencia Militar, SIM). All the leaders were arrested and court martialed. Colonel Barquín was a graduate of the Cuban Military Academy and the General Staff and War College of Mexico. He was, at the time of his arrest, the Cuban Army attaché in Washington, and delegate to the Inter-American Defense Board. He had a reputation as a good officer and one of relatively few to be regarded as a professional. Barquín and his co-conspirators were sent to prison on the Isle of Pines where they remained until Batista fled the country. He is now in exile living in Puerto Rico.²⁸

A total of between 200 and 250 officers and enlisted men seemed to have been involved in the plot. The main co-conspirators were Lieutenant Colonel Manuel Varela, who commanded the armored battalion, Major Enrique Borbonet, who

²⁸ Colonel Barquín has published several excellent books on the Cuban military. However, a major problem with using his books is that they do not have an index, thus making it very difficult to cross-check the names of people mentioned in different chapters. This is a frequent problem with books published in Latin America.

commanded the paratroopers, and Major José H. W. Orihuela, who was in the artillery. It is interesting to note that several of the men implicated in the conspiracy had received advanced training in the United States or had served in some capacity in the Cuban Mission in Washington.²⁹

On September 5, 1957, a rebellion led by retired Navy Captain José Dionisio San Román took place among Navy officers and enlisted men in Cienfuegos, at the Cayo Loco naval base. Their action was coordinated with members of Fidel Castro's M-26-7 organization, as well as other groups opposed to Batista. The uprising started after Captain San Román was allowed to enter the Southern Navy Command at Cienfuegos by Sergeant Santiago Rios Gutiérrez, who was the duty non-com at the base. Within minutes the men involved were able to arrest the commander of the base, Colonel Roberto Comesañas, and take over the installation. Civilian revolutionaries took over several strategic locations in Cienfuegos.

Coordination with other military units also involved in the conspiracy, as well as with civilian revolutionaries, was weak and the insurrection was crushed by Army units sent to the scene. An Army battalion supported by tanks from the Military District in Santa Clara and by the air force was able to quickly end the insurrection. San Román and many of his followers were killed fighting the Army.³⁰

According to several historians, ex-President Carlos Prío, as well as Manuel Antonio de Varona, were behind the Cienfuegos uprising. A military uprising with the participation of several units had been organized but the date was postponed. The conspirators in the Navy who were stationed at Navy Headquarters in Havana, had failed to alert the units in Cienfuegos that the uprising had been postponed and this led to the defeat of the insurrection. Another version that circulated at the time, in the rumor mill, was that the U.S.

²⁹ An excellent description of the Barquín conspiracy is given by Louis A. Pérez, Jr., in his book Army Politics in Cuba 1898-1958. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1976).

³⁰ Navy Captain Julio Laurent led the Naval Intelligence Service investigation of the insurrection and the capture, torture and execution of the men implicated. He was able to escape to the United States after the fall of Batista. Among his principal agents were: Jesús Blanco, Ignacio Basols, Pedro Gómez Raveló, and Fernández Velasco.

Central Intelligence Agency was involved in the failed operation.³¹

The Commander of the Army in the province was Colonel José Fernández Rey. Colonel Cándido Hernández led the counterattack leading a battalion stationed in Santa Clara. The casualties of the uprising, according to Colonel Ramón Barquín, were 70 civilian revolutionaries and 32 sailors who

³¹ Among the conspirators who were arrested and sentenced by a court martial were:

NAVY

Capitán de Corbeta

Miguel Ponce Goizueta
Alberto Juarrero
Guillermo Driggs
Andrés González Lines

Teniente de Navío

Jorge Caifas Sierra
Hermes Carballo
Emidgio Báez Vigo (currently
a Rear Admiral and First
Deputy Chief of the Navy)
Emilio Virgó
Orlando Fernández García
Isidro Contreras
Abelardo Miranda

AIR FORCE

Captains

Enrique Carrera Rolas
(now a Brig. Gen. in
the Air Force; he flew
important missions
against the Bay of
Pigs invasion in 1961)
Gastón Bernal Fernández
Jorge Parramón Spencer
Eduardo Ferer Castillo
Mario León González

Lieutenants

Lázaro Rey
Aurelio Martínez Leiro
Martín Klein Schiller
Rolando Cossion Soto
Alvaro Prendes Quintang

ARMY

Captains

Teobaldo Cuervo Castillo (MD)
Antonio Gordon Osorio
José M. Vidal Yebra

Lieutenants

Edmundo Costales Ferrer
Jesús Saa González
Francisco S. Morales Paula
Eduardo Sotolongo

Several of these officers had graduated from the Cuban military academies and had taken advanced training in the United States, including Capt. Carreras Rolas (He is now a general in the Cuban Revolutionary Air Force). For additional information see Ramón Barquín's Las Luchas Guerrilleras en Cuba (Madrid: Plaejor, 1975), pp. 477-483; Ambassador E.E.T. Smith mentions in his book The Fourth Floor the CIA participation in this incident, pp. 32-34.

participated in the uprising; 12 soldiers were killed and 30 wounded. The alleged CIA contact of the military leaders of the conspiracy was a Mr. William Williamson, a member of the staff of the American Embassy in Havana, who was possibly the deputy chief of station of the CIA. He is the man who is said to have promised U.S. Government recognition in the event that the insurrection was able to overthrow Batista.

One of the reasons for these conspiracies is the fact that most of the rank and file of the Cuban military did not receive any special favors or obtain any benefits from Batista. In fact, they did not share in the revenues obtained from control of prostitution and gambling, as well as other forms of organized crime. The general officers and a handful of henchmen kept all the money. The captains, lieutenants, sergeants and lower ranks did not benefit, for the most part, from illicit activity. On the other hand, they were discredited in society simply because they wore a uniform.

Please note that Batista did have many loyal supporters among the enlisted men. Many old sergeants still remembered all the benefits they had received under Batista's rule from 1933 to 1944. These men to this day blame the officers for their failure to defeat the revolutionaries. They claim that the officers sold them out by taking bribes from rebel leaders.

Leadership of the Armed Forces

The leadership of the Armed Forces during Batista's dictatorship was more political than military. The police leadership was the same. Batista counted on a small group of officers who were loyal to him to carry the brunt of the battle against the opponents of the government by means of terror, torture, and general repression. Several of them were even close relatives who had made the Armed Forces a private domain. These men were more interested in placing more stars on their uniforms than in winning the war.

The command structure of the Armed Forces was reorganized in November of 1957 with the changes being implemented in January of 1958. A new position of Chief of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Jefe del Estado Mayor Conjunto) was created with the rank of General-in-Chief (four stars). General Francisco Tabernilla Dolz was promoted to the new position. He was replaced in the position of Chief of Staff of the Army by Pedro Rodríguez Avila, with the rank of lieutenant general (three stars); the head of the Directorate of Personnel (G-1) was given the rank of brigadier and the position was given to José Fernández Rey; the head of the Directorate of Intelligence (G-2), was given the rank of major general (two stars) and given to Aristides Sosa de Quesada; the Directorate of Operations (G-3), was raised to the rank of

major general and the position given to Martin Diaz Tamayo; the Directorate of Logistics (G-4) was also raised to the rank of major general and given to Juan Rojas González. Finally, the Directorate of Inspection (G-5) was raised to major general and the position filled by Luis Robainas Piedra.

In addition to all of these new general positions, the Chief of the Army Air Force was a brigadier, the Director of the Military Hospital was a brigadier; the commander of the "General Alejandro Rodriguez" Infantry Division was a brigadier; the commander of "Máximo Gómez" Mixed Artillery Regiment was a brigadier. The commander of the First Military District (Oriente) was Major General Eulogio Cantillo. The commander of the Third Military District (Camagüey) was Brigadier Alberto del Río Chaviano. The Fourth District (Matanzas) was commanded by Brigadier Carlos Cantillo. The Fifth Military District (Havana) was commanded by Brigadier Julio Sánchez Gómez, and the Seventh Military District (Pinar del Rio) by Brigadier Dámaso Sogo Hernández.

Obviously all of these promotions represented a substantial change from the situation in the Armed Forces before the coup d'état of March 10, 1952. However, the rank "inflation" did not have any relationship to experience or to effectiveness in combat. It could not even be justified on the bases of an increase in the size of the military forces. In addition, the Armed Forces became almost a family affair.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Estado Mayor Conjunto) was Mayor General Francisco Tabernilla, who had been one of Batista's co-conspirators in 1952.³² He brought his sons back from retirement and promoted them quickly to take over the principal commands, particularly after the discovery of the conspiracy led by Colonel Barquin. Francisco Tabernilla Palmeri, his oldest son, became a brigadier and was given command of the Mixed Tank Regiment. Another son, Carlos Tabernilla was also made a brigadier and made Chief of the Army Air Force. Yet another son, Lieutenant Colonel Marcelo Tabernilla was made commander of the Bomber Squadron of the Army Air Force. Rafael Salas Cafizares, who was a lieutenant in 1952 at the time of the coup, became a brigadier and Chief of the National Police. His brother José María Salas Cafizares was also given the rank of colonel and made Chief of Police in Santiago de Cuba. Their brother-in-law, Colonel Alberto del Río Chaviano was the Commander of the Army regiment in Santiago de Cuba for several years and then promoted to brigadier and given command in Santa Clara. As has already been mentioned, the Chief of Police was the son of the Deputy Chief of the SIM.

³² Gen. Tabernilla had also participated in the 1933 sergeants' rebellion led by Batista.

While the organization was becoming "top-heavy," the conditions of the enlisted men and lower officer ranks were the best. There was no mandatory military service. As a result the Armed Forces were composed of recruits, mostly poor, with very little education. A large percentage were blacks. The non-commissioned officers were only a little better than their men, perhaps in education. However, they were not physically fit and remained in the military past normal retirement age of age 40, in most countries. The officer corps was better educated and recruitment for the academies was made from a slightly higher social and economic class. However, there was no "up or out" system. They also remained in the military past a normal retirement age. An officer may get his commission as a second lieutenant at age 22 and remain in the same rank in the force until his fifties. By then he was fat, not physically fit, and disillusioned about military life. These officers could see political supporters of the President enter the force at a higher rank and use their position to earn money through an extensively corrupt system. Often the funds appropriated for supplies, food, education, etc., were pocketed by the higher ranks. There were only a limited number of units which were well-trained and ready for combat. (See the next chapter for more details).

The new recruits brought in to expand the Army in 1957 and 1958, to fight the growing insurgency, were no better. They were for the most part poor, black, poorly educated and scared. They were easy targets of the guerrillas who nickname them "bocaditos" (sandwiches), meaning that they were easy targets. The Cuban slang term does not translate well into English. Another popular nickname used for these soldiers was "casquitos," meaning little helmets.

Guerrilla Warfare Intensifies

In 1958, the final year of the dictatorship, the armed conflict underwent major changes. The guerrilla forces in rural areas, particularly in the mountains of Oriente, grew in size to about 1,000 strong. New guerrilla units were formed in the Escambray Mountains in the south-central portion of the island. Finally, two columns of guerrilla units led by Majors Camilo Cienfuegos and "Che" Guevara moved west across Camagüey toward Las Villas to establish a strong second front in the Escambray Mountains. The strategy was similar to the one used during the War of Independence, with rebel units moving from the stronghold in Oriente towards Havana.

Castro's forces consisted of six guerrilla columns of about 200 men each. Column one (José Martí) was commanded directly by Fidel Castro. Column Two (Antonio Maceo), was commanded

by Major Camilo Cienfuegos. Column six, with the name "Frank Pais," was commanded by Raúl Castro.³³ A third column was commanded by Major Juan Almeida. A fourth column was commanded by Major "Che" Guevara.

In the Escambray Mountains a second guerrilla front was formed by members of several opposition groups. The veterans of the assault on the Presidential Palace formed a guerrilla unit of the Directorio Revolucionario "13 de Marzo," and were commanded by Major Faure Chomón. A second group formed by the Organización Auténtica was commanded by Major Antonio Santiago. Eloy Gutiérrez Menoyo commanded the guerrilla units of the "Segundo Frente Nacional del Escambray;" and the followers of Fidel Castro formed another guerrilla unit under Victor Bordón, representing the July 26 Movement.

Army Offensive in Oriente

The government attempted to put down the guerrillas in Oriente by putting together a force of over 10,000 men with armor and air support to encircle the guerrillas and wipe them out. The force consisted of 14 infantry battalions (350 men each) and seven independent infantry companies (103 men each), one field artillery battalion and one tank battalion. In addition, several Navy ships and personnel were assigned to the operation.

The offensive began on May 24, 1958, under the command of General Eulogio Cantillo. The Army pushed south from the northeast and northern border of the Sierra Maestra Mountains. A few days later, on June 15, the Navy landed a battalion commanded by Major Corzo Aguirre at Las Cuevas, with orders to push north toward the mountains. Battalions commanded by Major Menéndez Martínez and Lieutenant Colonel Sánchez Mosquera pushed into the mountains on June 20th. The 18th Battalion commanded by Major Quevedo advanced toward the mouth of the La Plata River and the coast line. The 19th

³³ Raúl Castro's guerrilla unit operated in the Sierra Cristal area and was known as the "Second Front." Several of the generals in the Revolutionary Armed Forces in Cuba today are veterans of Raúl Castro's guerrilla unit. They include Division General José Causse Pérez (Deputy Chief of the Eastern Army); Division General Rigoberto García Fernández, Vice Minister of the MINFAR and Chief of the Youth Labor Army; Division General Zenén Casas Regueiro, Chief of the Antiaircraft Defense and Revolutionary Air Force; Division General Julio Casas Regueiro, member of the Politburo, CCP; and Brigadier General Cesar Lara Roselló (Military Advisor to the MTT in Havana and former Chief of the Army Corps in Camagüey).

Battalion commanded by Major Suárez Soulet advanced toward Merino. The Air Force provided as much air cover as it could to the soldiers as they moved toward the rebel stronghold in the mountains. By June 29th, about 90 percent of the guerrilla-controlled area had been taken by the Army before the guerrillas began to fight back. Combat took place in Las Vegas de Jibacoa, Santo Domingo, Naranjal, La Plata, Palma Mocha, as the Army advanced toward Gaviro and San Lorenzo to surround the mountains and the rebel held areas.

Two months later, despite the effort of the Armed Forces, the offensive failed after suffering over 1,000 casualties between dead, wounded and missing. Over four hundred had been captured by the guerrillas. Thousands of weapons had fallen into rebel hand. The battalion commanded by Major Quevedo was surrounded by the guerrillas and after several days, Quevedo and his men not only surrendered but joined the rebels. In addition, Cantillo had made contact with Fidel Castro and had established a dialog which in a way sealed the end of the Batista regime since field commanders could not be trusted to carry out their tasks. One major factor in the defeat of the offensive is that at no time did generals or colonels venture into the field to lead their troops and maintain the "macho" image which is so needed in Latin American politics. Rebel leaders did lead their men in battle and this fact made a major difference in the outcome.

But the offensive was defeated to a great extent by a strong public relations campaign launched by the revolutionaries, particularly by Raúl Castro from his strong hold in the Mayari Mountains in the north coast of Oriente. They were able to stir up public opinion in the United States and other countries against the bombing raids conducted by the Air Force in support of the advancing ground troops. Guerrilla units began to kidnap American citizens employed by the multiple American companies located in Cuba and particularly in Oriente. Several were captured treated well, and asked to write letters to the U.S. Ambassador, their company headquarters and the news media to the effect that the guerrillas were not Communist or bandits and their members only wanted to bring back democracy to Cuba.³⁴

The United States pressured the Cuban Government to stop the air support and avoid killing civilian non-combatants. In

³⁴ This type of behavior by Americans after they have been victims of political kidnapers has become fairly common. As part of the stress of being kidnapped, the victims begin to find redeeming values in their kidnapers and to make statements against U.S. Government policy. Americans are also more often than not fairly naive about international politics and not very well educated or informed about either geography or politics in general.

addition, the government was asked to stop using weapons that had been provided to Cuba under bilateral treaties for national defense in a domestic conflict. These pressures and the lack of leadership of the General Staff, which never provided direct field support to the troops with their presence in the battle zone, doomed the offensive.

The United States Stops Selling Weapons to Batista

The government faced another important problem in the spring of 1958. The Armed Forces had traditionally been armed with U.S. weapons and other materials. On March 14, 1958, the U.S. Government announced that it was placing an embargo on further sales of military hardware to Batista. Thus, it became necessary to find other sources. Great Britain, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic, as well as other countries and international arms dealers, cashed in on the opportunity.

The British Government in particular moved in to sell weapons to Batista. Several helicopters (Westland S-55), Sea Fury fighter planes and 15 Comet tanks were sold and delivered to Batista before the end of 1958. British Ambassador A.S. Fordham and his Air Attaché became frequent visitors to the offices of the Tabernilla family of "generals." (See pictures on page 244)

But weapons were not the key to the victory or defeat of the Armed Forces. Aside from the question of who had the support of the public, the military did not have the training or the leadership to lead men into battle, particularly against unconventional forces. In addition, repressive tactics against civilians and internal corruption in the military could not gain the support of the population to deny aid to the rebel forces.

Politics at the American Embassy

It seems that there were strong differences of opinion at the United States Embassy in Havana, as well as in the State Department in Washington, about the situation in Cuba. Ambassador Smith in his book The Fourth Floor states that his CIA Section Chief claimed that there were only 10,000 card carrying Communists and about 20,000 sympathizers in Cuba and the revolution was not Communist inspired. He also claims in the same book that he was not informed that the "number 2" in the CIA station had told the conspirators in the naval uprising in Cienfuegos that the United States would recognize

them if they won. He claims that the CIA was giving aid and comfort to Castro's forces.³⁵

Ambassador Smith had become an ardent supporter of Fulgencio Batista. This is a common problem with some U.S. Ambassadors who have a tendency to want to represent the head of state of the country where they are serving in Washington, instead of the other way around. They do not want to convey any bad news to the host government. On the other hand the CIA, although correct in the analysis that Batista did not have popular support, seems to have failed to predict the future in Cuba.

1958 General Elections

The government began to make preparations under considerable international pressure to hold general elections in November of 1958. Several opposition parties announced their intentions to participate in the elections at the beginning of 1958. These opposition parties argued that they were looking for a peaceful solution to the political crisis in Cuba. Revolutionary organizations fighting against Batista took a different approach. They met in Miami and Caracas to set up a Revolutionary Government supported by a coalition of all the organizations fighting to overthrow Batista. They selected Felipe Pazos, a reputable international economist, for the position of provisional president. Fidel Castro's M-26-7 did not go along with the other revolutionary organizations. Castro announced that he had already selected Judge Manuel Urrutia for the position of provisional president. This judge had declined to sentence the members of the Granma expedition who had been arrested by the government. Urrutia stated that the men were exercising their constitutional right to fight against an illegal government and went into exile.

Castro also announced on February 21, 1958, that his guerilla forces would execute any candidates or individuals who in any way cooperated with the electoral farce that Batista was going to hold in November. He favored an all out war to defeat Batista's militarily. Castro also called for a premature general strike for April 9, which failed. The Cuban Workers Confederation (CTC), under the leadership of Eusebio Mujal, who had an alliance with Batista thwarted the strike. In addition, members of the Communist Party (PSP), also resisted the call for a strike because Castro had not sought an alliance with them. After the failure of the strike, Communist leaders, including Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, went to

³⁵ Earl E. T. Smith, The Fourth Floor, pp.32-34.

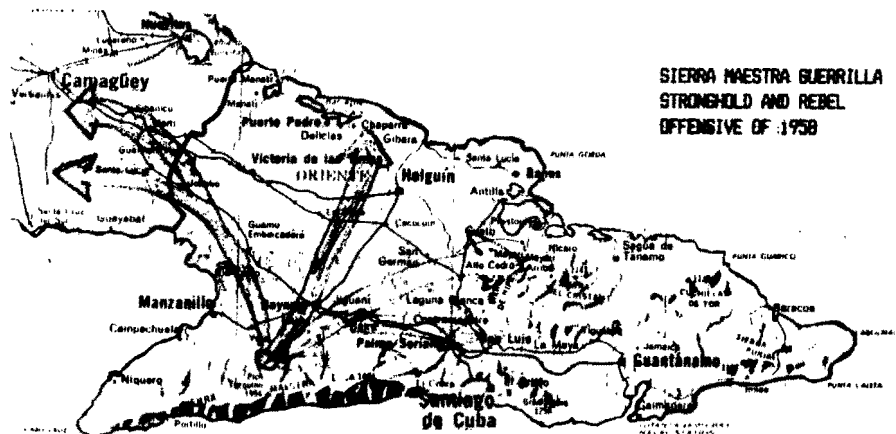
the Sierra Maestra and arrived at an understanding with Fidel Castro.

Possibly inspired by the failure of the strike, the government launched their offensive in May of 1958 against the guerrilla stronghold in the Sierra Maestra and continued the plans for general elections in November. Despite the failure of the offensive and a series of military defeats starting in mid-1958, the government went ahead with the electoral plans. Former President Ramón Grau San Martín ran for president with Antonio Lancis as his running mate. Carlos Márquez Sterling and Rodolfo Méndez Peñate ran under the banner of the Partido del Pueblo Libre. Alberto Salas Amaro and Miguel Ángel Céspedes ran under the banner of the Partido Unión Cubana. Batista's followers presented the candidacy of Andrés Rivero Agüero and Gastón Godoy. The government candidates were declared the victors of the very questionable elections.

The transfer of power to Rivero Agüero was to have taken place in February of 1959. However, the United States, other foreign governments, and all the opposition groups refused to recognize the validity of the elections and began to pressure Batista to step down. The military situation went from bad to worse as all the military leaders began to look for a way out of a very difficult situation.

The Rebel Offensive

With the defeat of Batista's offensive in the spring and early summer of 1958, the government was doomed. Fidel Castro immediately began to prepare his own offensive, and by late August, the rebel Army was ready to start a major offensive to extend the fighting out of the mountains in Oriente. The guerrillas had been able to develop a strong cadre of leaders to move in two directions: an invasion toward the



west and a move out of the mountains to encircle Santiago de Cuba.³⁶

The "Invasion"

In September 1958, Majors Cienfuegos and Guevara started their march leading their columns toward the west. Army commanders, in their path out of the mountains, are said to have been paid off to allow the guerrilla units to pass through their districts. Despite being spotted by the Air Force and constant pursuit by B-26's, C-47's, fighter planes and ground troops, the guerrillas managed to cross the flatlands of Camagüey and reached Las Villas by mid-October. They did suffer considerable casualties from fighting, as

³⁶ The principal "comandantes" of the revolution were:

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Almeida, Juan | Gutierrez Menoyo, Eloy |
| Ameijeras, Efigenio | Lussón, E.A. |
| Canacho Aguilera, Julio | Martínez Sánchez, A. |
| Casillas, Ernesto "el abuelo" | Matos, Hubert |
| Castro, Fidel | Montseny Vaca, Demetrio |
| Castro, Raúl | ("Villa") |
| Chomón, Faure | Mora, Victor |
| Cienfuegos, Camilo | Morgan, William |
| Crespo, Luis | Pena, Félix |
| Cubela, Rolando | Pérez, Faustino |
| de los Santos, René | Rodríguez Hernandez, |
| Díaz Lanz, Pedro | Horacio |
| Duarte, José | Rodríguez, Luis Orlando |
| Escalona, Derminio | Rodríguez, René |
| Fajardo, Manuel | Sánchez Díaz, Antonio |
| Gálvez, William | ("Pinares") |
| García, Calixto | Sánchez, Universo |
| Gómez Ochoa, Delio | Sorí Marín, Humberto |
| Guevara, Ernesto "Che" | Valdés, Ramiro |
| | Vera, Aldo |

Other up-and-coming officers below the rank of major were:

Samuel Rodiles, Felix Gutiérrez, Waldo Reyna Chirino, Adolfo Rodríguez de la Vega, Serafin Ruiz Zárate, Antonio Núñez Jiménez and José Arzibi, Raúl Menéndez Tomassevich, Abelardo Colomé, Carlos Iglesias and Belarmino Castilla. Revolutions have a way of "devouring" their own children. The majority of these men later turned against the Communist leadership and were arrested, executed or forced into exile. Others have become generals in the present Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces. Others have died either from natural causes or have died in other wars.

well as from environmental problems caused by the swamps of the region. They lacked food, water, and other essentials.

Three Army columns of about 400 men each were sent to the Escambray Mountains to surround the rebels. However, a few days later they were pulled back due to public opinion pressure because the farmers in the area were trapped by the Army encirclement and could not come out to sell their products. In a matter of a few days the guerrilla forces in the Escambray joined forces, broke out of the mountains and began to advance toward the provincial capital of Santa Clara. By then the Army was demoralized.

The guerrillas attacked and defeated Army barracks located in Cabaiguán, Fomento and Sancti Spiritus, Guayos, Yaguajay, Placetas, Remedios and Caibarién. Roads were closed to traffic with the help of urban guerrillas which helped to attack the rear guard of the Army. Some Army commanders, such as captain Abon Lee in Yaguajay, fought well against the rebel units, but could not make their demoralized troops fight to the last man. In addition, the Rebel Army now had field superiority as they attacked small garrisons with good weapons and superior numbers of fighters.

The Rebel Offensive in Oriente

The guerrilla units in the Sierra Cristal, in the eastern part of the province of Oriente, had increased in numbers. With the new men, Raul Castro, Commander of the Second Front, formed new guerrilla columns and began to move out of the mountains toward the southern coast of Cuba and the large towns located in that area, including Guantánamo.³⁷ Fidel Castro's guerrilla columns also began to move out of the Sierra Maestra Mountains toward Santiago de Cuba, taking advantage of the fact that the Armed Forces had pulled back from the positions that had been set up to encircle the mountains. They had hoped to keep the guerrilla bottled up on the hills.

Isolated Army posts were attacked and defeated along the path of the guerrillas toward the provincial capital of Santiago de Cuba. At the same time, the urban underground intensified its terror campaign throughout the country. Pipe bombs went off with regularity every night in Havana, as well as in

³⁷ Among Raúl Castro's principal commanders were Ciro Frias, Félix Pena, Reinerio Jiménez Lage, Efigenio Ameijeiras, Belarmino Castilla Mas, Manuel Pifeiro, Raúl Menéndez Tomassevich and Demetrio Montseny. Among the up-and-coming officers were: Julio and Senen Casas Regueiro, Abelardo Colomé Ibarra, Rigoberto García Fernández and José Causse Pérez.

small towns. Police patrols were ambushed by urban guerrillas and the government retaliated with an increased level of violence against all known enemies of the government. Radio Rebelde, the guerrilla's field radio station, as well as radio broadcasts from exiles living in Venezuela, kept the population informed of the victories of the guerrillas and the defeats of the government forces.

The End of the Dictatorship

The commanders of the Armed Forces knew by early December that the war had been lost and Batista's government was doomed. The question for the military leadership was how to save what ever they could from a bad situation. It was not only obvious that the Army was unable to stop the rebel advance, but also that the United States had withdrawn support. The time to save one's skin had arrived and all the top officers began to conspire. General Tabernilla began to explore the possibility of coming to terms with Fidel Castro. He asked General Eulogio Cantillo to try to meet and work out a deal with Fidel Castro.

General Cantillo ordered Lieutenant Colonel Fernando Neugart to find a way for him to meet with Fidel Castro. With the help of a Jesuit priest the meeting was arranged and both men met on December 28th, and worked out a plan for the military to join with the rebels to end the war and overthrow Batista. By then Cantillo was doing what many other officers in his command had already done, they worked out a deal with the enemy in an attempt to save their own skin.

The plan called for General Cantillo and Colonels José Rego Rubido and Commodore Manuel Carnero to surrender Oriente to the Revolutionary Army and join them in an advance toward Havana to capture the capital. Castro's conditions included that Batista and officers involved in war crimes would not be allowed to escape and would be court martialed and executed or otherwise severely punished for their deeds. The terms, particularly the capture of Batista and his closest associates, were practically impossible to carry out.

Upon his return to Havana after the meeting with Castro, General Cantillo was met at the airport and ordered to attend a meeting with Batista. The dictator seemed to have been aware of the conspiracies and confronted General Cantillo. Batista still hoped that he could contain the rebel advance, but when Cantillo suggested that he take direct control of the Armed Forces and lead the men into battle he turned down the idea. At this crucial moment, Batista could not even trust General Tabernilla and his closest generals. He had gone to the extreme of calling back to active service Colonel José Eleuterio Pedraza, whom Batista had retired in

1941 after a coup attempt against him, and placed him in command of the troops sent to hold the rebel advance in Santa Clara.³⁸

The last battle of the war took place at Santa Clara, starting on December 29, 1958. This was a city of about 150,000 people, guarded by large numbers of police and Army troops as well as rural guards. The key government post was the Leoncio Vidal Barracks, which were the largest in central Cuba and counted with a substantial number of infantry troops, as well as several tanks and armored vehicles. In addition, an armored train with several hundred soldiers and heavy weapons had been sent from Havana to reinforce the city. The Air Force provided additional support with fighters as well as B-26's which bombarded rebel positions. But despite all of these resources, by December 31st, the city's strong points, defended by government troops, had surrendered one by one to the advancing rebel units. Casualties were very high on both sides.

The fall of Santa Clara was in part the result of the poor performance of the Army commander. Colonel Rio Chaviano, who had commanded the troops in Oriente as far back as the Moncada assault in 1953, had been promoted to Brigadier despite his lack of interest in the war. He seemed to have been more interested in promoting his own interests and gathering as much money as possible from all forms of graft and corruption. As Commander of Santa Clara, General Rio Chaviano repeated his previous poor performance. He ordered the Rural Guard and the Army to retreat to Santa Clara while he enjoyed himself in parties. At the end, he did not even stand by his men in the final battle and fled the scene.

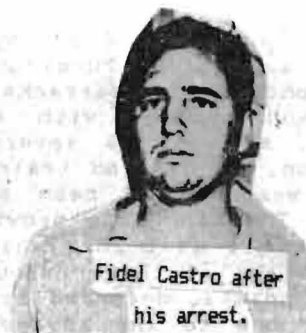
Batista was under increasing pressure from the business community, as well as from the United States to give up. On December 17th, Batista met for over two and a half hours with U.S. Ambassador Earl E. T. Smith to discuss the situation, and as it was explained to Batista, he had no choice but to get out. By New Year's evening, Batista had decided to get out. He gathered his family and a close group of collaborators, went to the military airport at Columbia, and left for Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, seeking asylum from dictator Rafael Trujillo.

³⁸ Colonel Pedraza's son, a civilian, had recently been killed by the revolutionaries. He obviously wanted to take revenge. Pedraza still commanded the respect of many of the old sergeants and officers. They remembered him as a tough disciplinarian and a man who would not sell out to the enemy. After almost 19 years out of the military he donned his green fatigues and went out to inspect the troops. However he never took command of the troops in Santa Clara because it was obvious that the war had been lost.

CASTRO'S ASSAULT OF THE MONCADA ARMY BARRACKS
JULY 26, 1953



Col. Alberto del Rio Chaviano, Commander of the regiment and Maj. Andrés Pérez Chaumont, Chief of Operations of the Regiment.



Fidel Castro after
his arrest.



Fidel Castro in 1955, leaving the Isle of Pines Prison after their sentences were reduced by a general amnesty for political prisoners.



Fidel Castro being interrogated by Col. del Rio Chaviano after his capture.



Haydée Santamaría and Melba Hernández after their arrest for participating in the Moncada assault.

LEADING "ENFORCERS" OF THE BATISTA POLICE



Brig. Gen. Rafael Salas Caffizares, Chief of the National Police during Batista's dictatorship until his death in a gun battle at the Haitian Embassy, in Havana, in October of 1956. This overweight and ruthless individual participated in Batista's coup d'etat in 1952, when he held the rank of lieutenant. Batista rewarded him with rapid promotions to the position of Chief of the National Police. General Salas Caffizares, as well as his brother, Col. José María Salas Caffizares were responsible for the killing of many opponents of the regime.

Lt. Col. Esteban Ventura Novo, one of the principal enforcers during Batista's dictatorship in the National Police. He is credited with the torture and murder of numerous enemies of the regime. He was without a doubt one of the most hated individuals in Cuba.



BATISTA REGIME PURCHASES BRITISH AIRCRAFT

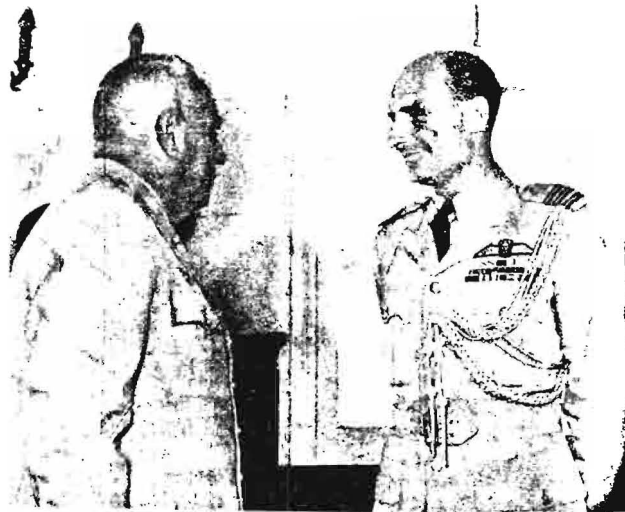


British Amb. A.S. Fordham flying in Cuban Army helicopter piloted by Brigadier General Carlos Tabernilla Palmero, Chief of the Cuban Army Air Force. Source: Boletín del Ejército (May-June, 1958), p.105.

The picture was taken on May 7, 1958, when a number of Westland S-55 helicopters made in Great Britain were delivered to the Army Air Force.

El Excelentísimo Señor A. S. Fordham, Embajador de la Gran Bretaña en Cuba, con el Ingeniero Julio Iglesias de la Torre disponiéndose a efectuar un vuelo en el helicóptero tripulado por el JFAEC Brig (PA) Carlos Tabernilla Palmero, MMN y P.

New British Air Attaché visiting Lieutenant General Tabernilla, Chief of Staff of the Cuban Armed Forces.



En esta fotografía, close-up del Jefe de Estado Mayor y el nuevo Agregado Aéreo británico.



General de Brigada Alberto R. del Rio y Chaviano, MMNP, Jefe del Regimiento No. 1 de la GR, "Maceo", C. de H., Oriente.

Coronel Victor M. Dueñas y Robert, MMNP, Jefe del Regimiento No. 2 de la GR, "Agramonte", Comagüey.

Brigadier General José Fernández y Rey, MMNP, Jefe del Regimiento No. 3 de la GR, "Leoncio Vidal", Las Villas.

Brigadier General Carlos M. Cantillo y González, MMNP, Jefe del Regimiento No. 4 de la GR, "Plácido", C. de H., Matanzas.

Brigadier General Julio Sánchez Gómez, MMNP, Jefe del Regimiento No. 5 de la GR, "Martí", La Habana.

Coronel Evelio Miranda y Rodríguez, MMNP, Jefe del Regimiento No. 6 de la GR, "Rius Rivera", Pinar del Río.

Brigadier General Dámaso Sogo y Hernández, MMNP, Jefe del Regimiento No. 7 de la GR, "General Calixto García", Holguín, Oriente.



**COMMAND STRUCTURE OF THE ARMED FORCES
1958**

Lista Jerárquica de Mando

JEFE DE LAS FUERZAS ARMADAS

Honorable Señor Presidente de la República
FULGENCIO BATISTA Y ZALDIVAR, GC DE LAS FA
General Jefe Supremo

MINISTRO DE DEFENSA NACIONAL

Doctor Miguel Angel Campa y Caraveda

JEFE DE ESTADO MAYOR CONJUNTO

GENERAL EN JEFE FRANCISCO TABERNILLA Y DOLZ, MMNP

JEFE DE ESTADO MAYOR DEL EJERCITO

Teniente General Pedro A. Rodríguez y Avila, MMNP

DIRECCION DE PERSONAL

(G-1) EME

Brigadier José Fernández y Rey
MMNP

DIRECCION DE INTELIGENCIA

(G-2) EME

Mayor General Aristides V. Sosa
y de Quesada MMNP

DIRECCION DE OPERACIONES

(G-3) EME

Mayor General Martín Díaz Tamayo
MMNP

DIRECCION DE LOGISTICA

(G-4) EME

Mayor General Juan Rojas
y González MMNP

DIRECCION DE INSPECCION

(G-5) EME

Mayor General Luis Robinas y Piedra MMNP

PRESIDENTE DEL TRIBUNAL SUPERIOR DE LA JURISDICCION DE GUERRA

MAYOR GENERAL ARISTIDES V. SOSA Y DE QUESADA MMNP

JEFE DE LAS FUERZAS AEREAS DEL EJERCITO

BRIGADIER (PA) CARLOS TABERNILLA Y PALMERO MMNP

JEFE DEL CUERPO DE INGENIEROS CORONEL FLORENTINO E. ROSELL Y LEYVA MMNP

JEFE DEL CUERPO DE SEÑALES TENIENTE CORONEL PEDRO CHIRINO Y OTANO MM

DIRECTOR DEL HOSPITAL MILITAR BRIGADIER (MED) LUIS J. IGLASIAS Y DE LA TORRE MM

DIRECTOR DEL CENTRO MILITAR DE VETERINARIA

TENIENTE CORONEL (VET) ADRIANO PADRON Y TORRA MM
DIRECTOR DEL CENTRO DE CRIA CABALLAR

TENIENTE CORONEL (VET) JOSE A. CASTAÑEDO Y HERNANDEZ MM
DIRECTOR DE LA ESCUELA SUPERIOR DE GUERRA Y ESCUELA DE OFICIALES

MAYOR GENERAL ARISTIDES V. SOSA Y DE QUESADA MMNP
DIRECTOR DE LA ESCUELA DE CADETES

TENIENTE CORONEL PEDRO A. FOYO Y FACCILO MM
JEFE DEL SERVICIO DE INTELIGENCIA MILITAR

CORONEL LEOPOLDO PEREZ Y COUJIL MMNP

DIVISION DE INFANTERIA "GENERAL ALEJANDRO RODRIGUEZ"

General de Brigada Francisco Tabernilla y Palmero, MMNP

REGIMIENTO NUMERO UNO DE INFANTERIA

Coronel Manuel A. B. Ugalde y Carrillo MMNP

REGIMIENTO MIXTO DE TANQUES

Coronel José M. Rego y Rubido MMNP

D/S ESTADO MAYOR DEL EJERCITO

REGIMIENTO MIXTO DE ARTILLERIA "MAXIMO GOMEZ"

General de Brigada Roberto Fernández Miranda MMNP

PRIMER DISTRITO MILITAR

Mayor General Eulogio Cantillo
y Porras MMNP

SEGUNDO DISTRITO MILITAR

Coronel Victor M. Dueñas y Robert
MMNP

TERCER DISTRITO MILITAR

General de Brigada Alberto del Río
y Chaviano MMNP

CUARTO DISTRITO MILITAR

Brigadier Carlos M. Cantillo
y González MMNP

QUINTO DISTRITO MILITAR

Brigadier Julio Sánchez y Gómez
MMNP

SEXTO DISTRITO MILITAR

Coronel Evelio Miranda y Rodríguez
MM

SEPTIMO DISTRITO MILITAR

Brigadier Dámaso Sogo y Hernández
MMNP

REGIMIENTO 10 (SME)

Coronel Manuel Larrubia y Paneque
MMP

Source: Boletín del Ejército



Teniente General Francisco Tabernilla y Dolz, MMNyP,
Jefe de Estado Mayor del Ejército.



Mayor General Eulogio A. Cantillo Porras, MMNyP,
Jefe de la División de Infantería
"General Alejandro Rodríguez".



Mayor General Aristides V. Sosa y de Quesada,
Director de Personal (G-1) EME.



Mayor General Martín Díaz y Tamayo, MMNyP,
Director de Inteligencia (G-2) EME, C/S como
Jefe Dpto. Mtar. de La Cabaña.



Mayor General Luis Robaino y Piedra, MMNyP,
Director de Inspección (G-3) EME.

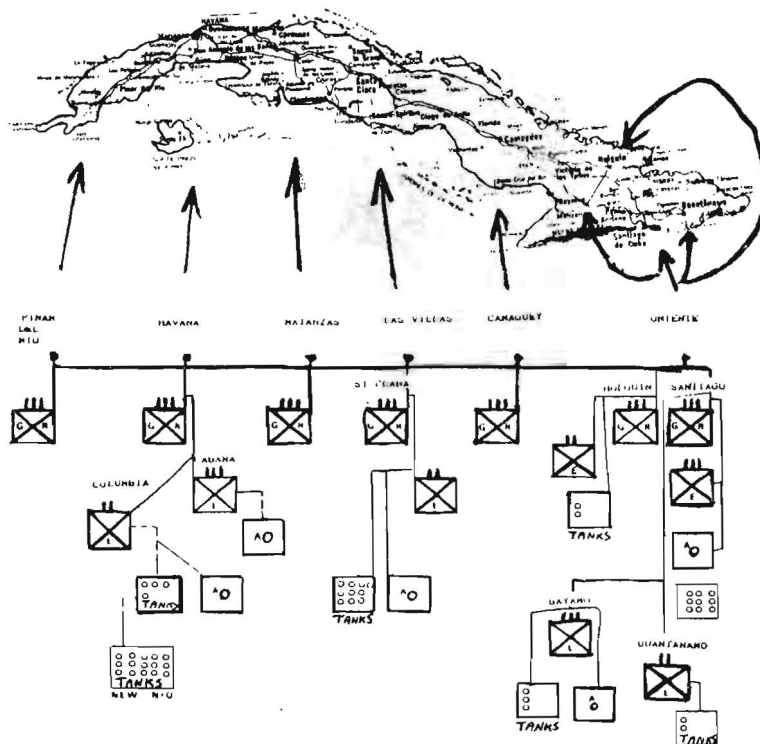


Mayor General Pedro Rodríguez Avila



Mayor General Juan Rojas y González, MMNyP,
Director de Logística (G-4) EME.

RESOURCES OF THE CUBAN ARMY AND RURAL GUARD
December 1958



At the end of December 1958, the Cuban Army had one Rural Guard Regiment in Pinar del Rio, Havana, Matanzas, Santa Clara, Camaguey, Holguin and Santiago de Cuba. It also had one Army infantry regiment in Havana, one battalion in Santa Clara, one battalion in Holguin, and one regiment stationed in Santiago de Cuba and another at Bayamo. Another infantry battalion was stationed in Guantánamo. Artillery units were stationed at Camp Columbia, La Cabana, Bayamo and Santiago de Cuba. There were only a few tanks in operating condition. Four were in Havana, ten in Santa Clara, two in Holguin, three in Bayamo, nine in Santiago de Cuba and two in Guantánamo. Fifteen new tanks had been received at Camp Columbia from Great Britain but were not yet operational.

XVII. The Downfall of the Military and Its Antecedents

The Cuban Armed Forces were defeated by a relatively small number of guerrilla fighters in two years of warfare between December 1956 and December 1958. An organization with close to 40,000 men was not able to overpower a guerrilla force that had considerably less than 400 members throughout most of the war. The victory of the revolution against Batista has had a striking effect on the imagination of historians and triggered thousands of bitter arguments over who or what was responsible for the Communist takeover in Cuba. The fact is that there is no single explanation for what happened.

Most historians would agree that there was almost unanimous opposition to Batista. Most historians would also agree that Fidel Castro was able to build a peculiar and formidable revolutionary movement while most people were confused and unable to understand the extent of what was taking place in Cuba. Beyond these two points, it is difficult to find any other common denominators in the different theories and explanations of what happened. This book only covers the military aspects of the revolution and leaves for other analysts the study of the economic circumstances in Cuba that contributed to it.

Military Training: Historical Overview

As has been pointed out in previous chapters, the Cuban military was organized and trained by the United States for over half a century. The Cuban Army, as well as its predecessors, the Rural Guard and the Artillery Corps, was formed under American Provisional Governments in Cuba. During the American occupation between 1898 and 1902, the Rural Guard and the Artillery Corps were formed under American supervision. The National Police was also formed during this period to provide law enforcement in the capital. During the American intervention between 1906 and 1909, the permanent Army was organized. Training and operations manuals were drafted by American advisors who also conducted direct training of Cuban military units at all levels.

After the departure of the United States authorities in 1909, American military advisors continued to provide direct training to military units in Cuba, as well as in the United States and Panama. As one could expect, the Cuban Armed Forces were organized on the United States model. However, despite this strong American influence, most of the members of the officer corps, as well as many enlisted men, were veterans of the Cuban Army of Independence. Some of these men had served in the Spanish military or had attended Span-

ish service academies. Others had been members of the armed forces of other countries. In addition, after almost fifty years of struggle to obtain independence from Spain, Cubans had developed their own native military management and warfare style.

Despite strong American influence, 400 years of colonial rule could not be erased overnight. Spanish tradition and culture continued to have influence over Cubans, whether they were civilians or members of the uniformed services. In fact, it was the sons of the Spanish immigrants who led the movement and fought for Cuban independence, with or without the blessing of their parents and grandparents. There was very little room for long-lasting hatred in a war that was almost a family dispute.

Although the majority of the officers of the Cuban Armed Forces were trained by American advisors, many Cuban officers also received training elsewhere. Cuban high-ranking officers were sent to Europe to review and study European training methods and the organizational structure of armed forces of many countries. When Cuba purchased ships or other weapons from European suppliers, advisors were sent to Cuba to train the troops in their use. In the 1930's Mexican officers provided training to Cuban officers after the sergeants' rebellion in 1933. Some Cuban officers were sent to Mexico to study in the advanced service schools such as the Escuela Militar Superior. The Cuban military then was exposed to a wide variety of educational sources and not just to what the United States had to offer. The failure of the Cuban military establishment cannot be blamed entirely on the United States.

Why did the officer corps fail to lead the Cuban Armed Forces to a successful campaign against the guerrillas? Colonel Ramón Barquín, perhaps one of the best officers of the Cuban Armed Forces and a leading opponent of Batista, explains that many young officers who had graduated from the Cuban service academies and had received advanced training abroad were separated from the service or not given command of troops by Batista. Their loyalty to the regime was questioned and Batista did not want to take chances giving them command of troops who could be turned against the government.¹

Barquín also explains that despite the fact that the United States had a fairly large military assistance mission in Cuba it could not do its job effectively. The mission would start training a battalion and before they could complete the training the officers were transferred to other units by the general staff. Often young officers, who had been sent to

¹ Ramón Barquín, El Día que Fidel Castro se Apoderó de Cuba, pp. 11-13.

Panama or to the United States for advanced training, were discharged upon their return for political reasons. These officers were replaced by men who were loyal to Batista but lacked any training or the courage to lead their men in battle.²

In fact Batista twice wrecked the Armed Forces. In 1933, his sergeants' insurrection forced out of the military hundreds of experienced officers. They were replaced by sergeants who became colonels overnight. Some of these new officers were borderline illiterates and had no notion of what they were supposed to do. When the Armed Forces had recovered from this major jolt, Batista once again led a military coup d'etat in 1952 and forced out many experienced officers. Many young officers who had been trained between 1934 and 1952 were dismissed or ignored. They were replaced by instant colonels and generals who did not have any idea of how to run a professional military organization.

Throughout the two years of guerrilla warfare (1957 and 1958), not a single colonel or general ventured into the mountains ahead of his men leading them into battle. They limited themselves to sporadic visits to command centers located far from the fighting. Even if they had led their men, it is doubtful that they would have known what to do. In the lower ranks, the officers who were trusted to command troops were often incompetent individuals who thought that using terror tactics could win the war. The guerrillas, on the other hand, were led by men who went ahead with their men into battle and were careful to develop the support and respect of the local population.³

Colonial Influences

The military establishment inherited some of the worst traits of the Spanish military. As in colonial times, the military was a tool of politicians to remain in power rather than a tool for national defense against outside forces. For politicians out of power and for members of the military, insurrection became a frequent tool to take control of the government even if it was against the will of the population. As in Spain in the 19th century, military leaders saw themselves as exempted from civilian control and constitutional guidelines. At will, either for personal desires to enrich themselves, or to hold and exercise power, or because they truly saw themselves as the only ones qualified

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

to run the country, they violated the constitution and took power by force.

Rather than emotions of loyalty and respect, the sight of the uniform stirred up emotions of hate in the population. The military did not receive the respect of the people. They were seen as the enemy of the civilian population, rather than as pillars of the constitution. Batista and his cohorts thought that somehow they were the "anointed ones" to run the country as if they had inherited the "divine rights" of the old Spanish crown to rule Cuba. They even attempted to form dynasties within the military, with fathers handing down their generals' stars to their sons. The honest members of the military in turn could sense the hatred directed at them and became demoralized.

The Enlisted Men

The enlisted men came from the lower economic and social classes. They had very little education and many were illiterate. Many were in poor health and lived with their families in poverty. These men entered the military because they needed a job to feed themselves and their families and remained in the service because they could not find better opportunities in civilian life. They remained in the military well past their usefulness. The low salaries made them find ways to supplement their income; more often than not through illegal or immoral means. The "power" of their uniforms was for sale to the highest bidder. The buyer could be a politician, a landowner or a merchant who wanted action taken against another person without having to use the judicial process to obtain their desired results.

Without universal registration for military service and/or conscription by lottery applied to all social classes, the military was seen as the dumping ground for the dregs of society. Even the wealthy, whose property was protected by the military, lacked all respect for the men in uniform. At the same time, without good leaders, the enlisted men's morale was affected by the role they played in society. Even the decent individuals, and there were many of them, lost self-confidence. A lesson to be learned from the Cuban revolution is that all segments of society, rich and poor, educated and uneducated, black and white, should be subject to universal registration and selected to serve on the basis of an impartial selection system. All economic, social and ethnic

⁴ See Chapter IV for more details.

groups in society have to understand that they all have to sink or swim together.⁵

The Officer Corps

In a well-run military establishment, the officers come from either the military academies or from the ranks of college graduates immediately upon graduation. College graduates are sent to officer candidate schools and provided military skills to supplement what they have learned in school for work in traditional civilian professions. Most countries with effective and professional armed forces have an "up-or-out" system to select the best junior officers for the higher ranks. Officers receive commissions to serve for a specified period of time in which they have to either reach the next highest rank or are discharged. Only the best officers are supposed to remain in the service and become chiefs. In addition, a "register" or "roster" is prepared, grading all officers at the same rank according to their skills and performance. Promotions are based on skills, performance and seniority. In other words, the best officers are supposed to be given first consideration for promotion.

The system described above is far from the methods used to select officers for the Armed Forces in Cuba before 1959. Selection of cadets for the military academies was more often than not based on political connections than skills. Most of the cadets came either from military families or from the lower economic class. University graduates were hired to fill technical and professional jobs in the officer corps, such as those of dentists and physicians. They entered the service through competitive exams. Nevertheless, politics and family connections also played a major role in who was accepted. Promotions almost always were the result of politics rather than capabilities. Possible exceptions were in the more technical areas, and even in these, seniority often replaced know-how as the most important variable for promotions.

The "register," called "escalafón" in Spanish, existed but was not respected. The Batista years from 1952 to 1958, provide innumerable examples of promotions of officers based on politics and nepotism. Without a doubt, these problems which were caused by the dictatorship itself, led to weakness and ineffectiveness that led to the downfall of the regime.

⁵ Please note that since 1963, there is universal registration for military service in Cuba. In addition, although military service is not universal, a large proportion of the male population does serve in the military.

But even prior to 1952, and without a doubt after 1933, the system could have lead only to disaster.

An important lesson to be learned from the Cuban revolution is that military establishments need to have an effective up-or-out system for the officer corps. The register has to be respected at all costs. In addition, promotions need to be based on experience and effectiveness.⁶

Graduates of the Cuban military academies entered the services as second lieutenants and often spent up to twenty years and more at that rank. Promotions were hard to get. In addition, they remained in the military well past their ability to perform well. Promotions were hard to get and even when a position became vacant the register was not respected. The whole system of administration of the military was chaotic.

Despite these problems, some members of the military were able to receive professional training through the assistance provided by the United States. Pilots were trained at Pensacola, Florida, and in San Antonio, Texas. Some cadets of the Cuban service academies were invited to meet with their American counterparts and often received post graduate training in the United States. Over the years many were sent for training at Fort Benning, Fort Belvoir and other U.S. military training installations. Other officers and enlisted men were sent to Panama for training at the School of the Americas. Senior Cuban officers participated in training programs through the Inter-American Defense Board and other institutions. However, these were the exceptions rather than the rule.

Historical Mistakes

The United States Government provided training and counselling to the Cuban military, but it could not overcome the problems inherent in the system. In fact, at times, the United States added to the problems by taking strange positions that often magnified the problems. For example, when an insurrection started in 1906, instead of supporting the constitutional government, the United States set a precedent and supported claims of an insurgency movement. During the

⁶ In the past 27 years the Cuban Revolutionary Government has instituted a more professional way for selecting and promoting members of the officer corps of the Armed Forces. However, the present Cuban Government has continued some of the same mistakes of the old regime. Rank in many cases has a direct relationship to cliques and/or proximity to power, i.e., Fidel and Raúl Castro.

American intervention that followed between 1906 and 1909, the insurgents were further rewarded with jobs in the government bureaucracy and in the Armed Forces. Actions like this contradicted U.S. policy and traditional efforts to promote democratic forms of government. The responsibility for the chaotic situation in Cuba has to be shared by the United States, as well as by the Cubans who failed to produce a democratic form of government with working institutions.

More recent examples of ill-advised U.S. policy toward Cuba was the lack of support for the constitutional Cuban Government in March of 1952 in the hours immediately after the coup d'etat staged by Fulgencio Batista and a group of officers and former officers in the Armed Forces. President Carlos Prío, with all his faults, had been elected under a democratic electoral process and had been friendly to the United States. In fact, he carried out a strong campaign to wipe out Communist influence in the labor movement in Cuba and had been supportive of American foreign policy. Batista, on the other hand, represented a return to political instability in the region and had a history of working with Cuban Communists. The United States lost a great opportunity to show its support for democratic institutions and regional stability when it failed to assist the Constitutional Government of Cuba against a band of outlaws in uniform.

During 1958, the United States again made a series of mistakes. They were the result of the failure to decide on one course of action in Cuba, either in support of the government of the island, or in support of the opposition. A review of the literature and official documents of this period show an American Ambassador who wants to support Batista and officials of the Department of State and elected officials in Congress who want to withdraw all military assistance and political support to the Cuban Government. In addition, we find an intelligence service that does not seem to have a clear picture of what was going on in Cuba and withheld information from the Ambassador about critical and potentially embarrassing activities.

The relationships between all the government entities in the United States on the Cuban question were full of ambitions, emotions, limited information, tensions and frustrations. They distorted the picture of the actual circumstances on the island. To make matters worse, the focus of attention was placed anywhere but in the country's own backyard 90 miles south of the border. In this general state of affairs, it was decided in March of 1958 to stop selling weapons to Batista and curtail other forms of military support. At the

⁷ The insurrection of 1906 and the American intervention from 1906 to 1909 are covered on chapters VIII and IX, pages 72 to 82.

same time, the government did not throw its weight behind the opposition to Batista. The end result was that the enemies of the United States multiplied while the friends became totally disoriented and deserted the ship.

What Makes a Cuban Leader?

Between 1902 and 1958, very few Cubans became national leaders as a result of intellectual ability, moral rectitude, honesty or strength of character. Great men with a perfectly clean record were very rare in Cuban politics.⁸ President Tomás Estrada Palma (1902-1906) was possibly one of the very few politicians who met these high standards. However, he failed as a leader because he saw himself as the only one qualified to lead the nation. Mediocrity was the common denominator in Cuban politics. Most politicians lacked positive merits. Brilliant intellectual gifts did not make a Cuban political leader. What, then, makes a Cuban leader triumphant?

Men who rose to political leadership in Cuba were those able to impress the popular imagination. They were eloquent in speech, showed courage and had strong political ambitions. Cuban politicians have not been known for their moral rectitude. At least one president was suspected of being a homosexual, as he was effeminate and dominated by women in his family. Nevertheless, he showed courage and guts on many occasions despite being effeminate. He was able to build pictures of "heaven on earth" and captured the popular imagination with great visions of an opulent future. Another president was known to have lived as a pimp on the second floor of a brothel in Havana during his student days at the University of Havana. Part of his claim to fame stems from impregnating the sixteen-year-old daughter of a lady friend who had given him refuge in her house during a political crisis. Perhaps these escapades reenforced a questionable macho image. These well-known facts did not prevent their election to high political office. Morality was based on power and money. The only unacceptable thing was not to have either.

However, these men and all other political leaders in the 1930's and 40's were outmaneuvered by a man with very little formal education who rose from the poorest class through the military. Sergeant Fulgencio Batista was able to become the dominant political figure in Cuba for a quarter of a century because he was able to outstage others by presenting himself as a man with guts. "Batista es el hombre." read billboards supporting his leadership. His demise came about when his

⁸ The present situation is not much different.

image as a man with guts was tarnished when he failed to personally lead his troops searching for the guerrillas in the Sierra Maestra Mountains in 1957 and 1958.

Batista entered Cuban political life in 1933, leading an insurrection of sergeants and enlisted men against the officer corps. Despite several instances in which he seemed hesitant and possibly scared during the insurrection, he was able to outmaneuver other co-conspirators to become the new strongman in Cuba. Although he never personally led his troops in storming the Hotel Nacional in October 1933 or defeating the uprising of November 8, 1933, he carefully developed an image as a man with guts.

Batista carefully nurtured his image. For example, when Colonel José Eleuterio Pedraza led a group of insubordinate officers in February of 1941 in what may have been the beginning of a coup d'état, Batista put on a dark leather jacket and went to Camp Columbia to take personal command of the Armed Forces and prevent his overthrow. In 1952, he entered Camp Columbia again leading a military insurrection. He had his famous jacket on and claimed to have entered the barracks with his handgun cocked, ready to fire. This further enhanced his image as a nacho leader. Many enlisted men followed and worshiped him as a man who spoke out for them and cared about their needs. This was particularly true of the black enlisted men. But this image became tarnished when he failed to visit his troops on the front lines after the December 1956 landing of Castro's guerrilla force. To make matters worse, his generals and colonels also lacked the guts and the smarts to be with their men on the front lines.

In the Armed Forces only a few men distinguished themselves as leaders for good or evil after 1933. These men generally fell into five categories. First, the professional officers who distinguished themselves commanding troops in combat. This group was fairly small, and is possibly best characterized by General Gregorio Querejeta, a black officer who led the Army counterattack and defeated the insurrection of November 8, 1933. He was a captain at the time and could have obtained whatever he wanted. He refused to accept rewards other than promotion to the next rank. In 1944 Querejeta was promoted to brigadier by President Grau. He was not known to engage in terror tactics or repression of civilians. As one of the very few blacks to reach the rank of general after the War of Independence, he was also respected by the enlisted men. By 1957, the Armed Forces could not produce men like Querejeta to fight against the guerrillas.

A second group within the military was composed of members of the professional officer corps, graduates of the military academies and thought to be honest in their desire to uphold the constitution. Two examples are Colonels Manuel Alvarez Margolles and Ramón Barquin. Colonel Alvarez Margolles at-

tempted to uphold the constitution and fight against Batista's men in March of 1952. He showed uncommon courage and dedication to duty. Colonel Ramón Barquin and several of the officers who participated in the attempted coup d'état in 1956 against Batista are also representative of best in the Armed Forces. Barquin is without a doubt the most representative of this group of educated and honest military officers, often referred to as "los puros."

A third group of officers can best be characterized by Colonel José Eleuterio Pedraza. He was respected by his men and by the population at large as a man with guts who accomplished missions assigned to him. He was not known as a corrupt officer who enriched himself by illegal means. However, he picked up a reputation as a ruthless officer while in command of the National Police, and was blamed for the murder of leftists and Communists revolutionaries in the late 1930's. He was respected and hated by many. His military career seemed to have come to an end in 1941 when he led a group of insubordinate officers against Batista and was forced to leave the country. In December 1958, Pedraza was brought back to active service by Batista in an attempt to find new leadership for the military. Pedraza still had the respect of many enlisted men as a man who could lead and accomplish missions assigned to him, without selling out. However, it was too late to save the regime. Pedraza did not take command of the Santa Clara forces that were assigned to him.

The fourth group represented the worst in the Armed Forces. They were paid assassins who behaved no better than common criminals. The first of these men to show up in Cuban politics was Lieutenant Arsenio Ortiz. He started his career in crime by executing the leaders of the black insurrection of 1912 after they surrendered. Fifteen years later he surfaced again, charged with multiple atrocities, as Military Supervisor in Oriente and as Chief of the Military Police in Havana, during the dictatorship of Gerardo Machado. In the 1950's Batista counted on several paid assassins in uniform, in the tradition of Ortiz. The group included the Salas Cañizares brothers, Colonels Esteban Ventura and Alberto del Rio Chaviano, Fermin Cowley Gallegos and several others. These men used state supported terrorism as a tool to combat opponents of the government in office. They were also "leaders" on a smaller scale. They operated with relatively small groups of followers who participated, assisted or endorsed their activities. Their dastardly and cowardly acts are at times glorified simply because they were said to have guts.⁹

⁹ In the Cuban vernacular they were said to have "cojones," or "brass balls".

The fifth group includes a group of high-ranking officers led by General Francisco Tabernilla and his sons. They never took part in any known gun battle or showed any courage. They provably never used a weapon to shoot at anyone. Their claim to fame was their reputation as supporters of Batista and as corrupt officers who stole funds appropriated for the Armed Forces. Not only did they steal from the nation but they stole from the enlisted men. They dressed up like toy soldiers and pinned stars on each other. As Colonel Ramón Barquín has pointed out, not a single general or colonel ever showed up at the front lines in the Sierra Maestra Mountains. Batista's closest friends in the military did him in.

Revolutionary Leadership

One of the principal differences between the Armed Forces and the revolutionary guerrillas was the quality of the leadership. Fidel Castro was well educated, bold, creative and ruthless. He was full of energy and determined to win. Perhaps due to his education in Jesuit schools, he had picked up many of their unique characteristic traits.¹⁰ His guerrilla organization had a centralized command with a courageous and authoritarian leader who ruthlessly suppressed any dissent; not unlike the "general" of the Jesuit order. Obedience without question was a demand made of all members of the Revolutionary Army.

Positive thinking about the eventual victory of the revolution was another important demand placed on members of the movement. The revolutionary movement even created a "mysticism," around visionary ideas of a post revolutionary Cuba, with all the evils affecting society gone forever. The Armed Forces could not match the leadership offered by Fidel Castro and his allies. He captured and impressed the popular

¹⁰ The Society of Jesus, known as the Jesuit Order, was formed by St. Ignatius, the Spanish-born former military officer Don Iñigo López de Loyola (1491-1556). After being wounded in battle in Pamplona in 1521, he dropped out of the military and became a priest. The order was formed in 1540, and was organized as a well-disciplined military organization. All members pledge unquestioned and absolute loyalty to the Pope. The order is headed by a "general" who is named for life; not unlike the Pope. Obedience, hard work and persistence to reach goals are characteristics of the organization. Over the years the Jesuits became very powerful and were feared by many heads of state. They were thrown out of several countries in the 18th century, including Portugal (1859), Spain (1767) and France (1762) and even suppressed by Pope Clement XIV in 1773. The order was later reestablished by Pope Pius VII in 1814.

imagination. He had more charisma than any other Cuban since the death of Raul Chibás.

Other revolutionary leaders inside and outside of Castro's M-26-7 were unable to establish the same style of leadership. Such leaders of the opposition against Batista as Carlos Prio Socarrás, Justo Carrillo, Aureliano Sánchez Arango, Raúl de Velasco, José Miró Cardona, Antonio de Varona, Roberto Agramonte, Manuel Ray Rivero, Rufo López-Fresquet, Eloy Gutierrez Menoyo, Humberto Sorí Marín, Raul Chivás and Felipe Pazos were not able to establish themselves as credible leaders in opposition to Fidel Castro. For the most part they were liberal, nationalistic and were seeking democracy. They lacked the macho-hero image of Fidel Castro. The absence of effective leadership was not a monopoly of Batista's Armed Forces. Other younger, charismatic, macho leaders, such as Frank Pais and José Antonio Echeverría, were killed in the war. After their deaths, the opposition groups were left without any other figure to counterbalance Castro.

Fidel Castro could not have been totally unknown to the general population. Although his adventures during the late 1940's, while a student at the University of Havana, may not have been well known, his leadership in the assault on the Moncada barracks in 1953 brought him up to the forefront of Cuban politics. He was known to be egotistical, to use foul language, to resort to executions to do away with political enemies and to have participated in student gangs. He was even known to have questionable personal hygiene habits one of the principal tabus in Cuban society. He was known to have read important books on Fascist and Communist ideologies since student days. None of this seems to have mattered. Castro had shown guts and that was the most important variable in Cuban politics.

Defeat or Suicide?

The Cuban military failed to sense, or misinterpreted the nature of the revolutionary movement they were facing. In addition to being incompetent in the battlefield, the officers and the enlisted men failed to understand the nature of the social forces at play. They thought that they were once again dealing with an insurrection rather than with a true revolutionary process, and that no drastic changes in the system would take place even if they were defeated. They thought that they would get away with the abuses and terror tactics used to combat the revolutionaries. Instead, they were facing a fundamental transformation by the use of force of the political and economic system in the country. Their mistake cost them their lives.

Army patrols and the military units involved in the offensive of May of 1958, operated like ravaging hordes, alienating the rural population. The officers stole the funds designated for supplies and placed imaginary men on their pay lists so that they could pocket the wages. The higher ranks enjoyed soft living and vice, enriching themselves at the expense of the troops and the population at large. They bilked people at every level, fueling a growing dissatisfaction with the political and economic conditions in the country. Their actions were suicidal.

In addition to the problems that affected the military, there were many cracks in the apparent smooth surface of society. Although the standard of living in Cuba was well above most other countries in Latin American and the rest of the developing world, there were large numbers of people who were desperately poor. Most farmers in the mountains of Oriente, as well as elsewhere on the island, lived in rickety shacks called "bohios" in wretched conditions. In the towns and cities, there was a growing gap between the ambitions and the expectations of the working classes. Unemployment was high and the masses were unable to improve their standard of living at the speed they hoped for. Years of virtual anarchy were fueling the estrangement between the poor, the middle class and the wealthy. The break in the constitutional system of succession in 1952 had created a situation where the settlement of all important economic and political issues would only take place by the barrel of a gun.



This picture was taken in March of 1958, when the guerrilla fighters led by Raul Castro arrived in the area of the Sierra Cristal Mountains where they were going to set up the Second Front. Raúl Castro is in this picture with his principal commanders, including Captain Ciro Frias, Major Efigenio Ameijeiras, Major Manuel Pifreiro Losada, Major Ernesto Casillas, Major Demetrio Montseny, Major Félix Pena, Major Reinerio Jiménez Lage and Captains Arturo Lince and Armando Torre.



Col. Ramón Barouín



Supreme Court Justice
Carlos Piedra



Pres. Osvaldo Dorticós



Pres. Manuel Urrutia



Maj. Camilo Cienfuegos



Maj. Raul Castro



Maj. Ernesto Guevara



Maj. Faure Chomón



Maj. Ramiro Valdés



Maj. Húber Matos



Maj. E. Gutiérrez Menoyo



Maj. Manuel Piñeiro

THE REVOLUTION IN POWER

XVIII. The First Decade (1959-1969)¹

Upon Batista's departure in the early morning hours of January 1, 1959, Carlos Piedra, a Justice of the Supreme Court, was sworn in as the new, temporary president. The Court, however, refused to go along with this arrangement and asked Piedra to step down. The officers who had participated in the failed conspiracy against Batista in 1956, headed by Colonel Ramón Barquin, were given their freedom by General Eulogio Cantillo and flown to Camp Columbia in Havana from the Isle of Pines prison. Colonel Barquin assumed control of the Armed Forces from Camp Columbia and announced that he would turn them over to the revolutionary leadership as soon as they reached Havana.²

Behind the scenes, Barquin and other members of the professional military attempted to save what they could from a very difficult situation. General Cantillo and Fidel Castro had declared a cease fire. Castro wanted the unconditional surrender of the Armed Forces. Barquin hoped to convince Armed Forces commanders to observe the cease fire but not to surrender. He preferred that the Armed Forces join the revolution so that they could maintain their organizational structure as intact as possible, given the seriousness of the situation. But by the time he was released from jail, the troop commanders had already given up.

General Cantillo could not or would not deliver on the promises that he had made to Fidel Castro at their meeting in

¹ This chapter will cover the most important developments in the domestic scene in Cuba between 1959 and 1969. Foreign activities involving the Cuban Government and the Cuban military will be covered in chapter XXI. Nevertheless, it will be necessary to refer to both domestic and international affairs in both chapters since it is almost impossible to separate the two.

² Colonel Barquin appointed several of his co-conspirators in 1956 and other close friends to key positions in the military. Among these men were Admiral Andrés González, Colonel Manuel Varela Castro, Majors Vicente León León, José E. Monteagudo, Enrique Borbonet and Clemente Gómez Sucre and Captain Vicente Villafañá. He could have tried to retain power with his associates, but the circumstances were not convenient for such a move. He eventually went into exile after several clashes with Raul Castro and other Revolutionary Army officers.

the mountains of Oriente. Most senior officers of the Batista government were able to leave Cuba, going to the Dominican Republic, the United States or any other country that would receive them. Colonel Barquin suggested to the general that he should also leave the country, but he decided to stay. A few hours later Barquin placed Cantillo under arrest as a war criminal, following instructions given by Fidel Castro.³

Fidel Castro marched on Santiago de Cuba, seized control of the city and formed a Revolutionary Government. A judge by the name of Manuel Urrutia was named President. He had made a reputation for himself by refusing to prosecute captured participants in the Granma expedition organized by Fidel Castro in 1956. Dr. José Miró Cardona, another prominent opponent of the dictatorship, was named as Prime Minister. A cabinet was formed with representatives of all the organizations which had fought against Batista. They were sent to Havana to start functioning as the new government of Cuba, as soon as it was reported that the capital had fallen into rebel hands.

Colonel Rego Rubido was named by Fidel Castro as Chief of Staff of the Army. After Batista's troops surrendered, military personnel implicated in war crimes were placed under arrest. This was followed by quick trials of several prominent henchmen and their execution by firing squad. Mobs in Havana and other parts of Cuba went into the streets to loot and burn the homes of Batista supporters. Batista's cronies were hunted down all over the country. Gun fights between revolutionaries, policemen and soldiers, who had been involved in the repression, took place in many locations. Soldiers and policemen abandoned their barracks and dressed in civilian clothes to try to escape reprisals.

March on Havana

Majors Ernesto Guevara and Camilo Cienfuegos were ordered by Castro to advance toward Havana and seize all the military barracks along the way. When they arrived in the capital, Cienfuegos went to Camp Columbia and took over the headquarters of the Armed Forces. Guevara took over the La Cabafia fortress. Rival guerrilla units took control of other important military installations in the capital. The second largest guerrilla unit, the Directorio Revolucionario, under the leadership of Faure Chomón, took over the Presidential Palace. Members of the Segundo Frente Nacional del Escambray captured other police and military installations in the capital.

³ General Cantillo was sentenced to a long prison sentence in June of 1959.

Fidel Castro advanced toward Havana with his forces, now much stronger, since he had captured tanks and armored vehicles in Santiago de Cuba. He increased his forces by passing out weapons from military armories to his supporters. They reached Havana on January 8th and completed the takeover of all the military installations throughout the island. By this time, all revolutionary organizations, however reluctantly, recognized him as the leader of the revolution and the new king-maker in Cuba.

Quick Trials and Executions

In the first 10 days of January 1959, as many as 71 members of the military and police, as well as informers, were tried and executed. In Havana over 100 additional members of the Armed Forces were charged with crimes calling for the death sentence. In a matter of a few days over 1,000 members of the military were arrested, of which about 450 were charged with capital crimes. Court martial proceedings were conducted at public trials with crowds chanting for the death sentence. Several trials, for example, were held at the Havana baseball stadium in front of television cameras and a crowd of 18,000 people.⁴

The executions and the trials continued throughout February, March and April of 1959. Among those charged with war crimes were over 40 airmen who had participated in the war against the guerrillas. Castro demanded the death sentence for 35 of them, calling the pilots the worst criminals of the Batista regime because they had bombed civilian targets. In March 43 of the airmen were acquitted. Castro, nevertheless, demanded a retrial, accused the court of counterrevolutionary tendencies and called for an investigation. The Supreme Military Tribunal rejected the acquittal and sentenced the airmen to prison.⁵

⁴ Many former officers and enlisted men were arrested and placed on public display. Thousands of people were dragged to the prisons to see them and place charges against them based on either personal experiences or hearsay evidence. Anyone who had as much as received a traffic ticket from a policeman or had any problems with the law, had a great opportunity to take revenge. However, in some cases these former policemen and soldiers were guilty of the crimes they were charged with, including police brutality, torture and murder. Many were innocent and most did not deserve the harsh sentences they received in very unfair trials.

⁵ The New York Times reported that in the first six months of 1959, a total of 364 executions of former officials of the

The Revolutionary Government's strong actions against Batista's henchmen were soon transferred to offenses committed by civilians, including white collar crime. Thousands of civilian government workers were dismissed from their jobs. Misappropriation of government funds and other forms of graft and corruption were to be considered as capital crimes. Criticism of any kind against the Revolutionary Government was considered a counterrevolutionary act and was punishable by long prison sentences. In a matter of a few months close to 5,000 civilians were serving jail terms or awaiting trial throughout Cuba. To counteract the adverse reaction of world public opinion regarding the circus atmosphere of the trials and executions, Fidel Castro called for demonstrations in support of the Revolutionary Government. One of the first mass rallies was held in Havana on January 20th, to show support for the revolution.

Reorganization of the Military

The Revolutionary Government began the reorganization of the military immediately after Fidel Castro arrived in Havana. By January 21st, Col. Rego Rubido had been relieved as Chief of Staff and replaced by Major Camilo Cienfuegos. Colonel Barquin was placed in charge of the service academies and Major Augusto Martínez Sánchez (Revolutionary Army) was named Minister of Defense. Col. Rego Rubido was sent to Brazil as Military Attaché; Lt. Col. Tomás Arias was named G-1; Col. Barquin was named G-3; and Maj. José C. Quevedo Pérez as G-4. Military attachés abroad were, for the most part, removed

Batista government had occurred. According to an Associated Press report published in several newspapers on January 22, 1959, 266 former military and/or civilian informers and followers of Batista had been executed as of January 21st. In addition to the executions, many officers and former officers of the Armed Forces were placed under arrest. Press reports of January 22nd, for example, carried the story that 130 ex-Navy officers and enlisted men were under arrest at the Morro Castle. They included: Rear Adm. Juan P. Casanova Roque, Rear Adm. (Ret.) Antonio Arias Echeverría, Comm. (Ret.) Joaquín Varela Conosa, Comm. Mario Rubio Baro, and Captains Mario Menéndez Domínguez, Eloy Rubio Baso, Arsenio Arrazola Rodríguez and Ramiro A. Rodríguez (Ret.). No charges had been placed against them but the government was asking in the press that anyone with information on crimes perpetrated by these men to come forward to press charges. "Twelve Executed in Pinar del Río," The Havana Post (January 22, 1959), p.1, col. 4.; "130 Ex-Navy Officers, Men Under Arrest," The Havana Post, (January 22, 1959), p. 1, col. 3.

from their jobs and new officers sent to replace them.⁶ Fidel Castro also announced that the size of the military would be reduced from about 39,000 men to about 20,000 men which was the level prior to Batista's coup in 1952.

When Batista's dictatorship came to an end on January 1, 1959, the Cuban military was composed of about 40,000 men, of which 35,000 were in the Army and the rest in the Navy and Air Force Corps of the Army and Navy. There was no separate Air Force service. The Revolutionary Army was no larger than perhaps 3,000 men. Its members belonged to the 26th of July Movement and other guerrilla organizations. Although many of the members of the Revolutionary Army were illiterate or had very limited education, some officers were as well or possibly better educated than the officer corps of the Armed Forces, since many were university graduates and some came from very well-to-do families.

All the Armed Forces commanders were replaced with officers of Castro's 26th of July Movement and in a limited number of cases with members of other revolutionary organizations. Civilian government employees in key positions were also replaced by members of the revolutionary groups within a few days of Batista's departure. By February 7, 1959, several hundred members of the military had been retired or discharged. As explained above, several hundred had also been arrested and sentenced to death or to long prison sentences. Traditional military ranks were abolished and the highest rank in the military became that of major. Naturally distinctions had to be made within the rank of major to show who was "first among equals."

Changes at the U.S. Embassy

Soon after the victory of the revolution, the U.S. Military Mission to Cuba was withdrawn and Ambassador Earl E. T. Smith, who had been in Cuba since June of 1957, was recalled. He had been considered a supporter of Batista. Despite the fact that the new government was recognized by the United States on January 7, 1959, tension between the new government and the United States began to build. The press and government officials in the United States were for the most part positive about the events in Cuba. In fact Ambassador Smith had bitterly complained that the Department of State officers in Washington had been strong supporters of the revolution against Batista and had undermined all his efforts to warn Washington of the Communist threat in Cuba. Philip Bonsal, a career Foreign Service officer, was named to

⁶ "Camilo Cienfuegos named Army Chief," The Havana Post, (January 22, 1959), p.1., col. 1.

replace Smith as U.S. Ambassador to Cuba.⁷ Relations between the two governments should have been excellent, but the anti-American rhetoric of the revolutionary leadership stood in the way of improving relations.

Crisis in the Revolutionary Government

Revolutionary excesses and Castro's unwillingness to accept any dissent led to a quick turnover of members of the cabinet and other key officers in the government. By February 13th, Castro had become Prime Minister and had started a purge to replace all questionable officials with new people who were loyal to him. Dr. José Miró Cardona resigned as Prime Minister due to his opposition to the death sentence and the way in which the trials of former Batista officials were being conducted.⁸

The revolution became more radical as time passed. More and more government and military officials were replaced with people who had been members of the old Communist Party (Partido Socialista Popular). The anti-imperialist tone and anti-American rhetoric increased as pro-Soviet statements increased. According to a new biography of Fidel Castro, a shadow or covert Communist government had already been organized by Castro.⁹ Moderates who had participated in the revolution began to conspire against the Revolutionary Government within a few months after Batista fled.

⁷ Mr. Bonzal had been serving as U.S. Ambassador to Bolivia since 1957, and had previously served as Ambassador to Colombia. He was 55 years old and had been a member of the Foreign Service since 1938. "Bonsal Nominated by Ike New Cuban Ambassador," The Havana Post, (January 22, 1959), p.1, col. 2.

⁸ Dr. José Miró Cardona had been the Dean of the Cuban Bar Association and a prominent opponent of the Batista dictatorship. He had been forced into exile in March of 1958 for his activities as a member of the Joint Body of Civic Institutions which called for Batista's resignation. He had also been the secretary-general of the Civilian Revolutionary Front formed in July of 1958 by the seven largest anti-Batista organizations. Dr. Miró Cardona, as well as other members of the original revolutionary cabinet, in addition to objecting to the blood bath, objected to the fact that Castro often announced new measures without them ever being discussed by the cabinet.

⁹ Tad Szulc, Fidel: A Critical Portrait (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1986), pp.463-478.

Creation of a Revolutionary Militia

Only three months after Batista's departure, in March of 1959, Raul Castro and Ernesto Guevara took the first steps to organize a militia to expand the ranks of the military and defend the island against any American military intervention. While Raul Castro and Guevara were taking these steps, Fidel Castro was visiting the United States. Whether or not he had approved these moves before he went on his trip is not clear. Major Guevara announced the formation of a workers' militia at the end of April 1959. This was followed by statements of support for the militia by the Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC). At the same time, Communist control of the labor movement was increased with government support.¹⁰ By mid-July 1959, most of the key officials of the CTC who showed signs of anti-Communist tendencies had been replaced. The same trend was taking place throughout the government, from top to bottom. One of the officials who was replaced was the titular head of state. President Manuel Urrutia was forced to resign and Fidel Castro placed Osvaldo Dorticós Torrado in the presidency.¹¹

What was left of the pre-revolutionary Army was disbanded on August 9, 1959. Within days dissent in the new military establishment began to appear. The new Chief of the Air Force, Major Pedro Diaz Lanz, resigned and fled to the United States.¹² He was replaced by Major Juan Almeida. Other Rebel Army officers fled Cuba as Raul Castro became Minister

¹⁰ "Guevara announces formation of workers militia to defend revolution," New York Times (April 30, 1959), p. 12, col. 6. Also, "Workers confederation demands for organization of workers militia," New York Times (May 3, 1959), p. 42, col. 1.

¹¹ Fidel Castro resigned as Prime Minister to create a popular movement in his support and demanded the ouster of President Urrutia. This was followed by demonstrations and a rally in which Castro denounced Urrutia for conspiring against the revolution. Osvaldo Dorticós Torrado was born on April 17, 1919. He graduated from Law School at the University of Havana in 1941. See: "Castro resigns as Premier, forcing ouster of Urrutia as President," New York Times (July 18, 1959), p. 1, col. 8

¹² Major Diaz Lanz was given political asylum in the United States. A few days after his arrival in the United States he was questioned by the U.S. Senate Internal Security Subcommittee about Communist infiltration in Cuba. For more information see New York Times, July 1, 1959, p. 1, col. 3; July 12, 1959, p. 19, col. 1, and July 13, 1959, p. 1, col. 2.

of the Armed Forces. Loyalty to the regime included clear definitions of anti-Americanism and pro-Soviet statements. There are many examples of high officials who were purged. Anti-Communism was made synonymous with counterrevolution. Major Hubert Matos resigned on October 19, 1959, as Commander of the Revolutionary Army in Camagüey because he opposed the movement to the left. He had been a leader in the guerrilla war against Batista. The next day he was arrested and charged with treason. Matos was later tried and sentenced to 20 years in prison.

A few days later Major Camilo Cienfuegos was lost in a small plane while flying back to Havana from Camagüey after his participation in the arrest of Hubert Matos. The public has never known exactly what happened, because the plane was never found. It was assumed by many that he had also dared to show disapproval and had been quietly done away with. The government claimed that the plane probably crashed in the ocean in bad weather.¹³ The revolution had become a beast that had begun to devour its own children.

Beginnings of the Counterrevolutionary Movement

Thousands of people began to leave Cuba in late 1959, seeking shelter in the United States, Spain and other countries. Most people expected that an inevitable clash with the United States would come and that thousands would be killed in a major military conflict with U.S. Marines on one side and fanatical Cuban revolutionaries and Communists on the other side. Anyone who could, sent their teenage sons of military age to the United States or other countries. Cuban parents did not want them drafted into military service. The whole concept of forced conscription was alien to Cuba. Parents hoped and expected that the United States would intervene and do the killing and the dying. Over the years Cubans had become reliant on the United States to come in and solve their problems. This time the U.S. Marines never arrived.¹⁴ By the end of 1959 dissent was strongly re-

¹³ It has never been determined what actually happened to Major Camilo Cienfuegos. He had been active in the struggle against Batista together with his brother Osmani Cienfuegos before joining Fidel Castro's invasion plans in 1956. He was wounded in a clash between police and students on December 7, 1955. His brother Osmani Cienfuegos continues to be a prominent member of the Cuban Government and was one of the principal military leaders who fought against the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961.

¹⁴ There are many Cubans, both in Cuba and in Miami, who are still waiting for the U.S. Marines to land in Cuba and take care of Castro. This is one of the reasons why the revolu-

pressed and government control of the news media had become more evident.

A new military order was at the same time being organized. A militia of between 200,000 and 300,000 troops was undergoing basic military training. However, the vast majority of the Cuban military had no combat experience. Most of the equipment was American-made and for the most part was WWII surplus. These old weapons were replaced by Soviet-bloc equipment. Infantry weapons, tanks, artillery, trucks and other supplies began to arrive in large quantities.

The Soviet Connection Arrives

In February of 1960, Soviet Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Anastas Mikoyan, visited Cuba to open a Soviet exposition in Havana. During his visit Cuba and the Soviet Union signed several trade agreements. In May of 1960, Cuba and the Soviet Union resumed diplomatic relations which had been cut after Soviet diplomats had their luggage opened in Cuba after Batista's coup d'etat in 1952. On July 9th, Soviet Prime Minister Nikita Khrushchev offered rocket support to Cuba in the event of a foreign invasion. In September of 1960, Fidel Castro announced that the Cuban Revolutionary Government was breaking the military pact with the United States and that it would welcome help from the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union. Within a few days, new trade agreements were signed with the Soviet Union. Cuba began to sell sugar to the Soviets and to purchase Soviet crude oil. The American management of the refineries in Cuba was informed that they would have to process the Soviet crude or face expropriation.

According to a U.S. Department of State estimate, by November of 1960 over 28,000 tons of military supplies had been received in Cuba since Batista's departure. Most of the supplies had arrived from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. By April of 1961, another 2,000 tons had been added. In addition to these weapons and the military buildup with thousands of new recruits, a very effective intelligence network was also being built throughout Cuba. It consisted mainly of the creation of Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR's). On every city block committees were

tion is still in power in Cuba. Some Cubans, as well as some people of the Caribbean and Central America, spend their lives criticizing the United States for intervening in their internal affairs. At the same time they always expect the United States to come in and solve the problems that they themselves have caused. They have a very limited understanding of domestic politics in the United States or how the American system works.

formed with the assistance of families who supported the revolution. The movements of all the residents in each neighborhood began to be recorded to detect any unusual activity.

Back to Guerrilla War in the Mountains.

Despite the odds against them, several counterrevolutionary groups were formed and guerrilla operations against the government began in the Escambray Mountains in late 1960. An urban underground was also formed, although its activity was very restrained, due to the government's increasing intelligence capabilities. These counterrevolutionary groups included ex-members of the Batista regime, landowners, workers, businessmen, students, ex-members of the Revolutionary Army, veterans of the guerrilla war against Batista and people with strong religious convictions who were concerned about the government's increasing criticism of the Catholic Church. One of the principal clashes between Church and State came about as a result of the secularization of the educational system. All Church schools, as well as private schools, were taken over by the government. Hundreds of foreign priests and nuns were forced to leave the country.¹⁵

Two of the most prominent anti-Communist guerrilla leaders were Majors Porfirio Ramirez and Evelio Duque, who had fought in the Escambray Mountains against Batista and had a substantial following in the region. Thousands of government troops under the direct command of Raul Castro and Ernesto

¹⁵ Although many people with strong religious convictions became active opponents of Fidel Castro and the Communist influence in Cuba, it should be noted that both Fidel and Raúl Castro were products of Jesuit Catholic schools. Many other prominent civilian and military leaders of the Revolutionary Government were also products of Catholic schools. They did not seem to suffer much agony in becoming Communists almost overnight. In fact, many of the people who joined the CDR's or neighborhood spy committees had been active in religious or church groups before the revolution. The CDR's gave them a sense of "belonging" and support in the same way that religion or the church had done during the old regime. People with a tendency toward fanatical activism seem to find it easy to change their ideological masters. Recent moves by Fidel Castro and the Cuban Government for rapprochement with the Catholic Church in 1986 has had a profound impact among both Communist hard-liners and fanatical Catholic anti-Communists. Extremists at both ends of the spectrum are not willing to compromise their concepts of right and wrong. However, the leaders at both ends prostitute their ideas whenever they find it convenient to do so.

"Che" Guevara were sent after Ramirez and Duque, who managed to defeat both of them. For example, troops under Guevara were thrashed at Potrillo. But this time the anti-guerrilla campaign, known in Cuba as "lucha contra bandidos," was much different than in the past. Thousands of peasant families were moved out of the region to prevent help from reaching the guerrillas. Drastic measures were taken similar to those used by Spain during the War of Independence to concentrate the rural population in the larger towns. Anyone caught within the encircled zone in the mountain region where the guerrillas were operating was considered an enemy and arrested, and in many cases executed.

By the end of 1960, over 100,000 people had left Cuba and requested political asylum in the United States. Many other Cubans went to Venezuela, Spain, Mexico and Nicaragua. The same pattern of thousands of Cubans going into political exile abroad began to repeat itself. With the assistance of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency many of these exiles began to receive military training for an eventual expedition to Cuba. The training began as early as March of 1960.

Relations with the United States went from bad to worse and on January 3, 1961, President Eisenhower broke diplomatic relations with Cuba. An effort was made to drop supplies to the guerrillas from planes operated by CIA recruits. These recruits were from the ranks of the exiles who had reached the United States. The training of an expeditionary force was expanded with the blessing of President John F. Kennedy, who took office on January 20, 1961.

Creation of a State Security Force

In September of 1960, the government formed Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR's) throughout the country. In all cities and towns, on every block, a committee was formed of local residents who backed the revolution. The members of the CDR's took turns to keep a 24-hour watch on each city block, noting all movements of people in and out of the neighborhood. This vast spy network made it practically impossible for the anti-Communist underground to operate. The movements of every man, woman and child were watched and noted. The CDR's kept track of every move of all people-- where they worked; where they went to school; normal departure and arrival times to and from work or school; license plate numbers; names of friends and relatives, as well as their views on the revolution. Before long most of the underground cells had been discovered and wiped out.

Cuban officials were taken to the Soviet Union, East Germany and other Communist countries and trained on how to operate a state security force. The Soviet KGB and the GRU provided

considerable training and assistance to the Cuban Government in setting up the CDR's and other intelligence organizations. Among the officers trained were Ramiro Valdés and José Abrahantes Fernández, the former and current Ministers of Interior of the Cuban Government. The Bolchevization of the regime in Cuba was directed from Moscow.

Bay of Pigs¹⁶

The rural guerrilla operations of counterrevolutionary groups in the Escambray Mountains and elsewhere in Cuba had failed by March of 1961. The urban underground was no match for the new intelligence network. Over 15,000 opponents of the government had been jailed and hundreds had been executed by firing squads. Cubans had never experienced the kind of government persecution of political dissidents that was put in motion by the Revolutionary Government. The only alternative for overthrowing Castro was through an invasion force with superior capabilities to those of the Revolutionary Armed Forces.

A brigade was formed by the CIA with about 1,500 Cubans exiles and trained in Florida, Louisiana, and other locations in the United States. Additional training camps were used in Panama and Guatemala. The instructors included American servicemen, Cubans who had been in the Armed Forces before the revolution, as well as veterans of the guerrilla war against Batista. Specialists in guerrilla warfare from other countries were used as instructors. Some were exiles from Communist countries or veterans of WWII who had worked behind enemy lines against the Japanese and Germans. Although in principle they should have been able to train the exiles, in fact they had no idea of how to put together a successful military organization based on objective conditions in Cuba. While the Soviet Union was providing unlimited assistance to the Cuban Government, the United States was putting together a "Mickey Mouse" operation that was bound to fail from the start.

The brigade consisted of four battalions, including paratroopers, infantry, armor and heavy guns. Upon the death of one of the men in training, his serial number, 2506, was selected to name of the brigade. Despite many difficulties, the expeditionary force was given substantial training. Political differences and the poor discipline characteristic of Cuban politics were overcome under the direction of the

¹⁶ The Bay of Pigs affair is also known in Cuba as "Playa Girón."

American instructors. But the whole operation was based on very weak information about the conditions in Cuba.¹⁷

In addition to the 2506 Brigade, several other units were formed to provide air cover and to infiltrate Cuba and start guerrilla units and assist underground groups with weapons, ammunition and communications gear.¹⁸ Special units were trained to carry out military and industrial sabotage and divert the attention of the military away from the actual landing site of the main expeditionary force. The air power of the counterrevolutionary forces consisted of 16 B-26 planes of WWII vintage which had had their anti-aircraft guns removed to lower the weight and increase their flying range.¹⁹ They had not expected to encounter enemy fighter planes.

Everyone seemed to know that a landing would take place. The exile community in Miami expected an invasion spearheaded by the Cubans who were being trained. They expected this would be followed by a large force of American Marines. In

¹⁷ The leaders of the 2506 Brigade were: José Pérez San Román, 29 years old at the time and a former officer in the Cuban Army, who was the Commander of the Brigade; Ramón Ferrer, Chief of Staff; Erneido Oliva, 28 years old at the time, was the second in command in the brigade; Alejandro del Valle was the 1st Battalion Commander (paratroopers); Hugo Sueiro, Commander of the 2nd Battalion (infantry); Erneido Oliva was the Commander of the 3rd Battalion, (armor); Valentin Bacallao commanded the 4th Battalion; and Roberto San Román, brother of the brigade commander, was the commander of the 5th Battalion (heavy guns). Dr. Manuel Artime, a physician, was the civilian leader of the brigade.

¹⁸ An interesting example of the lack of coordination between U.S. Government agencies was the handling of communications gear and radios. The CIA supplied the Cubans in Florida and the guerrillas in Cuba with two-way radios. Several days later, FCC agents showed up in the Cuban training camps in Florida and confiscated the radios because, according to U.S. law, non-U.S. citizens cannot broadcast in U.S. territory. CIA officials watched as their communications equipment was confiscated. These incidents rarely take place in any other country in the world. This is one of the reasons why it is so difficult for foreigners to understand the American system or American foreign policy. In the United States the law is the law, regardless of the consequences. But it is precisely this rule of law that makes the United States a true working democracy.

¹⁹ An excellent account of the air war during Bay of Pigs is: Edward B. Ferrer's Operation Puma: The Air Battle of the Bay of Pigs, (Miami: International Aviation Consultants, Inc., 1975).

Cuba everyone also expected the landing. Most families were particularly concerned about getting caught in the cross fire and about keeping their children out of the bloody confrontation that was expected. The Revolutionary Armed Forces were also in a high state of readiness, expecting to go into battle at any time.

On Saturday April 15, B-26 airplanes with Cuban markings and piloted by Cuban exiles, attacked the principal military airports in the island located at San Antonio de los Baños and Ciudad Libertad (the old Camp Columbia) in Havana.²⁰ Secondary Air Force facilities at San Julian in Pinar del Rio and Santiago de Cuba were also bombed. The goal was to destroy the Cuban Air Force which consisted of B-26's, T-33's and Sea Furies, while it was on the ground. Two of each type of aircraft were left in operating condition. The air attacks failed to destroy all the planes on the ground but did alert the government that the landing of an invasion force was imminent.

Starting on Sunday, April 16th, thousands of people throughout the island were arrested. In a matter of three days, over 250,000 people were arrested and taken to movie houses and other similar facilities which could be used to hold thousands of people. Anyone suspected of being opposed to the government was picked up. Even such a simple statement as wearing a suit and a tie in Havana on Monday April 17th, was considered a counterrevolutionary statement and provided a reason for arrest. Those arrested were told that if the government failed to beat back the expected invasion they would all be killed.²¹ What was left of the underground

²⁰ Camp Columbia was renamed Ciudad Libertad by Fidel Castro after the victory over Batista in 1959. He also promised to turn Camp Columbia and other military installations throughout Cuba into schools. Weapons...for what purpose?... Castro used to say. Within a few short years the whole country had been turned into a huge military camp.

²¹ The author was 15 years old when the Bay of Pigs invasion took place and remembers going to school as usual on Monday morning, April 17, 1961. About 10 a.m., secondary school students at Colegio Baldor were told to go home. On the way back to the family summer beach house at Cojimar, the author could see police, Army and militia troops arresting people in the streets of Havana for no apparent reason other than the fact that they were well-dressed. Later that day, troops arrived in the neighborhood in Cojimar and arrested businessmen and professionals, again without any apparent reason. The impression left in his mind was one of the

movement never received instructions to start an uprising. Diversionary operations, including the landing of small parties at different locations throughout the island, were not carried out.

In the meantime the 2506 Brigade had been taken to Nicaragua from the training site in Guatemala and placed on board several dilapidated old cargo ships and moved to a landing zone on the south coast of Matanzas. The location selected was a beach surrounded by a large swamp. The beach had a landing strip, a small town and a few houses which were being built to develop a tourist resort. Only three roads led to the landing site, which could be easily secured by taking control of the roads leading to it. Swamps on both sides of the roads made troop movements difficult. Forces sent to recapture the beach would have to advance in single file. The goal of the landing may have been to retain a strip of Cuba long enough so that a government could be established and recognized as legitimate after 72 hours. This government could then request foreign assistance to overthrow the Cuban Government headed by Fidel Castro.

The landing encountered serious problems from the first moments. The first problem was the incomplete destruction of Castro's Air Force. The second problem was the landing site. It had not been well-scouted and the frogmen sent to place signals for the landing crafts found rocks instead of sand, making it difficult to carry out a night landing. The third problem was that the beach was defended by militia and several military radio stations were able to notify Fidel Castro at the headquarters of the Revolutionary Armed Forces that a landing was taking place within a few minutes. All elements of surprise were quickly gone and the landing of men, equipment and supplies took much longer than anticipated. Not even the United States Marines had ever attempted a night landing !

The landing started about midnight on Monday, April 17th. By daybreak many of the men and their equipment were still on board the old cargo ships. Cuban Air Force fighters spotted them and scored direct hits on some of the vessels. Captain Enrique Carreras Rolas led a small group of pilots who used what was left of the Air Force and managed to deal a serious blow to the invasion force.²² The rest were forced to

strongest contributing factors for his determination to leave the country.

22 Captain Enrique Carreras Rolas had been in the military before the Revolution and had been trained in the United States. He was one of the officers who participated in the conspiracy that led to the September 5, 1957, uprising at the Cayo Loco Naval Base in Cienfuegos. He was convicted by

retreat before they could finish unloading. Even though the majority of the men in the landing force had never been in combat, their training and strategic location initially worked in their favor. With superior fire power they were able to kill about 40 of Castro's militiamen and wounded and/or captured about 100 more who attempted to defend the beach.²³ Some of the captured members of the militia offered to join the invasion and several local residents, mostly farmers and fishermen offered to help. Other people, among them some young children, refused to provide any assistance and made it clear that they were Communists and saw the men of the brigade as allies of the American imperialists.

As soon as the site of the invasion was known, large numbers of troops were mobilized and sent to the front lines. Among the first troops to arrive were members of the 339th Battalion of the militia stationed in Matanzas. This was a training unit for officers of the growing militia. They advanced toward the beach on one of the straight roads through the swamps in trucks, buses, jeeps and other vehicles. They were attacked by two of the brigade's B-26's and ground troops that had taken advantageous positions on the side of the road. In a matter of minutes the 339th was decimated. The carnage was stopped when a jet trainer T-33 and a Sea Fury of the government Air Force showed up and shot down the two B-26's which had been stripped of their gun turrets. They were sitting ducks without anti-aircraft guns.

The combat lasted all day and well into the night. In the rush to defeat the invasion before foreign troops could land, Castro sent units into battle as soon as they reached the front lines. They did not have much training in basic military skills. Many mistakes were made, such as sending infantry units ahead of tanks and trucks and even lighting the path for infantry units with the headlights of trucks behind them. They were massacred by the invasion units which had taken excellent positions on the side of the roads. With 4.2 mortar fire they inflicted very heavy casualties. The first day ended with less than 100 casualties on the invasion

court-martial and was serving time at the Isle of Pines prison on January 1, 1959. He is now a brigadier general in the Cuban Revolutionary Air Force. He is currently the chief of an unidentified unit.

²³ The landing force consisted of about 1,500 men. Their heavy weapons consisted of five M-41 "Walker" tanks, ten 2-1/2 ton trucks with 12.7 mm machine guns, three 1/4-ton jeeps, four 106.7 mm mortars, fifteen 81 mm mortars, three s/r 75 mm cannon, fifteen s/r 57 mm cannon and three 12.7 mm machine guns. How many of these weapons actually landed and how much ammunition was available for them is not clear from the literature on Bay of Pigs.

side and at least 300 dead and wounded and about 100 prisoners from the government's forces.

The results achieved the first day could not be repeated on the second day. Ammunition and supplies were only available in limited quantities and no air cover was provided by the United States as had been expected.²⁴ The government concentrated large numbers of troops with artillery around the swamps on the second day and a headquarters was established by Castro at the Covadonga sugar mill. Four batteries of 122 mm howitzers received from the Soviet Union, as well as mortars and other artillery units, started a heavy bombardment of the area held by the invaders. In a matter of a few hours over 3,000 shells were directed at their positions.

An assortment of Soviet tanks, self-propelled artillery and some American- and British-made tanks were sent down the three roads to the front lines. The American and British tanks were leftovers from before the revolution. Several were knocked out by 57mm cannon and the invader's tanks which had also taken strategic positions to defend the roads. Militia units, policemen from Cienfuegos, and regular Army troops continued to advance through the night, despite heavy casualties. Possibly as many as 300 may have been killed and many more wounded during the night as they advanced toward the beach. Actual numbers of casualties are not known.

By Tuesday, April 18th, more than 20,000 government troops had reached their advanced positions. Artillery continued pounding the beach and more tanks were sent into battle. The only air support available to the invasion force were a few B-26's still in operation. By Wednesday all of their 16 aircraft had been shot down. Among the men killed piloting these planes were four Americans. Cuban pilots had been flying without much rest for about three days. These four American CIA pilots volunteered to fly missions in support of the invasion. The government's small Air Force was unchallenged and could keep supplies or reinforcements from reaching the landing brigade. Despite control of the air, and in the rush to defeat the invasion, many mistakes continued to be made and the government forces continued to suffer many casualties. The 2506 Brigade members were able to resist the counterattacks despite their dwindling supplies, but their morale began to suffer as no help arrived.

By the evening of Wednesday, April 19th, the defense lines at the beachhead had crumbled and the invaders began to run for their lives. Some made it out to sea in small boats, others went into the swamps. Over 1,200 surrendered to the advancing government troops. Veterans of the 2506 Brigade

²⁴ Some would say "promised" rather than "expected."

claim that 107 of their numbers were killed. According to the Cuban Government 161 of their numbers were killed, including five civilians. In four days the invasion force had been defeated.²⁵

The captured invaders were taken to Havana by truck and paraded in front of the television cameras. The United States had been defeated by proxy. In December 1962, after 22 months in jail, the members of the brigade were ransomed for \$53 million worth of food and medicines and arrived back in the United States, where they were received by President Kennedy. Ten were kept in jail for their activities during Batista's dictatorship. The last of the brigade members was released on October 17, 1966. The banner of the 2506 Brigade was given to the President Kennedy for safekeeping. He told them that it would be returned someday to a "free Cuba."

Several of the veterans of the 2506 joined the United States Armed Forces. The citizenship requirements were waived for them until they could become American citizens. Several of them are now lieutenant colonels, colonels and one is a brigadier in the U.S. Armed Forces. Most of them fought in Viet Nam and have had distinguished military careers.²⁶

²⁵ The number of casualties were taken from Joseph B. Treaster, "Bay of Pigs: The years haven't dimmed hate," New York Times, (April 17, 1966), p. 4, col. 1. They probably do not represent the true figures on casualties.

²⁶ These are some examples of the experiences of veterans of Bay of Pigs in the U.S. military. Demetrio José Pérez, who flew as a copilot of one of the B-26's during Bay of Pigs was rescued by the U.S. Navy after the plane was shot down. He joined the U.S. Navy and had several tours of duty in Viet Nam as a carrier helicopter pilot. He is now a Lieutenant Commander in the U.S. Navy and is close to retirement. Hugo Sueiro, who commanded the Second Infantry Battalion, later served in the U.S. Army and was wounded in Vietnam. Luis Sosa and Selso Rodriguez also served in Viet Nam in the U.S. Army and were killed in combat.

Dr. Artime, the civilian leader of the Brigade, died in Costa Rica where he practiced medicine. Alejandro del Valle, commander of the paratroopers, died in a fishing boat in the Gulf of Mexico trying to escape. Erneido Oliva, who was second in command of the Brigade, has lived in Washington, D.C., for many years and is employed by the Government of the District of Columbia. Oliva is a member of the National Guard and was named Commander of the 260th Military Police Brigade with the rank of Brigadier General on February 23, 1965. Jorge Mas Canosa, another veteran of Bay of Pigs, is a wealthy building contractor in Florida and one of the prime promoters of the Cuban-American Foundation, with headquarters

Other veterans have become prominent professionals and businessmen. Some are now elected officials in the United States. Others have never been able to adapt to life in the United States. Most still feel that the United States betrayed them.

The Bay of Pigs invasion created a new set of "heroes" for the Revolutionary Government. Several books and articles have been published by the government on the "heroic deeds" of the men and women who fought and lost their lives fighting the "mercenaries" sent by the United States to overthrow the Revolutionary Government.

Fidel Castro, upon hearing of the landing, went to the Cavadonga Sugar Mill and directed the government's counter-attack personally. Among the officers that commanded the government troops were Major José Fernández (El Gallego), who was the director of the Militia Training Academy in Matanzas and Major Osmani Cienfuegos, who was at the time Minister of Public Works. Fernández had been an officer in the Army before the revolution and had fought on the side of Batista against the revolutionaries. He later joined the Revolutionary Army and proved his value to the military in the Bay of Pigs. Major Felix Duque, who was captured in the front lines by the 2506²⁷ Brigade, also led government troops at the head of this men.

in Washington, D.C. José Smith is the third ranking executive at Eastern Airlines. Dr. Robert Heros is an associate professor of pneumosurgery at Harvard Medical School. Other veterans developed a questionable reputation for their participation in the Watergate Affair and the assassination of Orlando Letelier, a Socialist and prominent Chilean political figure, in Washington allegedly under contract with the Chilean Government.

For additional information on the veterans of Bay of Pigs see: "La Causa lives on - 25 years after Bay of Pigs," U.S. News and World Report (April 21, 1968), p. 36.

²⁷ Felix Duque is now a member of the Central Committee of the CCP, and member of the Matanzas Provincial Committee of the party. He is also the director of the Victoria de Girón Citrus Fruit Enterprise and a Deputy to the National Assembly for Jagüey Grande Municipality (Matanzas). Osmani Cienfuegos and José (Ramón) Fernández (Alvarez) are members of the Office of Historical Affairs of the Council of State and are also members of the Central Committee of the CCP. Both have held cabinet-level posts and other important positions in the government.

The intelligence services of the government performed very well. They neutralized the opposition through mass arrests and prevented what was left of the counterrevolutionary underground from taking action in support of the landing. Manuel Pifeiro (Barbarojas), Ramiro Valdez, chief of the G-2 and Pedro Luis Rodriguez, among others, distinguished themselves in this field.²⁸

Fidel Castro declared Cuba a Socialist country at the May Day rally a few days after the invaders were defeated. There was no longer any question about the political affiliation of the Cuban Government. After this announcement, the level of military support from Communist countries increased. This was followed by direct participation of Soviet military forces in Cuba.²⁹

Foreigners at Bay of Pigs: An International Affair

Foreign advisors and pilots took an active role in the fighting on both sides during the Bay of Pigs invasion. The Cuban Government had at least one Chilean and one Nicaraguan pilot among the group of men who operated the small number of aircraft that had not been damaged by the bombing raids before the landings. At least one Nicaraguan pilot on the Cuban Government side was killed when his Sea Fury plunged into the sea. His name was Captain Carlos Ulloa. At least four Americans were also killed when their B-26's were shot down by the Cuban Government T-33 fighters. These men were Major Riley Shamburger, Captain Thomas W. Ray and their navigators, Wade Gray and Leo Baker. Captains Enrique Carrera Rojas, today a General in the Cuban Air Force, and Alvaro Prendes were credited with shooting down the two planes.

In addition to these pilots, an untold number of other foreigners participated in the rounding up of known opponents of the government, as well as in the fighting at the landing site.³⁰ It is also well known that the CIA had a major role

²⁸ Manuel Pifeiro is the Chief of the America Department of the Central Committee of the CCP and a member of the Central Committee. Ramiro Valdés is a member of the Politburo of the CCP. (For additional information on Valdés, see his biography on Appendix B). Pedro Luis Rodriguez is an Army colonel.

²⁹ The failure of the Bay of Pigs invasion may have resulted in the replacement of CIA Director Allen Dulles in November of 1961. He was replaced by John McCone.

³⁰ The author, who was then a 15-year-old high school student, remembers seeing Chileans participating in the round-up

in the organization of the 2506 Brigade and the staging of the failed attempt to overthrow the Cuban Government. The incident became an important landmark in international affairs and signaled a major defeat for the United States. If the results had been different, the United States might have been spared other major problems of the future. The defeat at Bay of Pigs showed weaknesses in the American political and military system.



of suspects in Havana. Some were Chilean students whose parents were Communists working for the Cuban Government.

The Missile Crisis: October 1962

Although Cuban exiles in the United States had reported strange military movements in Cuba (possibly Soviet missile entrenchments), nothing was done about it until early October of 1962. With the help of French intelligence operatives and air surveillance by U-2's, the United States determined that the Soviet Union indeed had moved missiles to Cuba and was deploying them in bases in different parts of the island. The missiles, as well as other new weapons, had started to arrive in July of 1962.

President John F. Kennedy denounced the Soviet actions and declared a blockade of Cuba on October 26th. A demand was made that the Soviet Union withdraw the missiles and preparations were made to intercept further shipments of missiles. Plans were made again for a possible American invasion of Cuba. Two days later, the Soviet Union requested a meeting to discuss the situation and the missiles were removed. The USSR, under the leadership of Nikita Khrushchev had maintained a hard line until October 28th. The Soviets then agreed to withdraw the missiles if the United States promised not to invade.

At no time were Cuban military personnel in command of any of the Soviet bases or of the sophisticated equipment that was placed in Cuba. Nevertheless, Fidel Castro is said to have personally fired a Soviet anti-aircraft missile that shot down an American reconnaissance plane flying over Cuba. Castro had been visiting the base and was being briefed on how the equipment worked. When the U-2 plane showed up on the radar he is said to have asked how the system worked and he pressed the button and fired the missile.

The withdrawal of the Soviet equipment was not well received by Castro. He thought that the Soviet support was being withdrawn and the Cuban Revolutionary Government was being left exposed to American intervention. It seems, however, that as part of the deal to withdraw the missiles, promises were made to the effect that the United States would not support Cuban exile groups trying to overthrow the Cuban Government. Several years later, in 1979, it was disclosed that a Soviet motorized brigade was stationed in Cuba and that it may have been in Cuba since the missile crisis. The details of what actually took place and what deals were made may not be known for years.

Defeat of the Anti-Communist Guerrillas

Between 1960 and 1965 close to 200 urban and rural guerrilla groups were formed by anti-Communists in a losing battle to overthrow the Revolutionary Government. Although these groups were active throughout the country, most of them concentrated their activities in the Escambray Mountains in central Cuba. The government mobilized thousands of soldiers and militia units to defeat these guerrilla groups. Approximately 10 times more men were used in the anti-insurgency war than Batista had used in the 1950's. In addition, the Armed Forces had large quantities of modern weapons supplied by the Soviet Union.

When Batista took over the government in 1952, the Armed Forces consisted of 24,797 men. By the end of the dictatorship in December of 1958, the Armed Forces had been increased to 29,270 regulars and a reserve force of 18,542 men had been formed.³¹ The Revolutionary Government increased the Armed Forces and militia to close to 300,000 men and women by the middle of 1964. Special anti-guerrilla, mountain troop units were formed and given modern automatic weapons and full support from all branches of the Armed Forces.

The Navy had been increased with the addition of fast patrol boats manufactured in the Soviet Union. They could intercept ships attempting to land men and supplies to help the guerrillas. New radar units assisted the Navy and the Air Force to track down ship movements around the island. New MIG fighters and bombers assisted the Navy in intercepting landing parties. New helicopters were used to transport troops to battle areas and to provide support to advancing ground troops in hot pursuit of guerrilla units. The rural population was moved out of the mountains and all areas where guerrillas were operating in order to reduce any possible assistance from the local population.

Political commissars were stationed in all military units down to the squad level, in both the regular Army and the militia. The presence of these political commissars was a useful tool to maintain the high morale of the troops. To train political instructors in Marxist doctrine, the Osvaldo Sánchez School for the Revolutionary Armed Forces was created. Experienced officers and enlisted men, many of them veterans of the guerrilla war against Batista, were sent to the school to learn skills in political indoctrination.

³¹ Jorge I. Domínguez, Cuba: Order and Revolution. (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 346-347.

Party cells in all military units maintained the troops under constant political indoctrination. All the men fighting the anti-guerrilla war knew why they were there and what they were supposed to be doing.

After the 1962 missile crisis any chances of success for the anti-Communist forces were further reduced when United States authorities stopped providing aid to them. In fact, U.S. authorities began to intercept and arrest Cuban exile groups as they attempted to launch attacks against military installations in Cuba. They were forced to fight a war on two fronts, one in the United States against the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the U.S. Coast Guard; and the other in Cuba, against Castro's forces. With these tremendous odds against them, the result was predictable. By the end of 1964 all the anti-Communist guerrilla groups in Cuba had been defeated. Cuban Government estimates place the number of guerrillas killed or captured between 1960 and 1965 at 3,591. About 500 government soldiers died during the same period.³²

Transformation of Cuban Society

In six years, between January 1, 1959, and December 31, 1964, Cuba had undergone a dramatic transformation to a Socialist state patterned after the Soviet Union. Only nine days after Batista fled the country, the Batista-banned Communist Party was legalized. A series of laws were passed within five months redirecting and transforming the economy of the country. Cuban businessmen, like most people in the country, had supported the revolution and the need for social and political reform. But they always thought that they would not be touched by the revolution. Any thought of protesting was quickly put aside because, from the beginning, the government would not tolerate dissent. By the time the business community realized that it would be hurt, it was too late. Organized labor underwent a similar experience. By the time labor leaders realized that their long efforts for the establishment of free unions, guaranteed right to strike, reduced work week and other benefits were being taken away, it was also too late to do anything about it.

In March of 1959 when rents for apartments and houses were cut in half and tenants given title after residing in one property for 20 years, businessmen who were not owners of real estate did not criticize. They hoped that their businesses would be spared. When land was expropriated from large landowners, the same thing occurred. When the American-owned Cuban Telephone Company was taken over in 1959, the natives rejoiced to see the foreigners being kicked

³² Ibid. p. 346.

out. The same happened when the foreign-owned oil refineries were nationalized in June of 1960. By the time all the U.S. owned firms were nationalized in August of 1960, panic began to set in in the Cuban private sector. By then it was too late. In October 566 Cuban-owned companies were nationalized.

The press was muzzled practically from the start. In the first few weeks some mild criticism was tolerated. Toleration quickly began to be replaced by a new form of censorship. Unionized workers in the newspapers demanded the right to print their own opposite commentary in the same page of a newspaper where any article criticizing the government was published. (These commentaries were named coletillas). Next, critical articles could not be published. Finally, newspapers, magazines, radio and television stations were nationalized. The government took control of the media.

Church criticism of the harsh treatment of political dissidents and growing intervention of the state in the economy was countered with strong criticism of the Church.³³ Foreign-born priests and nuns were ordered out of the country. Church-operated schools were taken over by the government. Churches were closed down. All forms of private education were declared illegal and the government took over all the schools in the country. Church attendance became equivalent to participation in counterrevolutionary activity. The Catholic Church, which was the predominant faith in Cuba, had the most to lose. However, many Protestant denominations often suffered even harsher treatment. For example, such religious groups as the Jehovah Witnesses were declared "obscurantist sects," and their members were often put in

³³ The Catholic Church in Cuba was divided and did not have the power it thought it had. During the War of Independence the Church had sided with Spain, with the exception of a limited number of Cuban priests. The majority of the leaders of the independence movement were in fact Masons. When the independent government started in 1902, the Church and the State were separated. For example, the Cuban Armed Forces did not have chaplains like the U.S. Armed Forces did. However, during the revolution against Batista some priests joined the guerrillas, while high officials of the Church were close to Batista. After the victory of the revolution, several priests were incorporated into the Revolutionary Armed Forces wearing olive green religious garments. This smoke-screen, of course, did not last long. The same situation exists now in Nicaragua, where some renegade priests are high officials of the Sandinista Government, claiming that it is possible to be a Communist and a Christian at the same time. The Vatican has suspended several of these priests and has taken a strong stand against the so-called "Theology of Liberation."

jail simply because they did not want to salute the flag or join the military.

By 1964, the state was the only employer. Anyone who did not support the government or at least keep his mouth shut, lost his job. Since unemployment was not acceptable to the government, people were forced into agricultural labor camps. Since the educational system was in the hands of the state, only those who supported the government could be accepted into the universities. Only those professionals who supported the government were allowed to practice. A surgeon who did not support the government would have his rights to perform surgery taken away.

Finally, universal, compulsory military service registration started in 1963 and broke long-standing opposition by Cuban families.³⁴ The schools were militarized. The factories were militarized. Farm production was militarized. In fact, every sector of Cuban society was placed under strict military discipline. Secondary schools students were sent to boarding schools away from home. This provided the government even more control over the minds of the students, since the parents were not around to re-enforce traditional values at home. Pregnancies and abortions skyrocketed.

In the first two years of the revolution, almost 100,000 people left the island. By 1964, almost 500,000 had left. The numbers were to increase to over 800,000 within ten years. The government tolerated and even favored the departure of all political dissidents. Their departure contributed to bringing about internal political stability. The enemies of the government left the country. In addition, the outflow helped by providing housing, material possessions and jobs to those who remained behind. The properties of those who departed were used to reward the government supporters who remained in the country. Cruel as it may sound, if the United States had not provided a safety valve, the hundreds of thousands of anti-Communists who left Cuba would have been forced to fight and die in the process of overthrowing the Communists. The United States Government may have made a major tactical blunder by opening the doors to Cuban immigration.

The Militia Disarmed

After the missile crisis large quantities of military equipment continued to arrive in Cuba. Between 1963 and 1965 it is estimated by the U.S. Government that about 70,000 metric tons of military equipment and supplies had reached Cuba from

³⁴ Law #1129 of November 26, 1963 ordered all males between 16 and 44 years of age to register for military service.

the Soviet Union. This was in addition to over 250,000 metric tons of hardware and supplies which had arrived during 1962.³⁵ With the new equipment the process of building a strong, regular force continued.

With the growth of the regular Armed Forces and the defeat of the counterrevolutionary groups, the importance of the militia began to decline. In 1964, the weapons were taken away from the militia and stored in military barracks. In the future, weapons would only be given to the militia in times of national emergency. From a position as an important front line force for defense of the island, the militia became a reserve force. A few years later it would be replaced by a new organization of reservists who had served their military service in the regular forces and went back on an annual basis for 45 days of active duty.

Formation of the Cuban Communist Party

During 1959 several revolutionary groups and organizations were allowed to co-exist with Fidel Castro's 26th of July Movement. As time passed, the conflicts within and between the revolutionary organizations that had participated in the war against Batista became sharper. With Fidel Castro's declaration that Cuba was a new member of the Socialist camp, a new umbrella organization was formed to bring about the unity of all the different organizations: the United Party of the Socialist Revolution (PURS).

Several members of the old Communist Party, which was known as the Popular Socialist Party (PSP), did not agree with many of the policies of the government. Many members were loyal to the Soviet Union. Elderly leaders such as Anibal Escalante, and many of his followers, ended up either in jail or departing the country for the Soviet Union and other Socialist countries. Others simply retired from politics or were left out of the new organization. In 1965, with the coaching of the Soviet Union a new Communist Party was formed to replace the PURS. The leadership of the new party was loyal to Fidel Castro first and foremost. The principal positions of leadership were taken by close supporters of Fidel Castro, and for the most part were high-ranking members of the military.

³⁵ Agencia de Comunicaciones Internacional de los Estados Unidos, Las Fuerzas Armadas Cubanas y la Presencia Militar Sovietica, (6-MK-82-217 (12) 7-82), p. 7.

Tri-Continental Congress

At the end of 1966 the Cuban Government sponsored a meeting of revolutionaries from all parts of the world. This meeting, which was held under the name of Tri-Continental Congress, provided support to the ideals of the Cuban Revolution and set the stage for the export of the revolution to other countries. The participants who gathered in Havana endorsed guerrilla warfare in Latin America and elsewhere and supported the war in Viet Nam against the United States and their allies in South Viet Nam. The Tri-Continental Congress was not the beginning of Cuban involvement in promoting revolution in other countries. Cuban-supported revolutionary organizations had been active since 1959 in Latin America and Africa. More specific details will be provided in Chapter XXI. The Congress represented an open endorsement for the export of the revolution.

Following the Tri-Continental Congress, a new Organization of Latin American Solidarity (OLAS) was formed to promote revolution in Latin America. The basic premise behind the endorsement of revolution throughout the Americas was that it was not necessary to wait for the objective conditions to exist for a revolution to start. A small group of dedicated revolutionaries could form the vanguard of the revolution and by their very actions create the conditions that would lead the masses to join the movement. Repression of the established governments against the revolutionaries would lead to curtailment of civil liberties and persecution of workers and peasants who advocated change. The masses would then become radicalized by the actions taken to defeat the revolutionaries. The movements would grow, the governments would fall and new Socialist governments would be established.³⁶

Che Guevara in Bolivia

In the Spring of 1965 Ernesto "Che" Guevara dropped out of sight in Cuba and within weeks rumors began to circulate as to his whereabouts. Why he decided to leave Cuba is not entirely clear. It has been speculated that Guevara was more inclined to the Maoist interpretation of Marxist philosophy and did not share Soviet views on wars of national liberation or how to run the Cuban Government. However, if one takes at

³⁶ The intellectual leaders of this philosophy were Ernesto "Che" Guevara and French Socialist writer Regis Debray. Their philosophy was presented to the masses in Debray's book Revolution in the Revolution and Guevara's writings on guerrilla warfare.

face value a letter he sent to Fidel Castro in April of 1965, he left Cuba to join revolutionaries trying to take power elsewhere.

He formally renounced his positions in the national leadership and his rank of major in Cuba, as well as his Cuban citizenship. He expressed his desire to join the fight against imperialism wherever it was. Within two years he showed up in Bolivia, trying to form a guerrilla organization with the help of some Cuban veterans of the revolution against Batista and local Bolivian Communist revolutionaries.

The guerrillas met with resistance from the Bolivian Indian peasants who did not trust the guerrillas and instead informed on their movements. The conditions in Bolivia were much different from Cuba. The middle class was not united in support of a revolutionary struggle to overthrow the Bolivian Government. The Marxist parties were very divided and each group claimed to have the correct interpretation of Marxist revolutionary thought. In addition, the Bolivian Army was much different from Batista's forces. They were more professional and their members did fight. They also had gained the experience of what had taken place in Cuba and could count on foreign technical assistance from the United States to fight a guerrilla war.

Guevara and his group were tracked down and either captured or killed in combat. Guevara, himself, was wounded and captured and then executed by the Bolivian Army. His diary of the Bolivian campaign illustrates the series of setbacks suffered by the guerrillas and how their eventual defeat was inevitable. The theory that revolutionaries could create the conditions for revolution instead of waiting for the right conditions to exist proved incorrect. Guevara's own theories about guerrilla warfare have also been questioned after his defeat. Perhaps it was just a historical accident that Guevara and his followers were defeated. ³⁷

³⁷ To understand Guevara's experiences in Cuba, the reading of his book Reminiscences of the Cuban Revolutionary War (New York: MR Press, 1968) is suggested. The Bolivian fiasco was based on what has become known as "la teoria del foco." According to this theory, objective conditions for a revolution can be created by a handful of dedicated revolutionaries, without the need for a mass movement. The people would follow and join the revolution once they understood the reasons for the struggle and had seen the examples of the revolutionary leaders. The book Revolution in the Revolution by the French Socialist writer Regis Debray expands on this theory.

Relations with the Soviet Union³⁶

Relations with the Soviet Union had been strained by several factors. First came the decision to remove the missiles from Cuba without consulting the Cuban Government. This was interpreted by the Cuban leadership as bordering on treason. Secondly, at least one segment of the Cuban leadership, particularly that of Ernesto "Che" Guevara, wanted to be in the forefront of revolutionary struggle and viewed themselves as more interested in the spread of Socialism than the Soviet leadership. Thirdly, some Cubans became admirers of Mao Tse Tung's leadership in the People's Republic of China and the concept of permanent revolution and the ideals behind the "great leap forward" and the "cultural revolution." Finally, as Cuba implemented very idealistic concepts, such as the move to provide moral incentives instead of material rewards to workers who performed above average deeds, the economy began to deteriorate. The mismanagement of the Cuban economy became a source of friction with the Soviet Union which was asked to contribute increasing amounts of economic support to keep the Cuban economy afloat.

The Soviets also were not enamored of the adventuristic approach to spreading the revolution. They were particularly angered by the frequent tendency of the Cuban leadership to make its own political decisions without consulting with the Soviet leadership. Friction was a natural byproduct of the major differences in the approach to the economy and the export of the revolution.

Despite the differences, the Soviet Union continued to supply large quantities of military supplies to Cuba. Between 1965 and 1969, it is estimated that 85,000 metric tons of military equipment and supplies reached Cuba. The lowest level of military supplies arrived in 1968, when only 5,000 metric tons reached Cuba. This may have been the year in which the relationship between the two countries reached its lowest point. However, 1968 is also the year in which most scholars of Cuba saw a turn around of the situation.

Fidel Castro endorsed the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and made an about turn in the policies that had been followed in Cuba. The philosophy of Guevara and his followers had failed. Guerrilla movements had been defeated everywhere. The Cuban economy was going from bad to worse. The international prestige of the revolution had deteriorated rapidly. The time for change had come.

³⁶ See Chapter XXI for additional details.

All the previous policies were revised and a move was made to implement in Cuba the same style of central planning that exists in the Soviet Union. Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, one of the most prominent members of the old Popular Socialist Party who had always maintained closer ties with the Soviet Union, emerged as the principal economic planner. He had always been opposed to many of the adventures of the mid-sixties but had remained loyal to Fidel Castro. In the early seventies the government was reorganized using the Soviet model.

Military Equipment, Combat Readiness and Mobilization

In ten years, between 1959 and 1969, the Cuban military arsenal increased well beyond that of all other Latin American countries. It included over 300 heavy- and medium-size tanks and about 150 assault guns, about 200 armored personnel carriers and thousands of military trucks. The Air Force which, at the time of Bay of Pigs in 1961, had only about six airplanes, was expanded to about 250 combat aircraft. As of 1969, it was estimated that Cuba had about 60 MIG-15's, 75 MIG-17's, 40 MIG-19's and 45 MIG-21's. The Air Force had also been given over 600 surface-to-surface and anti-aircraft missiles. The Navy, which was the last to be modernized and expanded, received at least 15 new submarine chasers and about 18 Komar class patrol boats with Styx surface-to-surface missiles. In addition to the missiles on board ships, the Navy also had shore missile batteries.

Thousands of Cuban military personnel had been sent to the Soviet Union for training in the use of these new weapons. In addition, with the militarization of the school system, the service academies were receiving well-trained students for officer candidate schools. The length of training for new officers had been expanded to between 3 and 6 years. Officers and enlisted men were provided refresher courses and advanced training in Cuba and abroad. Despite the fact that the military was often used to cut sugar cane and to perform other non-military tasks, the men were kept ready for action.

By 1969 the Army had grown to approximately 90,000 men; the Navy to about 6,000 and the Air Force to about 20,000. The militia had been expanded and given ample military training. It consisted of about 250,000 members. Compulsory military service for three years was established in 1963 and all males between the ages of 17 and 45 could be called to military duty. About one of every 31 Cubans was in the Armed Forces, as compared to one of every 103 Americans and one of every 292 Canadians.

After several setbacks, Cuban involvement in overseas adventures was curtailed and the emphasis was placed instead in the collection of intelligence and in providing training and

support to revolutionaries from other countries in Cuba. But despite the setbacks in overseas experiences, many of the failures helped to teach valuable lessons to the Cuban military. The following decade was to witness the implementation of the lessons learned in a new set of overseas military activity on all continents.

The First Decade

During the first ten years of the revolution in power, the level of political violence reached levels never experienced before in Cuba. Most Cuban revolutions and insurrections since 1902 had not been very violent. Only a few people were killed and the violence came to an end. Even during the dictatorships of Machado and Batista, although hundreds were killed by henchmen dressed in uniform, the numbers of executions and political detentions did not reach the levels of this first decade. Although torture of prisoners was reduced, it was not eliminated. Psychological torture became more prevalent. Opponents were not arrested, tortured and executed and dropped along roadways. Instead, they were arrested, subjected to refined methods of interrogation, tried, convicted and executed by firing squads. Prior dictators had used terror as public policy to warn their enemies. Castro was more refined. Enemies were done away with quietly in order to promote the revolution as a humane movement that did not violate the rights of individuals and fool world public opinion. By 1969, most opponents of the regime had been either killed, jailed or neutralized in one way or another. The regime could move from a defensive posture at home to a more active rôle abroad.



This picture was taken in late February of 1959 when the advance party arrived in Washington to prepare Fidel Castro's visit to that city a month later. Among the "comandantes" of the revolution in the picture are Camilo Cienfuegos (cowboy hat), Pedro Miret, Juan Almeida and Osvaldo Gonzalez.

Fidel Castro during his visit to Washington in April of 1959. This picture was taken at the Cuban Embassy in Washington. Several of the people in the picture later turned against Castro.

XIX. The Second Decade (1970-1980)

In the 1970's the Cuban Government underwent a process of reorganization and institutionalization. Although Cuban scholars do not seem to agree on the meaning or purpose of "institutionalization" in Cuba during the 1970's, they do agree that the Cuba of the 1960's and the Cuba of the 1970's were very different. However, their analyses of the changes which took place in Cuba have been limited, for the most, part to developments in the economy and the reorganization of the structure of government in the mid 1970's.¹ An in-depth analysis of the military during this time frame has not been published.²

In general, the Cuban Revolutionary Government entered the 1970's with its prestige seriously damaged by domestic economic problems and repeated failures in military operations overseas. By 1970, Fidel Castro had turned to the Soviet Union for help, admitting the failures of the policies pursued in the previous five years. A Cuban-Soviet Commission on Economic Scientific and Technical Collaboration was established in December of 1970, and thousands of Soviet technicians began to arrive in Cuba to help in restructuring Cuban institutions based on the Soviet model. Whereas Ernesto "Che" Guevara had been the most important theoretician of the revolution after Fidel Castro in the 1960's, Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, an old-line Communist and supporter of the Soviet model became the principal theoretician of the 1970's after Fidel Castro.³ One of the key components of the

¹ We refer to prominent Cuban scholars such as Carmelo Mesa Lago (University of Pittsburgh), Jorge Domínguez (Harvard), Nelson P. Valdés (University of New Mexico) and Edward González (UCLA). One exception is an excellent section on the Cuban military in the book by Jorge Domínguez, Cuba: Order and Revolution (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1976), pp. 342-375.

² This chapter will cover domestic military developments in the 1970's. Chapter XXI will cover foreign military operations from 1959 to 1986.

³ Despite the influence of Guevara's thoughts in the 1960's, it could be argued that his ideas or model for the revolution were never implemented. Although the Cuban Government paid lip service to Guevara, Fidel Castro was truly the man in control. The model used by the Cuban Government in the 1960's was more "Fidelism" than "Guevarism." The new theoretician, Dr. Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, was one of the few members of the old Partido Socialista Popular (PSP) who had joined Castro in the mountains during the revolution against Batista. Despite his pro-Soviet stance, he had remained

new theories implemented in the 1970's, was to move away from the excessive centralization of the 1960's, the democratization of mass organizations and the involvement of managers throughout the economy in decision-making.

Military Comes of Age

In the early 1970's, the military and intelligence forces in Cuba were reorganized and an effort was made to place well trained officers in command of all units. The time had come to conduct a purge of officers who did not have the qualifications to manage a modern military establishment. The Soviet Union had a great deal to say as to whom was to remain on active duty and who was going to be reintegrated into civilian life. Without a doubt, Fidel and Raul Castro also had a major say as to whom would remain on active duty and who would be retired. In this climate of reorganization, the associations, friendships, cliques, etc., which had been formed in the first decade of the revolution played an important role in the decisions that had to be made.

The officer corps seems to have been divided into three principal groups: those who were veterans of the revolution against Batista; those who had been sent to study in the Soviet Union and were experts in the operation of sophisticated modern equipment, such as radars, missiles, etc.; and officers who had attended the Cuban military academies after the victory of the revolution in 1959.

These groupings represent a generalization, since some veterans of the guerrilla army had been sent to school in the Soviet Union and other veterans had entered the Cuban military academies, such as the Inter-Armas Maceo Military School. Some graduates of the Cuban military academies had also attended Soviet schools for advanced training. Nevertheless, for the most part, the Soviet-trained officers were more technically capable than those who had not studied in Soviet schools.

The officers who had participated in the revolution against Batista were also divided, based on whom they served under during the period 1956-1959. There were three principal groups: those who had served in the M-26-7 headquarters directly under Fidel Castro; those who had served under Raul Castro in the Second Front in the Sierra Cristal Mountains;

loyal to Castro in the 1960's and did not participate in several conspiracies involving old PSP members who had favored closer cooperation with the Soviet Union and had opposed revolutionary adventurism in the 1960's.

and those who had participated in the invasion force from September to December 1958, under Camilo Cienfuegos and Ernesto "Che" Guevara. Each group was in turn further subdivided based on whom they served directly under. The loyalties and subgroups were further complicated by the fact that after 1959, the principal comandantes had been rotated in charge of different military districts throughout Cuba for about 12 years. During this period, new loyalties and friendships had also been established which cut across the previous groups outlined above. A fourth group was made up of veterans from the urban underground formed during the struggle against Batista.

One thing is certain, many of the older comandantes were reaching retirement age or were needed for civilian functions. Others were not well educated and did not have the capabilities needed to operate modern military equipment. More sophisticated weapons required specialization and increased competence could not be obtained with conflicting requirements in military and civilian tasks. Many veterans were retired and were no longer addressed by their former military ranks or allowed to wear their uniforms.

Military Leadership and the Economy

The military was used in the late sixties in an attempt to improve the economy by placing loyal, hard-working and disciplined officers in charge of key production areas. For example, during the failed attempt to produce a 10-million-ton sugar harvest in 1970, hundreds of officers and thousands of troops were given the management and the implementation of a substantial portion of this program. Other officers and their troops were tasked with construction projects, and still others were placed in charge of civilian workers throughout the economy. Even such experts as René Dumont, a French Socialist economist who had provided counselling to Fidel Castro, complained that the Cuban society was becoming very militarized at all levels.⁴

After 1970, Soviet technical advisers, working with the Cuban Government, made a move to reorganize the military to improve its competence. One of the first steps taken was to reduce the number of para-military organizations and the size of the permanent Armed Forces personnel. All the previous military organizations created to carry out non-military civilian work were disbanded and reorganized into one organization, the

⁴ René Dumont, Is Cuba Socialist? (London: Andre Deutsch, 1974).

Youth Army of Work (EJT).⁵ This institution allowed for the use of conscripts under the Obligatory Military Service (SMO) for civilian work projects within the discipline of the military, but in a separate organization from regular military units. Several older veterans of the revolution were retired from the military and transferred to positions in the civilian government. Only those with good military qualifications were allowed to remain in the structure of the Armed Forces. Logically, most of the graduates of Soviet academies remained in the FAR and those who had not had that experience or some other strong bona fides were retired.

Young men who signed up for military service (SMO) at age 16, were selected for either the EJT or for regular military service. Young men and women volunteers with the lowest educational skills were drafted into the EJT. The better educated were allowed to continue their education and attend night school for pre-induction training. The training was conducted under the auspices of the Patriotic Military Education Commission, which was created in May of 1974.⁶ The best students and those with strong family political contacts were allowed to continue in school and attend the universities. Only young people with good qualifications were drafted for regular military service.

Reorganization of the Military

The militia, which was formed in 1959 and had reached over 200,000 in strength, was disbanded in 1973. Members of the militia were given the honorary title of "subteniente" and

⁵ This organization replaced the previous "Unidades Militares de Ayuda a la Producción" (UMAP), which had been formed in 1968, and had been integrated by between 40,000 and 60,000 young people drafted under the SMO to participate in harvests, construction work and other similar projects.

⁶ Since January of 1979, pre-recruitment training has been under the direction of the Society for Patriotic Military Education (SEPMI) in close cooperation with schools and other civilian government agencies, so as not to disrupt educational programs or civilian employment. Classes are held in the evenings several times a week for about two hours.

⁷ Please note that although there is universal registration for the Servicio Militar Obligatorio (SMO), there is no universal service. Some young people somehow manage to avoid the draft. However, young people who do not support the regime and do not serve in the military find themselves unable to attend school or obtain a job.

sent home. The emerging military structure along traditional (i.e., conventional) lines could not support a parallel military organization in the form of a militia. Seven years later, in 1960, a new militia organization was formed and placed under the leadership of regular Army officers (Milicia de Tropas Territoriales).

In 1970, there were approximately 200,000 regulars in the Armed Forces. By 1974 the size of the regular force had been reduced to approximately 100,000 men. However, the combat readiness of this smaller, regular force was substantially increased through constant exercises and training. In 1975, the regular forces were increased to about 117,000 and a ready reserve force of about 90,000 men was organized. With the start of the African campaigns in 1975, the size of the regular forces began to increase, once again until they reached about 200,000 men by 1980.⁸ The ready reserves, however, remained at about 90,000 men.

Reorganization of the Ranks

Military ranks were no exception to the general trend of reorganizing and institutionalizing in Cuba in the 1970's. Prior to 1973, despite the tremendous growth of the military, the highest rank held by military officers was that of Major or Comandante. Fidel Castro, who held the rank of Comandante, was referred to as Commander-in-Chief. This was done to maintain the rationale of the Rebel Army during the revolution against Batista. But, by the early 1970's the system had become impractical. In 1973, a new system was announced which was a mixture of traditional military ranks and those used since guerrilla war days. These new ranks were:

⁸ Starting in November of 1975, thousands of Cuban troops were sent to Angola in support of the MPLA. Within three months at least 18,000 Cubans were fighting in Africa. In 1977, several thousand more combat troops were sent to Ethiopia to fight against Somalia and Somali guerrillas in the Ogaden. For more details see Chapter XXI, which covers Cuban military adventures overseas from 1959 to 1986.

Officer Ranks - 1973

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Comandante-en-Jefe | (Commander-in-Chief) |
| Comandante de Cuerpo | (Corps Commander) |
| Comandante de Division | (Division Commander) |
| Comandante de Brigada | (Brigade Commander) |
| Coronel | (Colonel) |
| Teniente Coronel | (Lieutenant Colonel) |
| Mayor | (Major) |
| Capitán | (Captain) |
| Teniente Primero | (First Lieutenant) |
| Teniente | (Second Lieutenant) |
| Subteniente | (no equivalent rank exists in the U.S. military) |

At the end of 1976 the Cuban Government again announced new ranks, which completed the process of institutionalization of the Armed Forces in a more traditional military format. To support the move away from the romanticism and mysticism of the revolution in its guerrilla stage, it was explained to the public that during the War of Independence traditional ranks had been used. The Cuban Government was only going back to the traditional ranks and the organizational style of the Ejército Libertador.⁹ Thus, the rank of general was reintroduced together with the rank of admiral for the Navy.

The highest rank in the new order remained that of Commander-in-Chief. It continues to be held by Fidel Castro. The second highest rank is that of General of the Army or Lieutenant General. It is held by Raúl Castro, who is also the Minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces. The insignia for Raúl Castro's rank are four stars. In the Army and the Air Force, the senior ranks are those of division general and brigadier general. In the Navy, the highest ranks are vice admiral, which is held by the Chief of Staff, and rear admiral. There are at least three naval officers with the rank of rear admiral.

⁹ This is the name given to the Cuban Army of Independence that fought both in the Ten Years War (1868-1878) and in the War of Independence (1895-1898). The members of the Army were called mambises, and the Army has also been referred to as Ejército Mambi. The word Mambi is an adjective in the Spanish Language with no meaning other than that of a member of the Cuban Army during the wars for independence.

Military Ranks- 1976

Comandante en Jefe Commander in Chief

Army and Air Force

Navy

| | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|--|
| General de Ejército | (General) | Almirante (Vice Adm.) |
| General de Cuerpo de Ejército | (Lt. Gen.) | |
| General de División | (Maj. Gen.) | Vice Almirante (Rear Admiral) |
| General de Brigada | (Brig. Gen.) | Contra Almirante (Commodore) |
| Coronel | (Colonel) | Capitán de Navío (Captain) |
| Teniente Coronel | (Lt. Col.) | Capitán de Fragata (Commander) |
| Mayor | (Major) | Capitán de Corbeta (Lt. Com.) |
| Capitán | (Captain) | Teniente de Navío (Lieutenant) |
| Primer Teniente | (1st Lt.) | Teniente de Fragata (Lt. Jr. Gr.) |
| Teniente | (Lt.) | Teniente de Corbeta (Ensign) |
| Sub Teniente | (no equivalent) | Alferez (Past Midshipmen) |
| Primer Sub Oficial | (no equivalent) | Primer Sub Oficial (Master Chief Petty Officer) |
| Sub Oficial | (no equivalent) | Sub Oficial (Chief Petty Officer) |
| Sargento de Primera | (Tech. Sergeant) | Sargento de Primera (Petty Officer 1st Class) |
| Sargento de Segunda | (Staff Sergeant) | Sargento de Segunda (Petty Officer 2nd Class) |
| Sargento de Tercera | (Sergeant) | Sargento de Tercera (Seaman/Petty Officer 3rd Class) |
| Soldado de Primera | (Private 1st class) | Marinero de Primera (Seaman Apprentice) |
| Soldado | (Soldier/Airman) | Marinero (Seaman Recruit) |

New Weapons Added to the Arsenal

As part of the process of reorganization, the Armed Forces were rearmed with new and more sophisticated weapons which began to arrive in Cuba in 1972. In January, new missile

patrol boats were added to the Navy. In April, MIG 23's were added to the Air Force. The Army received more sophisticated anti-aircraft equipment and armor. The arrival of weapons also brought several hundred Soviet troops to serve as instructors. By the end of 1973, the Armed Forces had been reorganized and patterned after the Soviet Union and its allies in Eastern Europe, although they still retained a Cuban identity based on the traditions of the island. One of the principal architects of this transformation was Soviet Lt. Gen. Dimitri Krutskikh, who commanded the Soviet advisers and trainers in Cuba.

According to the U.S. Government, during the decade of the 1970's, approximately 145,000 metric tons of military equipment and supplies were delivered to Cuba from the Soviet Union. In the period from 1970 to 1974, the average size of annual deliveries was about 10,000 metric tons. In 1975, the volume was increased to 15,000 metric tons, and between 1976 and 1979 the annual average was increased to 20,000 metric tons.¹⁰

In the period between 1975 and 1980, the growth in the number of some weapons was very significant. For example, the number of artillery pieces almost tripled, from an estimated 500 in 1975 to 1,400 by 1980. The number of T-54/55 tanks increased from about 300 in 1975 to about 720 by 1980. But the most important additions took place in the Air Force, where the almost non-existent transportation capabilities were enhanced with the arrival of 23 new AN-26 transport planes.

Recruitment and Training

Since November of 1963, a compulsory military service law has been in force in Cuba. All males upon their 16th birthday are required to sign up for military service. But in fact, long before they reach their 16th birthday, Cuban children start undergoing different forms of military training. From their first year in school, both males and females are taught to be supportive of the government and to aim for membership in the Communist Party when they grow older. They are taught to support the internationalist duty of Cuba to help revolutionary organizations in other countries. In addition, they are taught discipline and obedience to the state. Basic military training such as target practice with small-caliber rifles is also provided. This starts when they are old enough to hold and fire a small-caliber rifle.

¹⁰ U.S. Agencia de Comunicacion Internacional de los Estados Unidos, Las Fuerzas Armadas Cubanas y la Presencia Militar Sovietica, 1982. (6-MX-82-217 (12) 7-82), p. 9.

At the junior high school level, about age 13 or 14, students are split into at least three tracks. The best students are placed in a university preparatory track or sent to the Camilo Cienfuegos Military Schools (EMCC), established in each province in September of 1966. The students at the EMCC's are trained to enter the senior military academies for a career in the Armed Forces. There are 16 of these schools located throughout the country. The EEMC's graduated their first students in the 1971 school year. Since then, they have contributed a high percentage of the students who have entered the military academies. Two of the EMCC's specialize in training students for the Navy (Marina de Guerra Revolucionaria-MGR) and two specialize in training students for the Air Force (Defensa Antiaerea y Fuerza Aerea Revolucionaria -DAAFAR). The rest of the students, those with lower academic performance, are sent to vocational schools.

Active participation in youth groups which support the regime is a prerequisite for entering the university or the EMCC's, as much as good grades. Failure to meet either requirement is sufficient to keep young people from entering the university or the military academies. Young people who fail to attain higher education face a life of minimum wages, scarcity and difficulties from which it is impossible to break out. Those who enter and graduate from the universities and military academies can expect higher wages, opportunities for advancement including a chance to study abroad and to become a member of the privileged class at the top of the political and economic system.

The Navy (MGR) continued to train naval cadets at the Mariel Naval Academy, founded in 1916, long before the revolution. However, the program of studies had been expanded over the years to train officers in the use of sophisticated weapons systems. The academy trains officers for both the Navy and the merchant marine, and young officers can expect to serve in both organizations, as well as in the vast Cuban fishing fleet. The curriculum includes naval engineering, communications, navigation, and several specialties for weapons systems such as missile systems, gunnery, torpedos, mine warfare, submarines, radar systems, etc. They also serve as part of their training in one of the three training ships of the Navy: Vietnam Heroico, XX Aniversario and the José Martí.

Officer training for the Army and the other services is provided in at least five principal schools in the 1980's. Three of these academies were formed in the 1960's and oper-

ated throughout the 1970's.¹¹ The General Antonio Maceo Revolutionary Armed Forces Interservice School, founded in 1963, and located at Ceiba del Agua in Havana Province, is the second oldest of these schools.¹² Students complete a two- or four-year program to prepare them for service as officers for the infantry, armor, engineering, transport or supply services. The best students are selected for intelligence service and for the more sophisticated weapons systems. The Military Technical Institute (Instituto Técnico Militar-ITM), founded in 1967, is located on the grounds of the old Belén Jesuit school where Fidel Castro attended high school. It is located in the western suburbs of Havana, near the old Camp Columbia, which was the largest Cuban military camp before the revolution.

The ITM program trains cadets for service as officers for the DAAFAR. The program of studies includes pre-pilot training and specialized training in antiaircraft artillery and missiles. Upon their graduation after five years, the students are qualified as engineers in several specialties related to aviation including information systems, antiaircraft defense and radar systems.

Generally, the officer candidates who enter the DAAFAR are among the best prepared of the students to enter the military academies. Candidates for pilot training are usually between 17 and 21 years old, male and single. Until 1981, all military pilots were trained in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.¹³

Some officer candidates for the DAAFAR are trained as specialists in the repair and maintenance of airplanes, including aircraft weapon systems and avionics. DAAFAR runs a technical school in the capital with several programs that run from 45-day orientations to a 2-year program for specialists. DAAFAR officers also receive training at the General Antonio Maceo FAR Interservice School and the Camilo

¹¹ The two new academies created in the 1980's, the General José Maceo y Grajales Revolutionary Armed Forces Interservice School (1980) and the Major General Carlos Roloff Revolutionary Armed Forces Communications and Chemical Troops School (1983) will be covered in the next chapter.

¹² This school has been compared to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York, but with lower academic standards.

¹³ A new pilot training school was set up at the old San Julián air base built by the United States in Pinar Del Rio Province during WWII in 1981. The first class of this Escuela Militar de Pilotos de Aviación was graduated in July of 1984. See next chapter for more details.

Cienfuegos Artillery School, as well as in other service academies.

The Comandante Camilo Cienfuegos Escuela de Artilleria de las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias is the principal military academy training cadets for service as artillery officers. The school is located at La Cabaña Fortress, in the same location as in pre-revolutionary days, although the new school dates back to 1961. There are three programs of two, four and five years to train cadets in engineering with a specialty in artillery weapons, radio technology, military photography, map reading, and geodesic engineering.

Mid-level and senior officers of the Army, Navy and Air Force are also provided advanced studies in a one-year program at the General Máximo Gómez Revolutionary Armed Forces Academy located in the capital. This school, more or less equivalent to the War College in the United States, was created in 1963. It offers courses in Marxist-Leninists politics, leadership and logistics, among other subjects.

Each of the branches of the military carries out training exercises throughout the year to maintain a high state of readiness. Interservice exercises, particularly after 1971, became more frequent, with an emphasis on close-in fire support to the infantry from the Air Force, artillery and armor. These exercises also test the ability of the troops to replenish supplies, maintain their equipment and test the ability of the commanders to control the movements of key units in battle. Although most of the exercises have had the defeat of military forces attacking the island as a goal, over the years the ability of the troops to carry out offensive operations has also been improved by constant training.

Within the ranks of the military establishment, loyalty to the system is given high priority. Following the same pattern of the Soviet military and its Eastern European allies, the Cuban military maintains political sections throughout the entire military organization down to the squad level. Political commissars are tasked with the education of the rank and file in Marxist doctrine and maintain a high level of discipline and loyalty to the government and the Communist Party. As in the Soviet military, the political commissars have a high degree of authority which rivals that of the military commanders at all levels. All the flag rank officers are members of the Communist Party Central Committee. According to Fidel Castro, in a speech to the delegates of the First Congress of the Cuban Communist Party in December of 1975, 85 percent of the members of the Armed Forces

were either members of the Union of Communist Youth or the CCP.¹⁴

The African Wars¹⁵

In October of 1975, the Cuban military, for the first time entered a major overseas war thousands of miles away from Cuba. Within three months of the start of the Angolan war, thousands of Cuban soldiers were battling South African forces, as well as units of at least two major Angolan guerrillas organizations. Troops, equipment, supplies, medical teams, etc., had to be ferried to Africa in a complicated logistical nightmare without appropriate equipment and without prior experience. Both MININT and MINFAR units were pressed into action, with participation of both regular and elite troops, as well as members of the reserves. Units, as well as individuals from all branches of the service, were quickly mobilized and sent to the battle front.

Experienced, high ranking officers, including all the generals of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, were replaced by their deputies in Cuba and sent to lead their men in Angola. Although most of them had returned to their posts in Cuba by mid 1976, they had received their baptism of fire in a new kind of war for them. Several top commanders were killed, including the commander of the Cuban forces, Raúl Argüello, when his vehicle hit a land mine. He was one of the veterans of the guerrilla war in the Cuban mountains against Batista.

Despite several defeats in combat with South African regulars and Angolan guerrillas, they managed to help their MPLA allies to capture most of Angola within a period of five months. In 1977, several thousand more Cuban troops were sent to Ethiopia to fight against Somali regulars and Somali guerrillas in the Ogaden Desert. This time Cuban armored units and Air Force personnel took an active part in the war, possibly providing the Ethiopian military the key to their victory against Somalia.

Although the war in Angola continues eleven years later, the Cuban military proved in the Angolan and Ethiopian conflicts between 1975 and 1977, that major improvements had been made in their ability to wage war. At the same time, thousands of Cuban troops, from privates to generals, increased their competence through practice of their profession. By the end

¹⁴ "1st Congress of Cuban Communist Party Approves 5-year Plan," New York Times (December 22, 1975), p. 14, col. 4.

¹⁵ See Chapter XXI for more specific details of the wars in Africa.

of the decade, the Cuban Armed Forces had more experienced soldiers than most countries around the world.

The wars also increased the conflicts in Cuban society over the military requirements placed on all young men. Compulsory military service had never been popular in Cuba before and now young men were not only required to wear the uniform for the defense of the island against invaders, but also to fight wars overseas. The level of casualties in these conflicts were also hard to accept by the average Cuban. Although thousands volunteered to fight, the veterans of the African campaigns soon found out that other than a medal or a ribbon, they did not receive any special perks upon their return. The protracted nature of the Angolan war had opened wounds in Cuban society that are still open today.

Many of the returning veterans, particularly the lieutenant colonels and colonels, will want to move up to the rank of general before long. Will the old generals be forced to retire to open the road to promotion for younger men? Will the veterans of the African wars demand a greater participation in the governing of Cuba in the future? These and other important questions will be answered in the next five years. As the present Cuban leadership ages, including the Castro brothers, room will have to be made available at the top for younger military officers.

Serving in Africa has become almost a form of punishment. Young people have their studies interrupted and find it hard to resume them when they return to Cuba. Salary for the military is poor, even by Cuban standards. Housing and good employment in civilian life when they return is also difficult, to non-existent to find. Medical attention for the wounded and rehabilitation for those who have lost limbs is below modern standards. Political enthusiasm and loyalty to Marxist-Leninist principles cannot make up for the frustration experienced by the veterans.

First Congress of the Cuban Communist Party

The First Congress of the Cuban Communist Party was held December 17-22, 1975, while thousands of soldiers were fighting a difficult war in Africa. One of the outcomes of the congress was a move to strengthen the process of institutionalization of the revolution. As an important part of this process, a new Marxist-Leninist constitution for the country was drafted and presented to the party congress for approval. With only about 203,000 members or about 2 percent of the population and represented by about 3,116 delegates at the congress, the party was making decisions for the rest of the nation in an open display of elitism.

In addition to accepting the draft for the new constitution, the party approved a 5-year plan for the Cuban economy, under the watchful eye of Mikhail Suslov, the Soviet Communist Party chief who had been invited along with other communist leaders from around the world. Fidel Castro also established new goals for the party itself. Castro complained about the low average education of the members of the party and called for raising the average education of the members to at least an 8th grade education. Castro also complained about the low percentage of women in the party, who made up only 15 percent of the total membership. Five years later, during the Second Congress of the CCP in December of 1980, Castro repeated the same complaints. Ten years later, at the Third Congress held in 1986, the situation had not changed much and Castro continued stating his goal of advancing more women into a leadership role. However, only his sister-in-law, Raul Castro's wife, has been able to enter the ranks of the powerful Politburo.

The Constitution of 1976

On February 15, 1976, a referendum was held to ratify the new Constitution and was enacted on February 24th, the anniversary of the start of the Cuban War of Independence in 1895. This new constitution was part of the overall effort to institutionalize the revolution. As part of the reorganization, the number of provinces was increased from the traditional six to fourteen; the number of municipalities was set at 169; and 481 deputies were elected to the Popular Assembly (Asamblea del Poder Popular). Of these 481 members of the Assembly 35, or 7.3 percent, were members of the Armed Forces. Only 16 of the 481 members were not affiliated with either the CCP or the Young Communist League. The deputies, in turn, elected the first members to a Council of State, which is the highest elected office in the government.

But despite the formation of new civilian institutions such as a Popular Assembly, the military continued to have strong presence at all levels of the government bureaucracy. The ministry with the largest number of employees is the Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (MINFAR). When the number of officials of the Ministry of the Interior (MININT) is added, they constitute the largest segment of the Cuban Government. Their leadership is for the most part military.

Under the constitution, new and younger men and women were allowed to take a more active role in the administration of the country but essentially the same leadership of 1959, continued to be in control of the government. Only 51, or 10.6 percent, of the members of the Assembly were between 18 and 30 years of age; 73.8 percent were between 31 and 50

years old, and 15.8 percent were over 51 years old.¹⁶ Many of them continued wearing military uniforms. The society was as militarized before as it was after the enactment of the constitution. The question of an orderly transfer of power from the current leadership to future leaders was not defined. The civilian leadership, for all practical purposes, continued to be subordinate to the power of the military. Without entering into a debate over the extent of popular support for the government and the degree of participation of the masses in the government, one can safely indicate that authority is in the hands of the military, despite all the trappings of democracy.

Neo-Colonial Dependency on the Soviet Union

Dependency on the Soviet Union was increased during the 1970's. The creation of the Cuban-Soviet commission on Economic Scientific and Technical Collaboration in December of 1970, and Cuba's entrance to COMECON in 1972, opened the doors for increased economic assistance from the Soviet Union and other Communist countries in Eastern Europe. Technical assistance was received through about 3,000 Soviet advisers on a new state planning board (JUCEPLAN) created under their tutelage. The billions of dollars provided by the Soviets in economic assistance bought them the right to control the organization and planning of the economy.

The rapid increase in the price of oil in the 1970's at the same time that the price of Cuba's principal exports declined in the world markets in the late seventies also made Cuba even more dependent on the Soviet Union than before. Had it not been for Soviet oil and other forms of economic assistance, the Cuban economy would not have been able to survive the economic crisis of the late 70's.

As Cuba expanded its military arsenal it became more and more dependent on the Soviet Union for all its military hardware and supplies. The structure of the Armed Forces also became closer to that of the Soviet Union. Cuban large-scale military operations overseas in support of close allies of the Soviet Union was also a testimony to the increasing Cuban dependency and subservient behavior, although the Cuban Government declared that its involvement in the Angolan and Ethiopian wars in the 1970's was the result of its own decision and not due to Soviet pressure.

¹⁶ Carmelo Mesa-Lago, Cuba in the 1970's (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1978), p. 81.

Internal Security and Counterintelligence Reorganization

In principle, all officials of the Cuban Government and every citizen is required to work as an informer or as an intelligence officer for the Revolutionary Government. Every government agency, from the National Fishing Institute (INP) to the Ministry of Foreign Relations (MRE), has an intelligence function in support of the regime. Nevertheless, there are several institutions with specific intelligence and counterintelligence gathering duties. The principal intelligence agency is the Ministry of Interior (MININT), established June 6, 1961. In addition to MININT, the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR's), which is a mass organization, and the Ministry of the Armed Forces (MINFAR) also perform important intelligence functions for the government.

The internal security forces were apparently reorganized and purged in the early 1970's with the assistance or supervision of the Soviet Union. The two principal organizations that were reorganized were the Ministry of the Interior's Directorio General de Investigaciones (DGI) during 1971 and the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR) in 1973.¹⁷ The DGI began to coordinate its activities much closer than in the past with the Soviet's intelligence services. The CDR's, which had been created in September of 1960, to keep track of enemies of the state down to the city block level, were given new duties. In addition to operating the national rationing system for food clothing and other essentials, they were given other tasks in the delivery of government services, as well as in intelligence collection for the state.

MININT, as the principal intelligence organization in the country, covers a vast number of areas related to state security. It operates a national ID card system, national police and fire fighters, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the prison system, crime prevention, Border Guards, counterintelligence, and everything related to safety and physical protection of the state. MININT even has its own special troops, or commando units, organized into at least two infantry battalions. These troops remain in a high state of readiness, are very well trained, and are very well indoctrinated and loyal to the state. The personnel of these elite units are trained as paratroopers, sharpshooters and are proficient in the use of many different type of weapons. They are under the direct control of Fidel Castro and have often been referred to as Castro's own elite mili-

¹⁷ Hugh Thomas, Revolution on Balance, p. 13.

tary force. The first battalion of special forces sent to Angola in 1975 came from these special commando units.

While in the 1960's the Cuban intelligence organizations were set up primarily for internal protection and to counteract any attack against the island, in the 1970's they became very active world-wide. From primarily a defensive system, they became actively involved in the export of the revolution, as well as in support of a cold war against the United States and other non-Communist nations. By the mid-1970's, MININT had developed a world-wide network of spies directed against the United States and its allies. Thousands of informers and agents were recruited to operate in the United States, Canada, Mexico, as well as in Western Europe, Latin America and Africa. Before the end of the decade, Cuba had established embassies and consulates in over 130 countries and in each one an intelligence office was set up.

The principal target of Cuban intelligence is without a doubt the United States. Among the close to 800,000 Cubans that had entered the United States as political exiles by the mid 1970's, were an unknown number of Cuban intelligence officers. Among their principal goals was to infiltrate organizations of Cuban exiles and inform on the activities of anti-Castro Cubans. A concerted effort was also made starting at least by 1972, to make contact with members of the exile community who could be recruited to work for the Cuban Government. Cuban diplomats at the United Nations have been actively engaged in these activities in New York City since at least 1972. Cuban diplomats in Canada and Mexico were also actively recruiting agents to assist in the flow of information from informers and agents in the United States toward Cuba. Tourists and invited guests of the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP) were often asked to work for the Cuban intelligence services. A common request was for them to receive mail from informers and agents in the United States at their homes in Canada or Mexico, and forward it in different envelopes to addresses in Cuba.

By 1980, thousands of active informers and agents had been organized into a vast network operating in many countries throughout the world. It is obvious that a small developing country like Cuba does not have the funds to operate such a huge network of embassies, safe houses, cut-offs, informers, agents, etc., without Soviet support. The cost of these activities can only be funded by the Soviet Union. The Soviets are the ultimate beneficiaries of the intelligence collected by Cuban agents, as well as of disinformation planted by the Cuban intelligence network.¹⁸

¹⁸ See Chapter XXII for a more in-depth analysis of the MIN-FAR and MININT. Readers may also want to consult Pepita Ri-

American and Cuban Interest Sections Opened

Despite the growing Cuban military intervention overseas, after the inauguration of President Carter on January 20, 1977, an effort was made to explore the possibility of normalizing diplomatic relations with Cuba. At the same time that these efforts were under way, some contacts had also been made between Cuban officials and some members of the Cuban exile community in the United States. Finally, in September of 1977, the United States opened an interest section in Havana as part of the Swiss Embassy and the Cubans opened an interest section in Washington under the flag of the Czechoslovakian Embassy. Both interest sections were established in the old buildings that had housed the Cuban and American Embassies before diplomatic relations were broken in January of 1961.

Prior to this arrangement, in August of 1974 during the administration of President Ford, the United States removed a 12-year-old ban on exports to Cuba by foreign subsidiaries of American companies. This action was taken after the Organization of American States (OAS) voted to remove political and economic sanctions against Cuba that were imposed in 1964. The United States, however, continued an embargo on direct trade with Cuba. The decision was heralded by liberal politicians in the United States as a good first step in normalizing relations with Cuba. But within three months of this action by the United States to reduce tensions with Cuba, thousands of Cuban troops were sent to fight in Angola, despite repeated warnings by the United States that this would jeopardize future improvements in relations between the two countries.

The Return of the Exiles

On September 6, 1977, Fidel Castro announced at a press conference in Havana that a dialogue was about to start with

era's Servicio de Inteligencia de Cuba Comunista (Miami: Ediciones Universal, 1966, 255 pp.; Castro and the Narcotics Connection (Washington, D.C.: The Cuban American National Foundation, 1983), 88 pp. (Many hearings have been held on the subject of Cuban intelligence operations by the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism of the Committee on the Judiciary, by the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs in the past 15 years. Plenty of evidence is available to the general public on the extent of Cuban intelligence operations.)

members of the Cuban community in the United States who had gone into exile starting in the early 1960's. One of the principal purposes of the dialogue was to bring about family reunification and to pave the way for an eventual full resumption of diplomatic relations with the United States. With close to one million Cuban exiles in the United States, many of whom had become American citizens and active in American politics, full diplomatic relations had to be preceded by a new relationship that would reduce the strong hatred between Communist and anti-Communist Cubans.

Some of the initial contacts were made between Cuban diplomats working at the United Nations Cuban delegation in New York and a few Cuban scholars teaching in universities in the metropolitan area of the city, as far back as 1972.¹⁹ Lourdes Casal, a professor of Sociology at Rutgers University, was one of those contacted by the Cuban diplomats. Casal had been one of the organizers of the Institute of Cuban Studies in the Spring of 1969, and seemed to be open minded about the Cuban revolutionary process. As a high school and college student, Casal had been an activist in the Catholic youth movement in Cuba and had gone into exile in the United States in the early sixties due to her opposition to Castro's Communism. Once in the United States, she joined anti-Castro groups and may have worked for the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. Some sketchy evidence points to her travels to Africa in the early 1960's to speak against the Cuban Government possibly, on the CIA payroll.²⁰

With other young Cubans in the United States, Casal had formed "Nueva Generación," and later the magazine Aréito, with the purpose of publishing a more balanced (academic) analysis of the Cuban revolution. Casal and other members of her group were invited to travel to Cuba as guests of the Instituto Cubano de Amistad con los Pueblos (ICAP).²¹ She was the only member of the group who accepted the invitation, travelling to Cuba in September of 1973. Upon her return, she told her friends that she had been converted and now supported the Cuban revolution and its leaders. From that

¹⁹ The Cuban diplomat that called on Casal identified himself as Alfredo Pila, and said that he was a member of the Cuban Embassy to the United Nations in New York. Without a doubt, he was a Cuban intelligence agent.

²⁰ Casal told her close personal friends that she had worked for the CIA in the 1960's and had participated in a CIA operation in Africa.

²¹ ICAP is one of the many organizations controlled by the Cuban intelligence apparatus. It is an integral part of the Ministry of the Interior (MININT).

visit until her death in Cuba in 1981, she worked for the Cuban Government.

Argito became the center of a new pro-Communist organization of Cubans living in the United States, most of whom were American citizens. Many of the original members of Argito dropped out of the organization because they did not share Casal's ideas and continued to oppose the Castro regime. A new organization, the "Antonio Maceo Brigade," was formed by the young people who followed Casal conversion. A group of 55 of these Cubans went to the island in December of 1977 to assist in the sugarcane harvest and to have an encounter with the past. Many had left when they were very young and wanted to explore their cultural roots. A propaganda film was made of their visit by the Cuban Government. Some members of the group returned to the United States converted by the Communists but others returned to the United States rejecting the policies of the revolution.²²

In November of 1978, as Fidel Castro had announced, a group of 75 Cuban exiles, most of them American citizens, went to Cuba to participate in a dialogue with the Castro regime. This meeting would have been impossible a few years before. By December 8th an agreement had been signed by the "committee of 75" with the Cuban Government, which opened the doors for Cuban exiles to visit their relatives in Cuba. Castro also agreed to release about 3,600 political prisoners and their relatives, as well as about 600 other Cubans who had been arrested while trying to escape from the island illegally. The exiles, whom the Communists had called gusanos or worms, became members of the Cuban community overseas.²³

²² Many of the members of the group of 55 young Cubans living in the United States who joined the Antonio Maceo Brigade had become part of the "generation gap" that developed in the United States during the Vietnam war. Some had joined the anti-war movement or had become part of the drug culture with their American classmates. Possibly even the Cuban Government officials who handled their visit to the island were surprised by the gap that had developed between these young people and their parents. The Cuban film about their visit is entitled 55 Hermanos. The Cuban community in the United States was found not to be as monolithic as it had been in the early years of the revolution.

²³ The members of the group of 75 became instant enemies for the more anti-Communist militants in the exile community. Two of the members of the group were assassinated by anti-Communist terrorists and others were threatened by a new wave of right-wing violence in Miami, New York, New Jersey and other locations with large numbers of Cuban exiles. They had to be given protection by U.S. authorities.

The visits of the exiles started in January of 1979. Within a year as many as 100,000 exiles had returned for short visits of one to two weeks. The Cuban Government not only gained some good will by allowing the family reunions to take place, but also gained millions of dollars from the visitors' expenditures in Cuba. The exiles who went back to visit close relatives they had not seen in years, were charged high fees and inflated prices in government stores for goods needed by their relatives in Cuba. Millions of dollars were obtained by the Communists at the expense of people who wanted to see their close relatives (fathers, mothers, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters), whom they had not seen in years. The visits also provided a fantastic opportunity for Cuban intelligence to make contact with Cubans living in the United States and attempt to recruit them to work for the Cuban intelligence services. (The reverse is also true.)

Balance of the 1970's

The key to understanding the balance sheet of the 1970's in Cuba lies more in the international politics of the regime than in the domestic developments on the island. The Sixth Summit Conference of the Nonaligned Movement was held in Havana in September of 1979, bringing Cuba further into the forefront of international politics. A total of 97 countries sent delegates to the meeting and 20 more sent observers. Particularly significant was the fact that 12 Latin American countries had joined the movement and 11 more had sent observers. Fidel Castro was elected President of the movement as he celebrated the end of the second decade in power with several victories and a seemingly bright political future. This would have been impossible to accomplish had Castro not cleaned up his image by starting the dialog with the exiles and releasing political prisoners.

The wars in Angola and Ethiopia, where Cuba had taken a substantial gamble, resulted in victories even though the fighting still continues in Angola and the end of a difficult anti-insurgency campaign is nowhere in site. The Sandinistas took power in Nicaragua and hundreds of Cuban military and civilian advisers moved in to assist them in the consolidation of the regime. The guerrillas in El Salvador and Guatemala were given a new lease on life, with the example of the Sandinista victory in Nicaragua and the prospect for new aide through Nicaragua. On March 13, 1979, Prime Minister Eric Gairy was deposed in Grenada and a pro-Cuban government headed by Maurice Bishop was installed in power. Before long, several hundred Cuban military and civilian advisers moved in to assist Bishop in establishing a Communist government in Grenada.

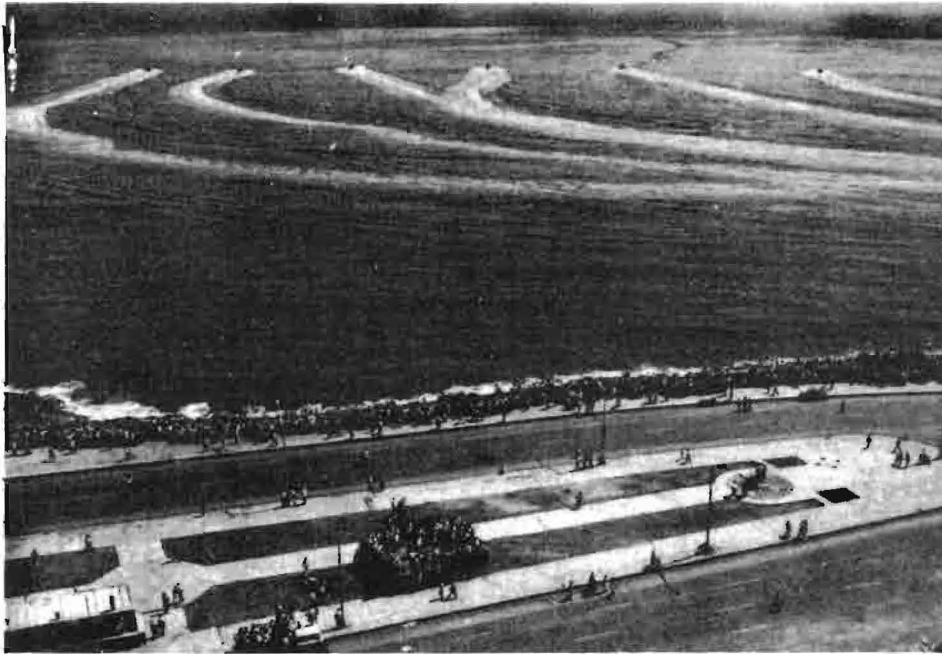
he Shah of Iran was forced out of power by a popular rebellion led by Muslim fundamentalists and Communist guerrilla organizations in January of 1979. A few days later Prime Minister Shapur Bakhtiar was also defeated and a violent anti-American movement headed by the Ayatollah Homeini took power. In November of 1979 the American Embassy was taken over and the United States was unable to obtain the release of Foreign Service hostages seized by Iranian revolutionaries. An attempt to stage a military rescue failed in April of 1980 after an accident in the Dash-e-Kavir desert. The United States was attempting to extinguish fires everywhere around the world and Cuba and their allies seemed to be coming out on top everywhere. These events overshadowed the reorganization of the Cuban Government, the new Constitution, the return of the exiles or any economic gains made in that decade.

Forecasts made by analysts of Cuban affairs predicted an increasing delegation of power by Fidel Castro through the National Assembly of the People's Government, increasing institutionalization, strengthening of the central planning process and improvements in the economy which have not materialized. Cuba is facing a tremendous financial crisis in the 1980's, with a huge foreign debt of over \$3.5 billion to Western banks alone. The debt to COMECON countries is even larger. The world prices of commodities exported by Cuba such as sugar, nickel and petroleum have plummeted to levels below their cost of production.²⁴ Relations with the United States and the Cuban anti-Communists have not improved as some had predicted. In fact, during the 1980's, tensions have increased and may have reverted to the level of the 1960's.

The one major setback for Castro came at the tail end of 1979 when the Soviet Union moved into Afghanistan with thousands of troops. As soon as the Soviets invaded Afghanistan in December of 1979, Castro was forced to make a public declaration of support for the actions of his Soviet bosses. This declaration caused him a considerable decline in prestige as a leader of the unaligned movement. His work of many years building up his reputation as a world leader was destroyed by his subservient statements to his neocolonial masters.

²⁴ Although Cuban crude oil production only covers between 5 and 8 percent of the needs of the country, Cuba obtained several over 300 million dollars a year by re-exporting Soviet oil acquired under preferential terms at prices below the world spot market price. With the drop in oil prices in the mid-1980's, this income has been lost.

NAVAL EXERCISES ON THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE REVOLUTION
January 1, 1979



Naval exercises along the sea shore in Havana.



Naval infantry parading in Havana.

CUBAN MILITARY PERSONNEL ARRIVES IN NICARAGUA
IN JULY OF 1979, A FEW DAYS AFTER THE VICTORY OF
THE SANDINISTAS



XX. The Third Decade (1980's)

The euphoria caused by a series of positive events for the Cuban Communist leaders at the end of the 1970's quickly dissipated early in 1980 with a series of setbacks. The first was possibly a result of the thousands of exiles who had returned to visit their relatives, bearing gifts and telling stories of how they had gone from rags to riches in the United States. Thousands of Cubans once again thought about leaving the island. After years of sacrifices, even the stronger followers of the regime could see that they had failed to achieve the material progress of their friends and relatives who left Cuba. The old "gusanos" were coming back as "members of the overseas community" and flaunting their wealth. Thousands began to actively seek ways of leaving Cuba in search of the "promised land."¹

The second setback was the defeat in Grenada in 1983. Castro had ordered his men in Grenada to fight to the end against the American and allied landing forces. Instead, many of the leaders ran for cover at the Soviet and Cuban embassies and most of the others surrendered without a fight. As a result of this incident a large number of officers and men were court martialed. Others, including many intelligence officials lost their jobs. The defeat in Grenada served to push the Cuban Government toward further militarization of society. The U.S. action against Libya in April of 1986 was perceived by Cuban officials as further inspiration to increase defense systems on the island. Finally, a serious downturn in the economy has made it impossible for the regime to meet its international debt.

The Mariel Exodus

After several incidents in which people seeking political asylum and a way out of Cuba crashed through the gates of embassies in Havana, a major confrontation developed at the Peruvian Embassy on April 4, 1980. A guard was killed as a group of men sought to enter the embassy grounds. In

¹ During an interview conducted in Miami, Florida, a newly arrived exile explained this problem: "I worked, I cut sugarcane, I suffered, but did not have any material possessions to speak of. They gave me a medal or a diploma... but people who did not work as hard and who did not support the revolution had plenty of material things, such as fans, radios, clothing, because they have relatives in the United States who supply some of their needs..." These views are shared by many people in Cuba.

protest, the government removed the guards claiming that the embassy officials were responsible for the death of the guard due to their willingness to accept refugees.

Within 24 hours, after learning that the guards had been removed, as many as 10,000 people, including entire families with small children, entered the embassy grounds after climbing over a 10-foot chain-link fence. The incident seriously damaged the reputation of the regime. Without food or water, the refugees attracted the attention of international news organizations. Castro countered by saying that the gates were open and that anyone who wanted to leave could go. He categorized the refugees as the worst of Cuban society and claimed that the nation would benefit by their leaving. President Carter's response was that the United States would receive Cubans seeking freedom and reunification with their relatives. What ensued was the Mariel boatlift and the exodus of about 125,000 Cubans to Miami between April and November of 1980.

This time the people living Cuba were not the wealthy, members of the middle class or the followers of Batista. The new wave of people seeking to leave the Communist paradise were a multiracial group from a lower economic strata than previous refugees. The largest percentage were semiskilled and unskilled workers (45.4 percent). Only a small number, about 11.2 percent were professionals, technicians or members of the managerial class. Some were veterans of the wars in Angola and Ethiopia. Many had been born after the revolution or were young children in 1959. A large proportion of the refugees were young males in the age range 15 to 34 and eligible for military service.²

To counteract the adverse publicity, Castro forced boat captains hired by Cuban-Americans to rescue their relatives in Cuba to take other people back to the United States. They included about 1,774 criminals who were serving jail terms for serious offenses, about 600 mental patients and about 1,500 homosexuals. Several thousand more had served time in jail either as political prisoners or for minor offenses. This was part of an attempt to depict the enemies of the state in Cuba as common criminals-- the scum of the island. Other groups of people, such as the Jehovah Witnesses, were also picked up by government agents, taken to the port of Mariel and forced to leave with their families.³ The boat

² Silvia Pedraza-Bailey, "Cuba's Exiles: Portrait of a Refugee Migration," International Migration Review (Spring 1985), pp.4-34.

³ The Cuban Communists classify the Jehovah Witnesses and other similar religious organizations as "obscurantist sects." The Communists have problems with the sect's practices such as not saluting the flag, not standing up for

captains had no choice, either they accepted the people placed on board by the Communists, or they would not be able to take relatives of the people who hired them back to the United States.

Reaction in the United States

The Mariel exodus coincided with a slow economy, high unemployment and a high inflation rate in the United States. These economic circumstances contributed to an adverse reaction of the American public against the new wave of immigrants. This reaction was shared by many Cuban exiles living in South Florida. The previous waves of exiles had been assimilated into the economy and American society. The new wave opened old wounds and triggered conflicts between the Cuban and American black communities in Miami, as well as between the Cubans and the poor and lesser educated Anglo population native to South Florida. They have resented the Cubans' economic progress over the past twenty years, claiming that it has been attained through Federal help not available to them. The old exile community also rejected the new arrivals for a number of reasons: they were darker, they did not understand the work ethic of the capitalist system and were from lower social and economic classes. The fact that some of the new arrivals had problems with the law almost as soon as they were released, contributed to very negative feelings about the "Marielitos." Many former "refugees" were among the first to become victims of the criminal elements that arrived on the boat lift.⁴

The 1980 U.S. Presidential Elections

The Mariel exodus also coincided with an election year in the United States. Voters in Miami and other South Florida communities were outraged about the influx of over 13,000 children who refused to sing the national anthem and not believing in military service. All of these beliefs contradict the militaristic nature of Marxist-Leninist doctrine as practiced in Cuba.

⁴ Many cases were recorded of Cuban-Americans who provided assistance to the Marielitos, including housing, food, clothing and employment only to be paid back with burglaries and even murder. Castro was successful in introducing a dangerous criminal element into the unsuspecting exile community in the United States. With about 2,000 criminals and criminally insane individuals among the 125,000 people who went to the United States in the Mariel boat lift, Castro was able to create havoc among the exile community.

dren to the public school system, without a tax base to support the additional costs or help from the Federal Government. The ordeal was taken to living rooms all over the United States by television news programs. President Carter's popularity, which was already suffering from the U.S. Embassy take-over in Iran and the state of the economy, was further damaged by the human avalanche that hit South Florida. The result was that his Republican opponent, long a foe of Fidel Castro, was elected President of the United States.

President Ronald Reagan had spoken on the Cuban question several times in his weekly radio addresses between 1976 and 1980. He criticized liberal U.S. Senators who visited Cuba in the interest of normalizing relations between the two countries.⁵ He criticized the exchange of visits by sports teams, discussions on reopening trade, as well as what he called the Soviet-Cuban assault on Africa.⁶ He informed the American people of the testimony of American POW's in Vietnam about the participation of Cuban personnel in the interrogation, torture, and assassination of American prisoners in North Vietnam.⁷ He criticized the Russian garrisons in Cuba and Castro's encouragement of insurrections in Central America.⁸ All of these and many other statements endeared him to Cuban-American anti-Communists, who voted in large numbers for him in the presidential elections of 1980. Castro feared that President Reagan's election would spell trouble for his regime in the future.

Back to the Barricades

The decade of the 1980's may best be characterized as a return to the strong militarization of all aspects of Cuban society that had existed in the 1960's. Using as the basis of the new military mobilization the threat of American intervention in Cuba, Fidel Castro launched what he calls "War of All the People."⁹ Under this concept of total mobilization of society to wage war, schools, factories, hospitals and all other institutions have been enlisted to play a part in this popular war doctrine. Political work at all levels is

⁵ Radio address of Ronald Reagan, December 20, 1976.

⁶ Radio address of Ronald Reagan, May 16, 1977.

⁷ Radio address of Ronald Reagan, October 7, 1977.

⁸ Radio address of Ronald Reagan, September 18, 1979.

⁹ La Guerra de Todo el Pueblo

stressed, to provide the masses the ideological indoctrination to fight in support of the revolution.

Although the program of total military mobilization is geared toward the defense of the island so-called "internationalist duty" is also included in the concept of total war. One of the top priorities is to develop a population willing to fight at home or overseas for the Communist cause. Effective political orientation of the masses is seen as the key to the success of the concept of popular war. A key element of this military concept is that all economic and social programs are placed on a second plane and military preparedness given top priority.

New weapons have been added to the Cuban arsenal. Continuous tactical exercises are being held by both the regular Armed Forces, as well as all the different paramilitary organizations that existed in Cuba. Intelligence networks have been expanded to allow for effective surveillance on a world-wide basis over all potential enemy forces. The goal is to be able to predict when and where the United States and/or other Western powers may take military action.¹⁰

Combat Readiness and Mobilization

Cuba has remained in a high state of combat readiness since the early 1960's. However, starting in 1980, Castro has placed the whole country on a wartime footing without parallel. A series of redundant defense systems were organized. An effective national mobilization plan to call up trained reservists and paramilitary organizations was set up. A system to coordinate paramilitary with regular forces has been organized and rehearsed frequently. An important part of the mobilization exercises has been the dispersal of forces throughout the island, the organization of call-up systems for mobilizing all military units and the provision of logistical support to the regular and paramilitary troops at all levels. Included in these exercises has been the maintenance and repair of equipment, the movement of supplies and the treatment of military and civilian casualties. Civil

¹⁰ The Cubans were taken by surprise when the United States and several island nations landed in Grenada in 1983. The different intelligence units of MININT and MINFAR failed to pick up information on the events leading up to the intervention in Grenada and failed to control the events leading up to the assassination of Prime Minister Bishop. After this incident several high-ranking intelligence officers, including the Minister of the Interior, were fired or demoted. For more details see Chapter XXI, Phase V.

Defense units have also practiced the movement of factory workers and students to safe places during air attacks.

Logistics and Maintenance

The logistics of the FAR are controlled by the Rear Services (Retaguardia) Headquarters, currently commanded by Division General Rogelio Acevedo González, with Brigadier General Julio Fernández Pérez as his deputy.¹¹ This organization is in charge of providing the troops with uniforms, food, weapons, ammunition, maintenance of equipment, and other logistical support. Other Directorates of MINFAR, including Armament and Technology, Construction and Troop Housing cooperate with Rear Services to provide the needs of the military. The organization of the logistical and maintenance support of the MINFAR follows the Soviet model. However, Vietnamese technical advisers, with experience obtained during their long war against the United States, have been reported to be working in Cuba providing know-how to MINFAR.

Repairs of equipment and other support functions are provided by a number of Military Industrial Enterprises (MIE) scattered all over the island. These facilities are under the control of the Directorate of Military Industrial Enterprises, which is part of the Directorate of Armaments and Technology (DAT). Brigadier General Francisco Cruz Bourzac commands the DAT. The MIE's are under the command of several colonels and lieutenant colonels.

Civilian organizations have also been set up to provide logistical support to the military if needed. For example, all transportation facilities in the country would come under the command of the military in case of war. Factories and materials in all the warehouses, hospitals and all other medical facilities in the country would also be available to the military.

Defeat in Grenada

The invasion of Grenada in 1983, after the assassination of Prime Minister Maurice Bishop and several other officials of his government, by an extremist pro-Cuban faction, shook up Fidel Castro and his followers. For the first time, Cuban and United States military forces fought each other. Despite Castro's orders to fight to the end, his local commanders ran

¹¹ General Acevedo is one of the most prominent Cuban generals today. He is a veteran of the revolution against Batista and has participated in many overseas assignments.

to seek safety in the Soviet and Cuban Embassies. Only about 100 of the approximately 700 Cubans did any fighting. Details will be provided in Chapter XXI. More than the defeat, the most important aspect of the invasion was that the United States has finally taken action against Cuban expansion and was willing to carry the mission forward to its conclusion.¹² The United States did not back out at the last minute as it had done on other occasions. It was possibly a¹³ signal of a new dawn in American foreign policy toward Cuba.

Expansion of Regular and Paramilitary Troops

On May Day 1980, Fidel Castro announced that he was once again creating a militia force to help defend the country against an expected American invasion of Cuba. The new militia force, named Territorial Militia Troops (MTT), had reached a membership of approximately 1,200,000 members by 1985. The invasion of Grenada in 1983 and the defeat of the Cuban forces and their local allies served to show Castro and his followers that indeed the United States and other countries in the region may be prepared to prevent them from doing as they please in the area.

The potential for increasing the regular and paramilitary forces even further does exist. The Cuban population in the second half of the 1980's will be around 10 million. It is estimated that approximately 5,500,000 Cubans will be between 15 and 49 years of age and available for military service. Of this total, about 2,770,000 will be males, of which about 1,740,000 will be fit to enter military service. Another 1,650,000 females will also be fit for military assignments. All young Cubans, male and female, to one degree or another receive military training starting in elementary school.

Under the Compulsory Military Service (SMO) law, all Cuban males must register for military service after their 16th birthday. Universal service does not exist in practice. After males register for the SMO, they may be called into active service or may elect to join the reserves. Almost all males are enrolled in pre-enlistment training for five to ten months. Classes are held for about two hours in the

¹² Unlike the disasters at Bay of Pigs in 1961 and in Angola in 1975.

¹³ Even if it was not the start of a new hard line policy toward Cuba, the action in Grenada probably gave Castro and other Cuban officials a lot to think about.

evening and arranged so as not to conflict with school or civilian employment.¹⁴

Those called into active duty are sent to basic training for between 45 and 60 days. Upon completion of basic training, they are assigned to a military unit or sent for additional specialized training. The normal period of active duty is three years. Upon completion of the three-year tour, they return to civilian employment but most register with their local military board for reserve duty until age 50. Some young men and women volunteers, normally those with lower academic background, serve their military service with the Youth Labor Army (EJT) instead of with regular units after completing basic training. After completion of their three-year active duty assignment they also must register for service in reserve units until age 50.

Young men not called into active service must also register to serve in a reserve unit after completing their pre-enlistment training in evening classes for five to ten months. Some reservists receive special training in high schools, technical institutes or in the universities which qualify them as reserve officers. These men can be called into active duty at any time. In fact, approximately 70 percent of the veterans of the African wars have been reservists. The system is similar to the National Defense Cadet Corps and ROTC program in the United States.

University graduates with degrees in medicine, dentistry, teaching, engineering and other professions may also serve their SMO requirements performing social service functions for the government, if not called into active military service.¹⁵ Some professionals, such as physicians, serve up to

¹⁴ Despite the fact that military training is provided in Cuban schools at all levels does not mean that the results are all positive. Interviews with young men in their 20's who left Cuba in 1986 reveal that young teenagers consider the military classes a joke. Part of the problem is caused by the use of bad instructors who are often older officers and are poorly educated. They are given such nicknames as "pata peluda" (hairy leg), and are often laughed at by the students as a result of their lack of teaching skills. The description of the poor discipline is not much different than that of a classroom in an inner city public school in the United States. Everyone seems to get passing grades. This situation contrasts the tough requirements placed on young people in order to get into the universities and higher technical institutes.

¹⁵ The salaries received upon graduation from the university amounts to only about 198 pesos per month or about \$240 U.S. dollars. Working and housing conditions provided for them is generally poor. The combination of these factors re-

three-years in remote areas or overseas. Upon completion of the three-year social service assignment they must also register with their local board for reserve duty until age 50.

Since the government operates all the schools and all the employment opportunities in the economy, enforcement of the SMO is absolute. The structure of the government bureaucracy is very effective in identifying any young man who violates the law. Punishment for not registering is very severe and may lead to long prison sentences and lifetime unemployment.

Between 1980 and 1985, the strength of the Armed Forces has been substantially increased with an expansion of regular troops, ready reserves and paramilitary forces. Even without specific data on the strength of several military organizations, such as the number of members of a special battalion of the National Revolutionary Police, the U.S. Department of Defense estimates the total strength of the Armed Forces to be approximately 1,718,000 men and women, as of mid 1985.

A large percentage of the members of the militia (MTT) are women. Many of the members, including members of the officer corps, are veterans of the FAR who have retired, as well as veterans of the revolution against Batista and the campaigns in the 1960's against anti-Communist guerrillas. Although the MTT grew within five years to 1,200,000 members, all the members have received basic training and continue to receive additional training on weekends. At least one week of combat training is provided to all the members including substantial target practice. An important component of the training is in unconventional warfare and operations behind enemy lines. Using the concept of total war or "guerra de todo el pueblo," one of the primary roles assigned to the MTT is to operate as guerrilla units against an invading force.

sults in considerable dissatisfaction and uneasiness among young professionals, regardless of their political views. Many of these young professionals are among the best and the brightest people in Cuba. Entrance to the university depends on excellent grades and scores in the high 90's. All students throughout the country are tested in every subject in national exams given on the same day and at the same hour to reduce chances of fraud. But even if a student has excellent grades, several university programs limit enrollment to only a few freshmen every year. A deciding factor in admission in areas of limited enrollment is the political and "moral" record of the student. Only those who are known to support the revolution and Marxist-Leninist doctrine are admitted.

STRENGTH OF THE CUBAN ARMED FORCES ¹⁶
1985

MINEAR

| | |
|---------------------|---------|
| Army: Regulars | 130,000 |
| Ready Reserves | 135,000 |
| Navy: Regulars | 13,500 |
| Ready Reserves | unknown |
| Air Force: Regulars | 18,500 |
| Ready Reserves | unknown |

Paramilitary

| | |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| Youth Labor Army | 100,000 |
| Territorial Militia Troops | 1,200,000 |
| Civil Defense | 100,000 |

MININT

| | |
|------------------------------------|----------------|
| Special Forces | 2,000+ |
| Border Guards | 4,000 |
| Department of State Security | 15,000 |
| Battalion of Police Special Forces | <u>unknown</u> |

TOTAL 1,718,000+

Officer Training

During the 1980's the number of service academies training officers for all three branches of the service has been expanded. In September of 1980 the "General José Maceo y Grajales Revolutionary Armed Forces Interservice School" opened its doors near Santiago de Cuba. During its first three years of operation, the school trained officers for the newly-established Territorial Militia Troops (MTT). Some warrant officers for the FAR were also trained there. Since 1983, the school has been training young men for service in the officer corps of the FAR. Most of the students come from the eastern provinces of Santiago de Cuba, Guantánamo, Gramma, Holguín, Las Tunas, Camagúey and Ciego de Avila.¹⁷ Most of the graduates serve in the Army, either in armor, artillery, motorized infantry or engineering units. The school

¹⁶ Source: U.S. Department of Defense.

¹⁷ These provinces were created in 1976 from the territory of the old provinces of Oriente and Camagúey.

offers a two-year and four-year programs of studies. A special program at this school also seems to be directed at training political and intelligence officers for the FAR for possible service in the Army.

Another new school, the "Major General Carlos Roloff Revolutionary Armed Forces Communication and Chemical Troops School," was created in 1983. The camp of the school is located in San José de las Lajas in the Province of Havana and possibly in the old facilities of the Managua Military Academy, where the pre-revolutionary officer training academy for the Army was located. The school, like most of the other academies, offers both two-year and four-year programs to train engineering specialists in communications and chemical warfare.

The Air Force (DAAFAR) opened a new pilot training school on the grounds of the old San Julian Airfield in Pinar del Rio province, which was built by the United States during WWII for anti-submarine operations in the Caribbean. The first class of the "Escuela Militar para Pilotos Aereos" (EMPA) graduated on July 13, 1984. As Brigadier General Vicente Gómez López, the key-note speaker at the graduation ceremonies, addressed the graduating class, MIG 21's flew overhead.¹⁸ Prior to the graduation of this class, all Cuban pilots were sent to the Soviet Union or countries in Eastern Europe for training. (Nicaraguans, as well as nationals of other countries, including Angola, may be receiving training at this school.)

The officer corps of the Territorial Militia Troops (MTT) are, for the most part, veterans of the regular forces, former members of the reserves and veterans of the revolution against Batista and the campaigns in the 1960's against anti-Communist guerrillas. However, a number of new MTT training centers have been set up at the provincial level throughout the country. Top officer positions in the MTT are currently filled by regular Army officers. Since it was formed in 1980, the rapid increase of this paramilitary organization to over 1,200,000 members has necessitated the creation of an officer corps of over 30,000 members. At least 17 schools were operating in 1985 to train officers for the militia.

Intelligence and Internal Security Systems

The internal security apparatus of the government has continued to improve its effectiveness in the 1980's. The principal organization in charge of intelligence collection, coun-

¹⁸ FBIS Report (July 16, 1984)

terintelligence and all facets of internal security operations is the Ministry of the Interior (MININT). This organization runs the national police, the prison system, immigration and naturalization, the national identity card system, firefighters, border guards and special forces. Very little takes place in Cuba without the knowledge of MININT.

The Department of State Security (DSE) has been very efficient in identifying and arresting enemies of the government since the 1960's. When state security officers tell a citizen to come in for interrogation or when an arrest order is issued, they already have sufficient information on hand to convict the individual. Using the vast intelligence network of MININT, any and all suspects of anti-government activities or of criminal behavior are watched around the clock. It seems to be standard policy not to harass or alert people that they are suspected of engaging in illegal acts. When MININT agents take action, their target has already been "convicted," for all practical purposes. Cuban internal security agents do not seem to make many mistakes. They are very efficient.

One of their tactics is to recruit informers from all over the country and from all social groups. The author, for example, interviewed a young Cuban male, about 21-years-old, who emigrated to the United States in the first months of 1966. He somehow had managed to avoid serving in the military, perhaps because his father is a high-level official of the government or due to the fact that he is a homosexual. He explained that he used to frequent the "La Rampa" district in Havana, in the general area where the old Hilton (now Habana Libre) hotel and several night spots are located. Often, he made contact with foreign visitors and diplomats and was driven home by them. Before long, the neighborhood CDR reported his behavior to MININT agents and he was called in for questioning. After receiving a warning not to associate with foreigners and reform his ways, the agents made a recruitment pitch. He claimed that he had no choice but to become an informer.

This young man provided some details of one of his assignments. He was given tickets to enter all functions associated with a recent international film festival in Havana. He was told to watch for people using marijuana or any other drugs, as well as for negative comments about the Cuban Government. The targets were foreign visitors, as well as Cuban nationals who were accompanying them. Infiltration may have been fairly easy, since this "informer" happens to have light brown hair, has fair skin, and is taller than the average Cuban of his age. He could pass for a foreign visitor rather well. When asked if he knew of other young people performing similar assignments, he claimed that he knew a young lady who was given 100 pesos per day to frequent night spots and keep an eye out for the "regulars" and their activities.

Other assignments included frequenting theaters, nightclubs and other locations which attract young people and foreign visitors and listen to what they were talking about. Although he did not provide details, it is possible that he was also asked to engage in homosexual acts with foreign visitors as a way of compromising them and possibly recruiting them to work as Cuban agents abroad. Cuban intelligence officers will use any and all means to carry out their assigned tasks.¹⁹

The case of this young MININT informer illustrates the extent and the effectiveness of state security forces in Cuba. For all practical purposes the anti-Communist activists, underground groups and most dissidents were either killed in combat, arrested and sentenced to long prison terms, or executed in the 1960's. As many as 40,000 people have been executed in Cuba since 1959. Except for about 1,000 former members of the Armed Forces and followers of Batista, all the others were arrested for participation in counterrevolutionary plots to overthrow the government. Some were executed after being caught trying to escape from Cuba illegally or were accused of criminal acts. At least eleven courts can sentence someone to death in the judicial system of the island.

Although the Marxist-Leninist Constitution of 1976 recognizes the right to freedom of speech and freedom of the press for all citizens, these rights and freedoms can only be exercised if they do not conflict with the goals of a Socialist society. Thus, for all practical purposes, they do not exist.²⁰

Joint Operations with the Soviet Union

Ever since the reorganization of the Cuban intelligence and military services under Soviet supervision in the early 1970's, there has been a growing cooperation between Cuban intelligence organizations and the Soviet KGB and GRU.

¹⁹ It is hard to believe that a young man with this kind of background was allowed to enter the United States. Whether or not he disclosed this information when being interviewed by immigration officials is not known. His mother, who has been divorced from his father for many years, is a U.S. citizen.

²⁰ Article 52 of the Socialist Constitution of 1976 spells out these rights and freedoms and also places a caveat based on Castro's own statements, that within the revolution everything is tolerated; outside of the revolution, nothing is tolerated.

Cuba's MINFAR, through the G-2, cooperates with GRU's "Special Branch" and "Special Center" for supporting military operations abroad. MININT agents work closely with the KGB's Department 8, Directorate S, First Chief Directorate, to collect intelligence and support revolutionary Communist groups around the world. The international departments of the Cuban and Soviet Communist Parties' also have strong working relationships and cooperate in supporting revolutionary organizations around the world.

Among the joint operations carried out by Cuban and Soviet agents is the selection, recruitment and training of Communist revolutionaries to form guerrilla operations around the world. Using Cuban training camps, foreign revolutionaries are trained in sabotage, espionage, terrorism and guerrilla warfare, to mention only a few areas. The activities of the Cuban international training program are also coordinated with East Germany, Bulgaria, North Korea, Nicaragua and other Communist countries. Cuban experts are known to have operated training camps in Cuba, Libya, Iraq, Lebanon, South Yemen and Nicaragua, in recent years. Other camps have been located in the Algeria, Congo, Angola and Mozambique.²¹

Special Forces

Among the military assets of the Cuban Government are several special forces units which seem to be controlled directly by Fidel Castro. Technically, the Special Troops are under the jurisdiction of MININT. Their numbers continue to total about 2,000 and have not changed much since they were used in the early weeks of the Angolan war in 1975, and continue to be organized into two battalions plus several specialized units. Over the years since the force was formed in 1963, training and capabilities have improved considerably. Many of the members of the force are sharpshooters and experts in the use of most infantry weapons. They are also qualified parachutists and experts in the martial arts.

The Navy (MGR) also maintains a special operations frogman unit trained in demolition, beach reconnaissance and infiltration. They may have been organized to support a new naval infantry unit created in 1979, consisting of one battalion of between 800 and 1,000 men. The formation of this naval infantry battalion coincided with the arrival of several landing ships and other amphibious equipment.

The Army also has a special Landing and Assault Brigade (BDA). This airborne infantry force consists of about 1,000 men and has the approximate size of a typical infantry battalion and is under the direct control of the Chief of Staff

²¹ Additional details will be provided on Chapter XXI.

of the Army. Like the members of the other special forces units of the Cuban military, all the members of the BDA are sharpshooters, experienced paratroopers and experts in the use of a wide range of infantry weapons. They are also trained in the martial arts and in guerrilla and counter-insurgency operations. Using the troop transport planes acquired by the Air Force (DAAFAR) since 1976, the BDA could be used for lightning attacks against neighboring islands or in Central America.

Another specialized force under MININT is the Border Guard Troops (TGF). This unit, consisting of about 4,000 members, originated as part of the Navy in 1963, and was a follow-up to the role of the pre-revolutionary Navy maritime police. The TGF are stationed around the U.S. naval base in Guantánamo and patrol the coastline and ports throughout the country. One of the principal duties of the TGF has been to capture Cubans who are trying to leave the island illegally by boat. Over the years they have killed or captured thousands of Cubans trying to escape. This unit is also in charge of intercepting landing parties trying to infiltrate the island or carry out hit-and-run attacks.

Increased and Modernized Arsenal

The U.S. Department of Defense estimates that the value of military equipment received by Cuba from the Soviet Union between 1960 and 1985 is nearly \$6 billion. It is estimated that about 60 percent of all the military assistance received from the Soviet Union has been provided between 1980 and 1985. Economic assistance to Cuba during the same period is estimated to have reached almost \$4 billion.²²

All of the weapons of the Cuban military continue to be imported from the Soviet bloc. With the exception of small arms ammunition, all the needs of the Cuban military are supplied from abroad. Nevertheless, an effort seems to be under way to create a domestic weapons industry on the island. For example, the Cuban press reported that a home-made antitank mine labelled 8-M had been designed and may start to be produced on the island.²³

²² U.S. Department of Defense, Soviet Military Power: 1986, p.128.

²³ FBIS Report (August 24, 1983)

GROWTH TRENDS IN CUBAN FORCES²⁴

| | 1975 | 1980 | 1985 |
|-------------------------|------|-------|--------|
| AIR FORCE | | | |
| MIG 23's | 0 | 12 | 45 |
| MIG 21's | 95 | 140 | 160 |
| L-39 Trainers | 0 | 0 | 30 |
| SAM Launchers | 105 | 165 | 215 |
| AN-26 Transports | 2 | 25 | 30 |
| IL-76 Transports | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| NAVY | | | |
| FOXTROT Submarines | 0 | 2 | 3 |
| KONI Frigates | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Missile Patrol Boats | 22 | 18 | 20 |
| TURYA Hydrofoils | 0 | 4 | 9 |
| POLNOCHNY Landing Ships | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| ARMY | | | |
| T-54/55 and T-62 Tanks | 300 | 720 | 1,000+ |
| Other Armored Vehicles | 120 | 1,000 | 1,200 |
| Artillery | 500* | 1,400 | 1,500 |

* Estimated

Increased Offensive Capabilities

Perhaps the most significant development in the Cuban military in the 1980's, in addition to the tremendous growth of regular, reserve and paramilitary organizations, is the acquisition of new equipment that has enhanced the country's offensive capabilities. Airborne forces have increased their capabilities with the acquisition of long-range jet transports and new smaller planes that can be used to transport troops to Central America and neighboring islands in the Caribbean. The long-range jet transports known to have been added to the Air Force are IL-76/CANDID's. These planes can carry a payload of 40 metric tons (40,000 kg.) and can also be used for troop/paratrooper transport with a capacity for between 125 and 140 men. The range of these planes with maximum payload is estimated at 4,163 nautical miles. The

²⁴ Ibid.

cruising speed is 850 km per hour. Another long-range aircraft in the Cuban arsenal is the IL-62/CLASSIC, which also has four jet engines and a range of 4,970 nautical miles with a mission payload of 23,000 kg. The cruising speed is 900 km per hour. The old Bristol Britannia airplanes used by the Cuban military to transport troops to Angola at the start of the war in 1975 are turboprops classified as medium-range aircraft. Their range is 4,266 nautical miles and their maximum mission payload is 15,831 kg. These planes cruise at about 402 km per hour. Although the range of the new planes is comparable to the old Bristol Britannias, the maximum mission payload and the speed at which it can be delivered has been substantially increased.²⁵

Smaller transport and passenger planes added in the late 1970's and early 1980's include short-range AN-26/CURL, Il-14 CRATE, AN-24/COKE, Yak-40/CODLING, and medium-range IL-18/COOT and Tu-154/CARELESS. These planes are used by both the air force and the civil aviation company Cubana de Aviacion. These short-range aircraft can deliver a mission payload of between 4,000 and 5,700 kg. from 1,200 to 1,300 miles from their base. The medium-range planes can deliver mission payloads of between 15,000 and 22,000 kg. from 3,200 to 5,200 nautical miles from their base. Together with the fleet of medium-lift and assault helicopters, such as Mi-8/HIP and Mi-4/HOUND which can transport troops to between 424 and 498 km (229 to 269 miles), the operational capabilities of the Cuban military have been extended to cover a large area around the island. The Mi-24/HIND gunship/assault helicopters with a range of 259 nautical miles, reaching targets at about 225 km (121 miles) per hour, add a new dimension to the assault capabilities of the special forces.²⁶

Military sealift capabilities have also been improved with the acquisition of amphibious warfare ships. POLNOCNY medium-size amphibious assault landing ships (LSM's) and T-4 medium landing craft (LCM's) can deliver troops and tanks to nearby islands and possibly to Nicaragua and other points in Central America, protected by missile boats, KONI Frigates and air force planes. The military can also call on the resources of the merchant and fishing fleets, as in the case of Angola in 1975 and 1976, to supplement the equipment owned and operated by the navy.

²⁵ Cubana Airlines has at least eight IL-62 M/CLASSIC's which can carry from 114 to 168 soldiers and at least two IL-76/CANDID airplanes.

²⁶ The DAAFAR has at least 30 An-26's which can carry between 38 and 40 soldiers; it also has at least twenty four AN-24's and four YAK-40's. Cubana Airlines has at least three TU-154's.

Domestic Reaction to Foreign Wars

Although participation in "internationalist" duties is supposed to be voluntary, refusal to participate can have very negative effects on one's present and future in Cuban society. Those who refuse to go to fight in Africa have been thrown out of school and others have lost their jobs.²⁷ Supporters of the government say that they are ready to go anywhere they are needed in support of internationalist causes. One thing is certain, the wars overseas, particularly in Africa, have caused many casualties and a substantial amount of pain to Cuban families. Thousands of young men have been killed and many more have been scarred for life. As the war in Angola continues with no end in site, the possibility of domestic problems in Cuba increase. However, it is impossible to predict what may happen in the future due to the "internationalist" policies of the government.

The Economy in the 1980's

After almost 30 years of Marxist-Leninist rule, the economy continues to look very much like the economy of the island before the revolution. It continues to be tied to one product-- sugar. The goal of expanding markets for Cuban products has also failed. Cuba continues to have one principal market. The difference is that instead of depending on the United States market, Cuba now is dependent on the Soviet Union. Despite the creation of the National Planning Council (JUCEPLAN) in the early 1970's, the planning is very superficial and often fails to produce cost-benefit analysis of projects before they are started. As a result, several major investment projects have failed to produce any profits. Financial discipline is as lacking today as it was in the first years after the revolution. The economic model continues to be changed periodically, often because of the overwhelming power of Fidel Castro. If he decides to change something, he does; without listening to his technical advisers. Finally, moral incentives have not worked. Like most people, Cubans prefer to work for material rewards. The lesson seemed to have been learned in the early 1970's. Now, after several years moving toward some degree of material incentives and some private production and marketing of agricultural products in particular, the government has gone back to old prohibitions. The system is confusing and the people are confused. The result borders of economic chaos.

²⁷ Migdall, Carl J. "How African War is Hitting Home in Cuba," U.S. News and World Report (June 19, 1978).

The country has been hard hit by the decline in world market prices of the country's leading exports. The world price for sugar (No. 11) started the decade in 1980 at an average price of U.S. \$0.29 per pound. By 1981 the average price of sugar in the world market had declined by about 50 percent to U.S. \$0.17 per pound. By 1982 it had once again dropped by another 50 percent to about U.S. \$0.085 per pound, and by 1984 the price had fallen further to about U.S. \$0.05 per pound. The Cuban Government income for the export of sugar had declined in real terms even further, with the estimated sale price of sugar FOB Cuba by December of 1984 placed at about U.S. \$0.36 per pound. Despite numerous public statements over 25 years of revolution to the effect that a major effort was being made to diversify exports, the economy of the island continued to depend on sugar exports.

One of the new exports developed by the Cuban Government in the 1970's were petroleum and petroleum products. These products produced about 40 percent of the country's income from exports. Crude obtained from the Soviet Union at low prices through barter and special trade agreements in excess of the country's needs was sold in the spot market. As the price of crude oil doubled from about about U.S. \$12.00 to about U.S. \$30.00 per barrel in 1979, Cuba gained an estimated U.S. \$300 to \$400 million per year as an oil trader. When the price of crude oil in the spot market dropped to about U.S. \$15.00 per barrel on average at the end of 1985 and throughout 1986, the income from trading on oil vanished overnight.

The Cuban Government found itself unable to meet payment on the country's debt with Western countries estimated at U.S. \$3.3 billion at the beginning of 1985. The amount of Cuba's debt with Communist countries is not known precisely, but is estimated to top U.S. \$22 billion. Since the beginning of 1985 Cuba has been trying to reschedule its payments to the West without much success. On the one hand the Cuban authorities present their economic situation as being serious and needing international assistance, and on the other hand they claim that the country has been able to achieve a growth rate in the first half of the 1980's of 7.4 percent. The figures and the analysis seem to be incompatible with the reality: the country is broke.

The Cuban Government's official budget for 1985 showed expenditures related to defense of approximately U.S. \$1.764 billion. This understated figure is equivalent to about 13 percent of the national budget. The budget only targets about 6.41 percent to housing and community services and about 22.6 percent to education and public health. The figures for defense and "domestic order" certainly do not reflect the millions of dollars in Soviet military assistance

given to Cuba annually.²⁸ Despite the serious economic crisis facing Cuba, the government continues to spend a substantial percentage of the national budget in weapons and overseas adventures.

Third Congress of the Cuban Communist Party: 1986

The Third Congress of the Cuban Communist Party was held in February of 1986. In his keynote address to the Congress Fidel Castro discussed what he called "renovacion amplia" or extensive renovation of the leadership of the CCP. He claimed that before this congress, all attempts to promote younger people had been largely symbolic. The time had come to graduate some of the old members and bring young men and women to the hierarchy of the party. However, an analysis of the results of this renovation shows that it was the military and the intelligence communities, which took it on the chin.

The Ministry of the Interior (MININT) was without a doubt the hardest hit group. Minister Ramiro Valdés was removed and replaced by his deputy, General José Abrahantes Fernández. Valdés was not only removed from the leadership of MININT but was also taken out of the powerful politburo of the party. Abrahantes was not named to replace him in that capacity. Division General José Joaquín Méndez Cominches, who had served as Vice Minister of MININT and as a member of the Central Committee of the CCP, was also removed from the CCP leadership. The reason for these removals seems to have been the failure of the intelligence community in Grenada, leading to the collapse of the Cuban-supported government of that island. Only their long service to the revolution may have prevented stronger punishment.²⁹ MININT positions among the top leadership of the party was reduced from seven to three.

²⁸ For more detail information on the Cuban economy in the mid 1980's, see: Cuba's Financial Crisis: The Secret Report from the National Bank of Cuba (Washington, D.C.: The Cuban-American National Foundation, Inc, 1985). This booklet presents the alleged copy of the report submitted by the Cuban National Bank to Western creditors in February of 1985 as part of its efforts to reschedule the payments of the Cuban debt with Western governments and banks. Dr. Jorge A. Sanguinetti, former head of the National Investment Planning Department of the Cuban Central Planning Board (JUCEPLAN), presents an analysis of the Cuban economy in the introduction.

²⁹ During his speech, Fidel Castro mentioned some highlights of the revolutionary record of Ramiro Valdés. He had participated in the assault on the Moncada barracks in 1953 and in the Gramma expedition in 1956. He fought in several of the principal campaigns of the guerrilla war against Batista and

The Navy (MGR) was also hit hard by the changes in the leadership of the party. Before the 1986 CCP congress, the Navy had four men in the Central Committee. It came out of the congress with none. In general, the Armed Forces did not do well. However, there were exceptions. Division General Abelardo Colomé Ibarra made a tremendous jump to an important position in the Politburo, bypassing other important flag rank officers. General Colomé, a veteran of the guerrilla war against Batista, participated in the African campaigns in the 1970's, and has distinguished himself as a good officer. In January of 1984, he was awarded the title of Hero of the Republic of Cuba and the Order of Máximo Gómez for his "extraordinary merits." Particularly significant is that his promotion came over that of Division General Senén Casas Regueiro, who seemed to have been a stronger contender for full membership in the Politburo sometime back.

Another military alternate member of the Politburo who failed to retain his seat or move up to full membership was Division General Sixto Batista Santana. In 1980, General Batista had been awarded the Bulgarian George Dimitrov 100th Birthday Commemorative Medal together with Generals Abelardo Colomé Ibarra and Ulises Rosales del Toro. He was granted other awards and commanded substantial prestige. Prior to the Congress, General Batista Santana seemed to be one of the leading political/military figures in the country. However, something happened to apparently derail his progress in the organization.

As in the First Congress in 1976 and the Second Congress in 1981, a large foreign delegation representing many sister organizations was invited to participate as observers. According to Castro's own words, delegates from 196 countries were seated. Among the figures present were Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua and representatives of Communist guerrilla organizations from Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala, South Africa (ANC), the old Spanish Sahara and Palestine. Also present were delegates from Haiti, Uruguay, Argentina, Zimbabwe, Algeria, Syria, Campuchea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Angola and even Henry Winston, representing the Communist Party USA. Castro made it clear that Cuba would continue to support so-called wars of national liberation throughout the world.

Balance of the First Six Years of the Third Decade

In the wake of the Congress, the Cuban Government will probably continue to expand and improve its military forces. A major effort will be made to increase political

served the revolution in many different capacities since 1959.

indoctrination of the troops to promote greater loyalty to the Communist cause. Political activists will also increase their efforts to maintain the population at large in a high state of alert for waging popular war in case of an American attack against the island. Higher discipline will also probably be stressed at both MININT and MINFAR. The purges that took place in preparation for the party congress may not be over. It is obvious that Castro will not tolerate defeat or failure to follow his orders. The failures associated with Grenada will not be easily repeated if Castro has a say.

The radicalization of the regime after almost thirty years in power will not solve many pressing problems in the economy. Petty thefts and violent crimes are already forcing the government to expand police protection. The economic downturn and the unsatisfactory performance of the government in matching the material advancement of the Cubans who left the country are already fueling social discontent and creating a crime wave. One possible scenario is a further deterioration of the economy as the energies of the government are diverted more and more toward the military.

A new rift between the Cuban and Soviet leadership may also be developing, as happened in the late 1960's. While the present Soviet leadership seems to be trying to carry out reforms to liberalize some areas of the Soviet economy, Castro is moving in the opposite direction. He is radicalizing the regime and moving back to strict government control over all areas of the economy. The results so far have worsened the Cuban economy and the Soviets have been forced to increase their level of economic support to Cuba, which has been estimated to be as high as U.S. \$6 billion per year.

The next few years will also be critical for the development of new and younger leaders. When Castro defeated Batista on January 1, 1959, there were about 36 "comandantes" of the revolution. Most of them are dead, retired, or approaching retirement. Other "comandantes" defected when Castro moved toward an alliance with the Communists. Many of the original members of the revolutionary leadership refused to accept Communism and became enemies of the regime. Soon the revolution will be faced with a new challenge. Will the older generals retire and open the doors for the lieutenant colonels and colonels to be promoted? Will the "renovación amplia" that Fidel Castro mentioned in his key-note address to the Third Party Congress take place? The best bet is that the old timers will not want to give up their positions. The veterans of the African wars may present a serious challenge to the present leadership, particularly if the economy of the country deteriorates even further.

CURRENT PRINCIPAL CUBAN COMMUNIST LEADERS

Central Committee - Politburo

1981

First Secretary
Fidel Castro, Cdr. in Chief

Second Secretary
Raul Castro, Gen. of the Army

MEMBERS

Almeida Bosque, Juan
Camacho Aguilera, Julio
Cienfuegos, Osmani
Hart Davalos, Armando
Machado Centura, Jose R.
Miret Prieto, Pedro
Risquet Valdés, Jorge
Rodríguez, Carlos Rafael
García Frias, Guillermo*
Roca Calderío, Blas*
Valdés Menéndez, Ramiro*
Valle, Sergio del*

1986

First Secretary
Fidel Castro, Cdr. in Chief

Second Secretary
Raul Castro, Gen. of the Army

MEMBERS

Almeida Bosque, Juan
Camacho Aguilera, Julio
Cienfuegos, Osmani
** Colomé, Gen. Abelardo
** Espin de Castro, Vilma
Hart Davalos, Armando
** Lazo Hernández, Estevan
Machado Ventura, José R.
Miret Prieto, Pedro
Risquet Valdés, Jorge
Rodríguez, Carlos Rafael
** Veiga Menéndez, Roberto

Alternate Members

Acosta, Armando *
Batista, Gen. Sixto*
Cano, Miguel J.*
Casas, Gen. Senén
Colomé, Gen. Abelardo ***
Espin de Castro, Vilma ***
Montané, Jesús*
Pérez, Antonio*
Pérez, Humberto*
Ramírez, José G.
Veiga Menéndez, Roberto*

**Alvarez, Luis
Casas, Gen. Senén
**Fernández, José R.
**Ferrer, Yolanda
**Michel, Raul
Ramírez, José G.
**Rizo, Julian
**Rosales, Gen. Ulises
**Simeón, Rosa Elena
**Vázquez, Lázaro

* Out in 1986

** New in 1986

*** Promoted in 1986

MILITARY TRAINING BEGINS AT AN EARLY AGE



Cuban children training with AK-47 assault rifles.



Picture published in the Cuban Armed Forces magazine Verde Olivo explains that through the efforts of the Society for Patriotic Military Education (SEPME) the new generation of children are learning to shoot well.

Source: U.S. Department of Defense

AFRICA

COUNTRY YEAR OF
INDEPENDENCE

| | |
|-----------------------|------|
| Liberia | 1847 |
| South Africa | 1910 |
| Egypt | 1922 |
| Ethiopia | 1941 |
| Libya | 1951 |
| Tunisia | 1956 |
| Morocco | 1956 |
| Sudan | 1956 |
| Ghana | 1957 |
| Guinea | 1958 |
| Mauritania | 1960 |
| Mali | 1960 |
| Senegal | 1960 |
| Ivory Coast | 1960 |
| Volta | 1960 |
| Togo | 1960 |
| Camaroun | 1960 |
| Dahomey / Benin | 1960 |
| Gabon | 1960 |
| Congo (Brazzaville) | 1960 |
| Congo (Leopoldville) | 1960 |
| Central African Rep. | 1960 |
| Somali Republic | 1960 |
| Malagasy Republic | 1960 |
| Chad | 1960 |
| Niger | 1960 |
| Sierra Leone | 1961 |
| Tanzania | 1961 |
| Algeria | 1962 |
| Rwanda | 1962 |
| Burundi | 1962 |
| Uganda | 1962 |
| Kenya | 1963 |
| Malawi | 1964 |
| Zambia | 1964 |
| Gambia | 1965 |
| Angola | 1975 |
| Mozambique | 1975 |
| Guinea / Bissau | 1975 |
| Cape Verde | 1975 |
| Sao Tomé and Principe | 1975 |



CUBAN OVERSEAS MILITARY OPERATIONS IN AFRICA

The Cuban Armed Forces have been very active in the African continent since at least 1963. At the present time there are between 45,000 and 60,000 Cuban military and civilian personnel stationed throughout Africa, with the largest concentrations in Angola and Ethiopia. Readers may need to refer to this map often as they read the following chapter in order to better understand the complicated African politics that have followed the end of colonial rule over the past 30 years.

XXI. CUBAN MILITARY ADVENTURES ABROAD (1959-1986)

Cuban military involvement in foreign countries has taken many different forms in the past 27 years. The Revolutionary Government has given military training, logistical support, weapons and combat troops to revolutionary groups and friendly governments throughout the world. Thousands of Cuban soldiers have participated in guerrilla operations, civil and conventional wars. The experience gained over so many years of conventional and unconventional warfare has made the Cuban military establishment one of the most effective in the world. This chapter outlines the highlights of this growing outward projection of military power to other countries.

There are at least five distinct phases of Cuban military involvement overseas. The first phase, in the period from 1959 to 1965, can best be described as a learning process. At least 20 revolutionary groups in Latin America were given direct assistance by veterans of the revolution against Batista. Most of these efforts to export the revolution failed, for many different reasons. At the same time, the Cuban Revolutionary Government was in the process of establishing contacts with African anti-colonialist movements and newly independent countries. The Cuban leaders went as far as to send combat troops to Algeria in 1963 to help that country fight a war with Morocco. Contacts developed throughout Africa in the early sixties were to result in a major commitment in the 1970's and 1980's. But the learning process in Africa was long and, as in Latin America, not without mistakes.

The second phase, between 1966 and 1969, was very difficult and resulted in several major failures. It started with a great deal of hope and fanfare at the Tri-Continental Congress held in Havana in 1966, with a promise of world-wide revolution and ended on a sour note with several major setbacks. An untold number of Cubans, most of them veterans of the revolution against Batista, died in unsuccessful attempts to assist revolutionaries around the world to take power. Perhaps the worst failure was that of Ernesto "Che" Guevara in Bolivia in 1967. Cuba was strongly criticized for interfering in the internal affairs of native revolutionary movements and Communist parties, as well as for attempting to impose the Cuban revolutionary model on others. The divisions that resulted in many of these revolutionary groups was partially responsible for major setbacks like the one suffered in Bolivia. Relations with the Soviet Union were also strained as a result of the Cuban policies. The many failures in this period, particularly in Latin America, forced a rethinking of the strategy and goals of Cuban military involvement abroad.

In the third phase, from 1970 to 1975, the tactics of exporting the revolution changed. In the 1960's, the tactics had been to organize rural-based insurgency movements with Cubans or their allies often attempting to promote revolution on their own without forming alliances of coalitions with other revolutionary groups. In the 1970's the new tactics called for urban-based insurgency movements and an effort was made to form coalitions of revolutionary organizations. The Cuban Government made a major effort to establish diplomatic ties with developing countries and change its image in the world community. In Latin America an effort was made to re-open diplomatic ties which had been broken in the early 1960's. In Africa, Cuba strengthened ties with revolutionary movements and the governments of the new independent nations. Cuban military personnel were sent to train military forces for several of these young nations. They were also sent to act as body guards for revolutionary leaders who had been able to take power, but still faced many political enemies. Cuban civilians were sent in large numbers to provide medical, educational and technical services to civilians. In addition, thousands of foreign students were given scholarships to study in Cuba.

In the Middle East, the Cuban leadership was able to establish close ties with Arab revolutionary leaders. The defeat of the Arab armies in the 1967 war with Israel provided Cuba an avenue to develop strong friendships with the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and other organizations which claimed that Israel was an extension of American imperialism in that part of the world. Arab guerrillas were given training in Cuba and Cuban troops were sent to the region to support training programs and to reenforce Arab armies. When the 1973 Arab-Israeli war broke out, Cuban combat troops were present in Syria, operating tanks and armored vehicles and providing logistical support.

During the fourth phase from 1975 to 1980, Cuban military involvement abroad underwent a major and important change. Thousands of Cuban soldiers were sent to Africa to fight as conventional units in Angola and Ethiopia. These major military efforts were carried out by younger soldiers who had not participated in the revolution against Batista. They were the product of the revolution after years of political and technical training. A new military order was born as a result of these experiences.

¹ Some of the higher ranking troop commanders were indeed veterans of the revolution against Batista, however, the majority of the young men sent to Angola were very young children in the late 1950's.

In the fifth phase, during the 1980's, Cuban military units have been caught up in a protracted war in Angola with no end in sight. Thousands of soldiers have been rotated through a difficult and bloody war. Thousands have been killed and estimates of casualties run as high as 10,000 since 1975. At the same time a new cadre of experienced military leaders has been formed. These men are experienced and respected both inside and outside of Cuba. The Grenada incident in 1983, however, brought about a major defeat. Cuban troops faced the American military for the first time and were defeated. An important aspect of Grenada was not the defeat but the failure to follow orders and fight to the end. Only token resistance was made by about three dozen men while the rest ran for safety and/or surrendered. This has not deterred the Cuban leaders from continuing to expand their military commitments to the spread of Communism. Now, in fact, most of the Cuban soldiers had not been born in 1959 when Fidel Castro captured power in Cuba. A new generation of soldiers is in the process of taking over the Cuban military establishment. Within 10 years all the old timers will be gone and the soldiers who are now participating in foreign experiences will be running the country.

Each one of the five phases outlined above has been subdivided by regions of the world. An attempt has been made to provide the reader basic information on the political history of each country where Cuban troops have been active. For most people, African history in the past thirty years is very confusing and difficult to understand. But without some minimal knowledge of African affairs it is impossible to gain an understanding of Cuban policies and military activities.

PHASE I (1959-1965)

WESTERN HEMISPHERE

The Cuban Revolutionary Government has been training Latin American revolutionaries in Cuba and providing material assistance to revolutionary groups throughout the Western Hemisphere since the overthrow of Batista on January 1, 1959. In the early years Cuba provided assistance to revolutionaries from the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Colombia, Argentina, Panama, Guatemala and other countries in the region. Fidel Castro bragged of turning the Andes into the Sierra Maestra of South America. For some members of the Cuban leadership, including Fidel Castro, the survival of the Cuban Revolution depended on the start of revolutions throughout the continent. However, most of these attempts to export the revolution ended in complete failure.

Dominican Republic

The first incident started on June 14, 1959, when 56 men who had departed from Cuba landed at Constanza in the mountains of the Dominican Republic, to start a guerrilla war to overthrow Dominican dictator Rafael L. Trujillo.² Six days later, on June 20th, another group of 140 men who had also departed from Cuba, landed in the north coast of the Dominican Republic to join forces with the first group. Within days, the Dominican military had killed or captured most of them.

Several Dominicans who had been living in exile in Cuba had joined the anti-Batista guerrillas. Some of them had become officers and had made strong friendships with their Cuban

² On April 25, 1959, a group of about 80 men landed in Panama and took over a small coastal town in an effort to start a revolution to overthrow President Adolfo de la Guardia. The leader of the group was a Panamanian who owned a night club in Havana, who may have had the idea of duplicating the Cuban revolution in his home country. The group surrendered within days. The Cuban Government denied any knowledge or involvement in this adventure and the author has not been able to find evidence to prove otherwise. For this reason, this Dominican incident rates as the first Cuban military operation abroad after 1959.

comrades.³ After the defeat of Batista some Cuban revolutionaries wanted to assist their Dominican friends to overthrow Trujillo. The fact that Batista and many of his henchmen had sought refuge in Santo Domingo added to the Cubans' desires to participate in the Dominican revolutionary movement.⁴

According to press reports some 70 well-armed Cubans and Dominicans landed in the Dominican Republic. The Dominican Government claimed that its intelligence service had penetrated the group, and had been informed of the upcoming landing. The Dominicans were waiting to defeat them. They presented Captain Juan de Dios Ventura as the man who had carried out the intelligence operation. But regardless of whether or not they had penetrated the group, the Dominican Armed Forces defeated the invasion. Captain Enrique Jiménez Moya, one of the alleged leaders of the expedition was killed early in the invasion. Major Delio Gómez Ochoa, the leader of the invasion, was captured and after a period in jail in the Dominican Republic was repatriated to Cuba.⁵

The Dominican Government claimed that three Cuban Navy frigates, the "Máximo Gómez," the "José Martí" and the "Antonio Maceo" had escorted the expeditionary ships "Carmen Elisa" and "Tinima" to an area near the Dominican coast. They also showed evidence of substantial Cuban assistance to the expedition. However, interviews conducted by the author with several Dominicans who participated in this adventure provided a different picture of the Cuban Government's actions. Their account of what took place follows.

Soon after the overthrow of Batista, Dominican exiles living in the United States, mostly in the New York City area, flew to Cuba to join in an effort to overthrow Trujillo. Several Cubans and Puerto Ricans also joined the conspiracy and were given assistance by the Cuban Government. At some point, however, the Cuban Government clashed with the Dominican

³ The tradition of Dominicans fighting in revolutions in Cuba went back as far as the 1860's when many Dominicans joined the Cuban struggle for independence. In fact, as was mentioned in previous chapters, a Dominican, General Máximo Gómez, had become the Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Independence. His grandson has been in Cuban jails for many years for participating in counterrevolutionary activities.

⁴ Readers may remember that as far back as 1947 Fidel Castro, during his student days, had participated in the failed attempt to overthrow Trujillo. It was known as the Cayo Confites incident.

⁵ Gómez Ochoa seems to have fallen in disfavor and has not surfaced again.

leadership and forced them to expedite the preparations for the expedition or get out of Cuba. Cuban ships had in fact provided an escort, but at the last minute, a large number of the members of the expeditionary force were taken into custody and returned to Havana. They were threatened with execution and were close to being shot by firing squad. What saved them was the quick intervention by a United States consular officer who, upon learning that U.S. citizens had been detained and were about to be executed went to the prisons and forced his way in to search for them.⁶ Thanks to his efforts, the prisoners were found and the government was coerced into releasing them. Many of these old Dominican revolutionaries, some of whom were Marxists, now have a strong dislike for Fidel Castro and the Cuban Government.

Trujillo feared for the stability of his regime because of the threat of Fidel Castro and his followers. The incident in June of 1959 led him to fund a project to overthrow the Cuban Government. Mercenaries from Europe, as well as followers of Batista, including former Army officers were hired to organize an expeditionary force. An effort was also made to recruit Cubans on the island, including members of the Armed Forces to join in the conspiracy. The group was infiltrated by Castro's intelligence. Weapons were dropped by parachute to guerrillas in the Escambray Mountains. An airplane with men and supplies were captured in 1961. Major William Morgan, an American who had joined the revolution against Batista and reached the highest rank in the Rebel Army, was implicated in the conspiracy, arrested and executed by firing squad in March of 1961.

Trujillo attempted to eliminate his principal international enemies, who at the time were Fidel Castro and President Rómulo Betancourt of Venezuela. As a result of one of Trujillo's plots to kill Betancourt, the Organization of American States, at a meeting of foreign ministers in Costa Rica in 1960, declared sanctions against the Dominican Republic. The following year, Trujillo was assassinated by a group of conspirators as he returned to Santo Domingo from visiting a lady friend in San Cristobal. In 1962, elections were held and Juan Bosch was elected President with the assistance of Cuban exiles. The Cubans were members of the old Partido

⁶ The U.S. citizens were the Puerto Ricans in the group.

⁷ For additional information on this incident see: "Dominican Fighting Reported by Exiles," New York Times (June 22, 1959), p.10, col.3; "Trujillo Reported to Crush Invasion Backed by Cuba," New York Times (June 24, 1959) p.1, col.6; "Cuban Regime Cuts Ties With Trujillo," (June 27, 1959), col. 7, p.1. "Trujillo Shows Armed Strength," New York Times (June 29, 1959), p.8.

Auténtico, who had provided Bosch with sinecures in Cuba in the late 1940's when he lived there as a political exile.

The arrangement between Bosch and the Cuban exiles was that if he won the elections, he would provide them assistance to organize a movement to overthrow Fidel Castro. One of Bosch's sons had even received training to participate in the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961, but never participated in the landing. However, within a few months after his election, Bosch failed to provide the Cubans the help he had promised, although he did provide them economic assistance. Some were given sugar quotas so that they could plant cane fields and sell their production to the United States. The Cuban exiles withdrew their support feeling betrayed and before long Bosch was overthrown by right-wing military officers.⁶

On April 24, 1965, a rebellion led by followers of Juan Bosch and Communists started to overthrow Donald Reid, who had been named president with the support of right-wing military officers. Some police and Army officers backed the rebellion while the Air Force, the Navy and other elements of the Armed Forces backed the government. The rebel troops were led by Police Colonel Francisco Caamaño Deñó and the loyalist troops by Colonel José Wessin y Wessin. Cuban-trained Dominican revolutionaries took an active part in the bloody fighting in downtown Santo Domingo. Within four days United States Marines landed to separate the different groups and prevent Bosch and his Communist supporters from taking power. Five Latin American countries under the flag of the Organization of American States (OAS) also sent troops to help maintain the peace. Elections were held in 1966 under the supervision of the OAS and Joaquín Balaguer was elected president, defeating Juan Bosch by a 3-2 margin.

A frustrated Juan Bosch turned to the left and established close ties with the Cuban Government. Different leftist revolutionary groups, some with Cuban assistance, continued to promote revolution in the late 1960's and early 1970's. A right-wing group called "La Banda," tracked down leftists be-

⁸ The support of the Cuban exiles was very important for Bosch. Many of these Cubans were activists who had considerable amount of military and/or revolutionary experience in Cuba. They provided with Bosch a group of "cowboys" to surround himself to prevent right-wing military officers with strong ties to the Trujillo regime from attempting to overthrow his government. Without these "cowboys" helping to protect the president, the military had nothing to fear.

⁹ Several Cuban exiles, who had participated in the Bay of Pigs invasion and had joined the United States Armed Forces upon their release in 1962, participated in the landing of American troops in the Dominican Republic.

tween 1966 and 1971, and either killed them or forced them to leave the country. Colonel Francisco Alberto Caamaño Deñó, who had led the revolutionaries in the 1965 rebellion went to Cuba and organized a landing force to overthrow the Balaguer government. In February of 1973 Caamaño and a group of 10 men landed on the south coast of the Dominican Republic and attempted to start a guerrilla movement. However, within 15 days they had all been killed by the military. In 1975 another small group again attempted to start guerrilla operations but were also defeated.

Venezuela and Colombia

Starting in 1960, the Cuban Government began to denounce the leaders of Venezuela and Colombia as puppets of the United States and to provoke demonstrations in support of the Cuban revolution. Local revolutionaries were encouraged to copy the Cuban example. Cuban agents distributed handbooks on guerrilla warfare and trained cadres in these and several other Latin American countries. Both Venezuela and Colombia broke diplomatic relations with Cuba

During 1961, Cuban-sponsored guerrilla organizations were formed in Venezuela and Colombia. The three principal Communist organizations in Venezuela in the early 1960's were the Venezuelan Communist Party, the Movimiento Insurreccional Revolucionario and the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional (FALN). The Communist Party did not favor the armed struggle supported by the other two groups but did provide some assistance to them. The principal tactic of the revolutionary groups was to organize the poor residents of the barrios on the hills that surround the capital of Caracas into an effective urban underground and guerrilla movement. One of their goals was to disrupt the general elections scheduled for December, 1963.

The Venezuelan people had been able to reestablish a democratic system of government after the overthrow of dictator Marcos Pérez Jiménez on January 23, 1958. Under the leadership of a coalition formed by the Acción Democrática (AD), Partido Social Cristiano (COPEI) and Unión Republicana Democrática political stability had returned after years of dictatorial rule. Despite the Cuban inspired violence, President Rómulo Betancourt, of the Christian Democratic Party was able to transfer power to Raul Leoni, leader of the Acción Democrática Party after fair and democratic elections. AD is a member of the International Socialist Movement.

One of the principal leaders of the Venezuelan revolutionaries receiving Cuban aid was Fabricio Ojeda, who was killed in combat in 1966. The Venezuelan Armed Forces seemed to have been effective in defeating the guerrillas by 1966. However,

some guerrilla operations continued in the mountains of Yaracuy and Falcón. Cuban exiles living in Venezuela provided considerable assistance to the Venezuelan military in the struggle against the guerrillas. Despite the defeat of most of the Venezuelan guerrilla groups by 1966, infiltration by Cubans military personnel to support Venezuelan revolutionaries continued. For example, Antonio Briones Mototo, a Cuban Army officer, was killed in combat with Venezuelan Army units on May 8, 1967, at the Machurucutu Beach.

The Cuban Embassy in Colombia was equally as active as the one in Venezuela. Cuban officials directed anti-government demonstrations and encouraged leftists to take to the fields and copy the Cuban example. One of the principal leader of the Colombian revolutionary groups receiving Cuban assistance was Camilo Torres, a former Catholic priest. He was killed in 1966 in combat with the Colombian Army. In Santander the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) under the direction of Fabio Vázquez, continued to operate throughout 1966 and 1967, as "Che" Guevara attempted to start a guerrilla movement in Bolivia. A major difference between Venezuela and Colombia is that guerrilla warfare in Colombia has continued uninterrupted to the present.¹⁰

Guatemala

While Cuban exiles were being trained in Guatemala and Nicaragua in 1960 for the ill-fated Bay of Pigs invasion, pro-Cuban revolutionaries were forming guerrilla units in both countries. Former Guatemalan President Jacobo Arbenz was given sanctuary in Cuba and given a forum to promote revolution in his homeland. Carlos Fonseca Amador, founder of the Frente Sandinista de Liberación (FSLN) in Nicaragua was also given refuge in Cuba. By 1962, Cuban sponsored guerrilla units were active in Guatemala under the leadership of Captain Marco Antonio Yon Sosa and other friends of Ernesto "Che" Guevara.¹¹ Yon Sosa led the the 13th of Novem-

¹⁰ Several revolutionary organizations are active in both rural and urban areas. At the present time the following guerrilla groups are active in Colombia: 19th of April Movement (M-19), National Liberation Army (ELN), Ricardo Franco Front (RFF), People's Liberation Army (EPL), and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). They operate in Bogotá, Medellín, Cali, Santander and Barrancabermeja. All of them have received some degree of support from the Cuban Government. Possibly the group with the strongest ties to Cuba is the M-19, which was formed by Jaime Bateman, a strong supporter of the Cuban leadership.

¹¹ Some authors spell his name as "Jon" Sosa.

ber Movement. Another important guerrilla organization with Cuban support was the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias (FAR), led by Major César Montes and Turcios Lima. In 1966, the FAR had about 300 men operating in the area of Zacapa and Izabal. These groups were defeated by the Guatemalan military, in a military offensive conducted by Arana Osorio. Turcios Lima was killed in a car accident on October 2, 1966. Yon Sosa was killed in combat in 1970.

One of Ernesto "Che" Guevara's old friends, a Guatemalan named Julio Roberto Caceres Valle, known as "El Patojo," was one of the revolutionaries who received some assistance from Cuba. He had gone to Mexico with Guevara after the overthrow of the Arbenz regime in 1954, and had been close to joining the Granma expedition in 1956. However, Fidel Castro did not allow him to participate for fear of bringing too many foreigners into the group. After the victory of the revolution, "El Patojo" went to Cuba and was given employment by Guevara in the National Institute of Agrarian Reform.¹² He was a member of the Partido Guatemalteco del Trabajo and a revolutionary who wanted to emulate in his own country what had taken place in Cuba. According to Guevara, he left without military training to join a guerrilla unit in his country. Although this may be true, it is doubtful. He was one of the guerrillas killed in battle with the Guatemalan army.¹³

Cuban involvement was not limited to providing moral support, weapons and training. At least some Cuban veterans of the revolution against Batista went to Guatemala to take an active role in the guerrilla war. In July of 1963, one of Guevara's closest aides, Captain José María Martínez Tamayo arrived in Bolivia, after completing a mission in Guatemala. This "mission" took place as the world followed the events of the missile crisis of October 1962.¹⁴

New guerrilla organizations became active in Guatemala in the 1970's and have remained active throughout the 1980's. They

¹² Guevara, Reminiscences of the Cuban Revolutionary War, op. cit. pp. 31-35.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Regis Debray, La Guerrilla del Che (Mexico: Siglo XXI, 1985), p. 29. In the early 1970's, several new guerrilla organizations were formed in Argentina which were hoping to take power by force. The three largest organizations were the Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo (ERP), the Montoneros and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias (FAR). The ERP and the FAR had strong ties to Cuba, whereas the Montoneros were formed as a splinter group of the Peronist Party. However, the Montoneros also established contact with the Cuban Government and ended up locating their headquarters in Havana.

have continued to receive assistance from the Cuban military. The groups presently active are the Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP), the Rebel Armed Forces (FAR) and the Armed People's Organization (ORPA). All of these organizations receive Cuban assistance to one degree or another.¹⁵

Chile, Peru and Ecuador

Chile is one of the few Latin American countries that was able to develop a long tradition of stable and democratic governments elected by popular election. Despite the fact that there were strong Socialist and Communist organizations, they did not favor the use of force. The Chilean people also rejected the revolutionary violence represented by Cuba. However, a small organization with Cuban support, the Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (MIR), was formed in the early sixties. This group, with strong connections to Peruvian revolutionaries, favored the start of a guerrilla campaign to take power in both countries. Among the leaders of this organization were Luis de la Puente Uceda and Guillermo Lobatón. Both of them were killed in Perú in 1965.¹⁶

¹⁵ The Spanish names for these guerrilla organizations are:

Fuerzas Armadas Rebeldes (FAR)- active in the 1970's in urban guerrilla warfare;

Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias (FAR)- associated with the Communist Party of Guatemala;

Ejército Guerrillero de los Pobres (EGP)- possibly the largest of all the guerrilla organizations in the country with as many as 1,500 members;

Organización del Pueblo en Armas (ORPA)- this guerrilla organization was formed around 1980 and may not be associated with Communist guerrillas. It is one of the most active in rural areas and has fought many battles with the Guatemalan army.

¹⁶ The MIR picked up strength during the administration of Salvador Allende in Chile and often confronted him with calls for radicalization of his administration. After the overthrow of Allende in 1973, MIR started guerrilla war against the Pinochet regime. At least 100 members of the organization have been trained in Cuba and some have returned to Chile. Another new guerrilla organization formed after the overthrow of Allende to fight against Pinochet is the Milicia Popular de Resistencia (MPR). This organization is based in

Cuban sponsored guerrillas were also active in Ecuador during 1962 and 1963, but were defeated by the Ecuadorean Army. The following year, in 1963, Cuban sponsored guerrilla units started operations in Peru but were also routed by the Peruvian Army. One of the Peruvian guerrilla groups, the Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional (ELN) was practically wiped out on May 15, 1963, as it entered the country at Puerto Maldonado from a training base in Bolivia. One of the leaders of the group, Javier Heraud was killed. Others, including Hector Bejar and Juan Pablo Chang, escaped to Bolivia. Other members, including Luis de la Puente, were killed in combat with the Peruvian Armed Forces in 1965.¹⁷

Luis de la Puente Uceda was an ex-member of the Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana (APRA), formed by Victor Raul Haya de la Torre, with former members of the Peruvian Communist Party. Haya de la Torre wanted to find domestic inspiration for revolutionary movements to carry out economic and political reform instead of importing Marxism, which he considered an ideology foreign to Latin America. Luis de la Puente broke away from APRA and became a founding member of the ELN. He believed in the "Che" Guevara philosophy of creating revolutionary conditions by means of the direct action of the insurreccional process. He attacked members of Marxist parties who maintained that the objective and subjective conditions for starting an insurrection were not present in Peru. Together with his followers, and influenced by the Cuban leadership, he proposed that the exploited masses capture power through armed struggle, and that the revolution should start in the Sierra and the eastern Andean escarpments

urban areas and also has strong ties to Cuba, as well as to other international terrorist/revolutionary organizations such as the Red Brigades in Italy, the Bolivian ELN, the Argentinean ERP and the Tupamaros of Uruguay.

¹⁷ The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency allegedly had a lot to do with the defeat of the Cuban-sponsored guerrilla organizations in Peru. The CIA is said to have been asked secretly by the Peruvian government for help in combating the guerrillas in the remote eastern region of the Andes. The CIA allegedly built a "miniature Fort Bragg" in the Peruvian jungle and recruited and trained a special anti-guerrilla combat brigade for the Peruvians. The training was conducted by the CIA Special Operations Division and Green Beret instructors. The Peruvians trained at this secret facility wiped out the guerrillas. Source: Victor Marchetti and John D. Marks, The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence, (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1974), pp. 137-138.

led by worthy representatives of the revolutionary vanguard in Peru.¹⁸

Some members of the ELN were able to escape to Bolivia and joined Ernesto "Che" Guevara at Rancagua, headquarters of the Cuban attempt to start a guerrilla war in Bolivia in 1967. Among the members of the Peruvian ELN who joined Guevara were: José Cabrera Flores "El Negro," Lucio Galván "Eustaquio," and Juan Pablo Chang "El Chino." Cabrera Flores, a physician, was captured on August 31, 1967, in an ambush at Vado del Yeso and was later killed by the Bolivian Army. "El Chino" was captured with Guevara in another ambush at Quebrada del Churo on October 8, 1967, and later killed. Lucio Galván was captured on October 12, 1967, together with a Cuban and two Bolivians and executed.

One of the units of the ELN which was based in Huamanga, in the province of Ayacucho, later became the root of the Partido Comunista del Perú en el Sendero Luminoso de Mariátegui, known as "Sendero Luminoso" or "Shining Path." This ELN branch was led by Abimael Guzmán Reynoso, a professor at the National University of San Cristóbal de Huamanga. Many members of this organization were invited to visit Cuba, starting around 1965. Among the principal members of the ELN who visited Cuba were Osman and Katia Morote, Julio Casanova and Luis Kawata, who later were to become some of the principal leaders of Sendero Luminoso. While most of the leaders of the ELN were killed trying to implement the Cuban theories of guerrilla warfare in the 1960's, members of Sendero Luminoso adopted Maoist principles of guerrilla warfare.

Influenced by the Maoist movement in 1966, the Huamanga group broke away from the ELN and formed the Partido Comunista del Perú -Bandera Roja (PCP-BR). Four years later they changed the name of the organization adopting the name of Sendero Luminoso, as they searched for Peruvian roots for the movement. They found them in Carlos Mariátegui, founder of the Peruvian Communist Party in 1928. Contrary to the failed Cuban tactics of the 1960's, they spent several years working in rural areas, learning local native languages and making friends with the peasants to develop a strong base of support for the movement.

¹⁸ For additional information see: Luis F. de la Puente Uceda, "The Peruvian Revolution," Monthly Review (November, 1965), pp. 12-26.

Argentina

Cuban sponsorship of revolutionary groups in Argentina started early in 1959. The influence of Ernesto "Che" Guevara, an Argentinean leader of the Cuban revolution, helped to promote the idea of duplicating the Cuban experience in that country. By 1960 the Cuban Embassy in Buenos Aires was heavily involved in promoting revolution, passing out manuals on guerrilla warfare and urban terrorism. President Arturo Frondizi was strongly criticized in Cuban propaganda as a tool of United States imperialism. Frequent clashes between Cuban diplomats and Argentine police led to the breaking of diplomatic relations.

Before long, Jorge Massetti, an Argentinean who had headed Prensa Latina, was dedicating most of his time to the organization of the Ejercito Guerrillero del Pueblo (EGP).¹⁹ In mid 1963, the group was receiving Cuban assistance to start guerrilla operations in Salta. Several veteran Cuban officers of the revolution against Batista who were close to Guevara were sent to assist the Argentineans. In July of 1963, Captain José María Martínez Tamayo arrived in La Paz with a Colombian passport. His instructions were to set up a base in the South of Bolivia to supply Massetti's group across the border in Argentina.

In July of 1964 Massetti's group was discovered by the Argentinean Armed Forces and wiped out. Massetti and several of his followers including at least one Cuban, Captain Hermes Peña, were killed. Captain Peña was very close to Ernesto "Che" Guevara. Régis Debray states that Peña was like an adopted son to Guevara. After the failure of the Argentinean guerrillas Captain Martínez Tamayo returned to Cuba.²⁰

¹⁹ Jorge Ricardo Massetti visited the M-26-7 guerrillas in the Sierra Maestra Mountains in Cuba to interview Fidel Castro and Ernesto "Che" Guevara in 1958. Massetti was working for Radio El Mundo of Buenos Aires, Argentina. The interview was conducted at a farm named La Otilia, near Las Niñas. Massetti later went to Algeria and joined the FLN guerrillas seeking independence. After the Algerian adventure, Massetti worked for the Cuban Government as a representative of Prensa Latina before joining the Argentine guerrillas in the province of Salta. He took the pseudonym "Comandante Segundo." Source: Ernesto Guevara: Mi Hijo el Che (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1981), pp.40-43.

²⁰ Debray, La Guerrilla del Che, op. cit. pp. 30-31.

Brazil²¹

When Fidel Castro came to power in 1959, Juscelino Kubitschek was President of Brazil. He had opened the door to foreign investment in the country and had designed an ambitious economic development program which included moving the capital to the interior of the country to open new areas for development. The capital was moved to Brasilia from Rio de Janeiro

²¹ To understand Brazilian politics, one has to go back to the revolution of 1930. Prior to this time, Brazilian politics had been polarized by extreme right and extreme left politics as well as by regional rivalries. Sao Paulo, Minas Gerais and Rio Grande do Sul, being the three principal geographic poles in the country, rotated the government of the country under a gentlemen's agreement. When the rotational system failed in 1929, Getulio Vargas leader of the Aliança Liberal from Rio Grande do Sul, led a bloodless insurrection and took power with the support of young officers. Vargas was able to retain power and ruled the country on and off until his suicide in 1954. Under Vargas, Brazil was run as a corporative state. Economic growth and industrial development was encouraged by government policies. His program, which he labeled Novo Estado, was somewhat similar to the German and Italian models under Hitler and Mussolini. Promoting economic nationalism and a strong program of import substitution Vargas was able to achieve economic growth while maintaining a balance between Communists, labor leaders and right wing elements. The emphasis was placed in industrial development rather than in agricultural development as had been the case before he came to power. Using able technocrats Vargas was able to improve the living conditions of the Brazilians and inspire public confidence. Despite his peculiar politics, Brazil joined forces with the United States and the allies during WWII and participated in the invasion of Europe. Vargas left power in 1946 but was reelected in 1950. This time, his economic and political leadership did not match his previous performance. Several of his officials were unpopular and their policies unwise. Communists picked up strength and relations with the United States deteriorated. As the economy deteriorated the people blamed Vargas for running a corrupt regime in which thugs associated with the government ran a reign of terror. Finally, Vargas took his life on August 24, 1954, leaving a note behind blaming his death on international economic and financial groups. Communists were quick to blame the United States and organized massive demonstrations against the American Embassy.

in 1960. Kubitschek's economic program triggered galloping inflation, a large foreign debt, crime, and uncontrolled growth. Requests for foreign assistance from the United States and the International Monetary Fund were answered with demands for a reduction in the national budget and in bank credits. Communists took advantage of the situation to fuel anti-American sentiments.

In 1960, Janio da Silva Quadros was elected President with support of conservative elements. Joao Goulart, a Communist sympathizer was elected as vice-president under the banner of the Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro. Within eight months, Quadros resigned from office claiming that he was unable to govern without congressional support for his economic programs, and was replaced by Goulart. The new President appealed for Communist support and attempted to organize the masses to counterbalance military and congressional opposition to his rule. Fidel Castro provided a considerable amount of assistance to Goulart using all the resources of the Cuban Government to promote popular support for his leadership, particularly among militant young leftists. Communist leaders in unions affiliated with the Confederaçao dos Trabalhadores na Industria were mobilized to support Goulart. Nevertheless, Goulart's demagoguery and Castro's support failed to keep him in power. A military coup d'etat on April 1, 1964 put an end to Goulart's government.

The overthrow of Goulart signal the start of a Cuban sponsored terrorist guerrilla campaign to take power in Brazil that lasted throughout the 1960's and early 1970's. The two principal guerrilla organizations were the Popular Revolutionary Vanguard and the Action for National Liberation. Although they were mostly active in urban areas, they also attempted to start a rural based guerrilla war.

With the overthrow of Goulart, the Organization of American States moved to establish an economic blockade against Cuba with the support of all the members countries with the exception of Mexico. The Cuban Government was accused of promoting revolution throughout the continent. The decision against Castro was taken at a meeting of foreign ministers in July of 1964, only three months after the overthrow of Joao Goulart.

Bolivia

Ernesto "Che" Guevara's efforts to start a revolution in Bolivia that would spread to the rest of the continent started as far back as 1963, with the arrival of Captain Martinez Tamayo. Careful preparations were made by Guevara and his Cuban followers to set up an infrastructure in Bolivia to support a guerrilla movement. Members of the

Bolivian Communist Party and the Bolivian Communist Youth were enlisted for the effort. In addition, the network included European and Argentinean agents, including Tamara Bunker, "Tania." She is one of the most interesting characters to become involved with the Cuban Government's efforts to export the revolution. She was born in East Germany and at some point became a Cuban intelligence agent. At the same time, she may have also been working for the Soviet Union or for East German intelligence. Bunker arrived in Bolivia in 1964, after meeting with Guevara in Havana.

While Cuban trained guerrilla units were being formed in several Latin American countries, a rift was developing between the Cuban Government and its allies and several Latin American Communist parties. Traditional Marxist divisions over who had the "correct" definition of Communist doctrine were being heightened by the rift between Moscow and Peking and Havana's direction of armed revolution. As part of an effort to mitigate these problems a congress of Latin American Communist parties was held in Cuba late in 1964. An example of the problems between the traditional parties and the Cuban leadership were accusations of foreign interference by the Argentinean Communist Party and Communist leadership in Bolivia against Cuba.

AFRICA

Cuban involvement in African affairs started soon after the overthrow of Fulgencio Batista. African revolutionaries, most of whom were active in anti-colonial wars, were sympathetic to the Cuban revolution and its leaders. It was a case of mutual admiration. Ernesto "Che" Guevara visited several African countries in 1959, seeking to establish ties with revolutionary organizations. As a result of his trip, several new relationships were established and African leaders began to visit Cuba. For example, President Sekou Touré of Guinea was welcomed to Cuba in 1960. They spoke of the natural alliance of all people seeking to obtain their freedom. Similar activity was also taking place in Asia. Leaders such as Sukarno of Indonesia were invited to visit Cuba. But behind the open political contacts were the beginnings of Cuban military activity far from the island's borders.

Algeria

At the time of the overthrow of Batista, the Algerians were in the middle of a bloody war to obtain independence from France. Algerian revolutionaries were given assistance by the Cuban Government starting fairly soon after the revolution took power. Cuban radio and television, as well as newspapers controlled by the government, ran many news stories on the progress of the war and presented "soap operas" about the struggle of the Algerians against French colonialism. The extent of Cuban assistance to the Algerians is clouded. However, the French Government prohibited Cuban civilian planes from flying over French air space as a form of protest²² for the assistance that was being given to the Algerians.

²² In 1954, Algerians began a rebellion to obtain independence from France. The principal revolutionary organization was the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN). In 1958, after a series of meetings in Morocco, Tangier, Tunis, and Libya, representatives of several Algerian revolutionary groups formed a Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic (GPRA). By the end of 1959, it is estimated that at least 170,000 lives had been lost in the conflict. In 1960, the GPRA had been recognized by the Soviet Union and several other countries, despite the fact that the GPRA had not yet defeated the French. Seeking an end to the war, French President de Gaulle offered the Algerians three choices: independence, federation with France or internal autonomy. The offer was neither accepted nor rejected as the war continued. After several years of bloody fighting, Algeria was granted independence in 1961. It is estimated that as many as 1.5

After Algeria obtained its independence in 1962, diplomatic relations were quickly established and a Cuban military mission sent to Algeria as part of the Cuban Embassy. When war broke out between Algeria and Morocco late in 1963 over a border dispute in the area of Colomb-Béchar, a brigade of Cuban troops was sent to assist the Algerians. This was the first instance of a Cuban combat brigade being sent out to participate in a foreign war.²³

When the war broke out in October of 1963, the Cuban merchant ship "Aracelio Iglesias" was en route to Algeria with several T-34 tanks and military technicians. On October 28, a battalion of tank troops may have arrived on another vessel. In addition, other Cuban soldiers were flown in by Cubana de Aviación Bristol Britannia aircraft. It is estimated that about 400 soldiers and 40 tanks plus artillery were transferred to Algeria. Although the Cubans were deployed to the front lines, the war came to an end before Cuban combat troops could enter into action. It seems that the Cubans were withdrawn within three months.²⁴

million Algerians may have died during the revolution and that as many as 2 million people were arrested or forced to live in concentration camps. Conservative elements in France did not go along with the move to grant independence and formed the Organisation de l'Armée Secrète (OAS), to thwart the government's moves. They operated as an underground terrorist organization in both France and Algeria, but could not achieve their goals. Ahmed Ben Bella became the first Algerian Head of State in 1962 and ruled the country until 1965, when he was overthrown by a coup d'état led by Col. Houari Boumedienne. A Constitutional Assembly in August of 1963, proclaimed a new constitution which stated as one of the country's goals the building of socialism. The following year, in 1964, the Algerian Communist Party and the FLN joined forces to form one party. In 1968 the new party changed names to Socialist Vanguard Party of Algeria.

²³ In 1973, King Hassan sent an infantry brigade to support the Syrian Army on the Golan Heights front during the war with Israel. At this time, a Cuban armor brigade was also providing assistance to the Syrians and thus the old enemies ended up fighting on the same side. We know that the Moroccans distinguished themselves in combat around Mount Hermon, but little is known about how the Cubans performed.

²⁴ William J. Durch, The Cuban Military in Africa and the Middle East from Algeria to Angola, (Alexandria, Va.: U.S. Department of Defense, Defense Logistics Agency, Center for Naval Analyses, 1976), pp. 14-16.

The conflict did not last very long and the Moroccan Armed Forces humiliated the Algerians. After this incident, relations between Cuba and Algeria have been very close. Algeria has provided a base for Cuban military operations in the rest of Africa. When President Ben Bella was overthrown in 1965, relations between the two countries were somewhat strained, but before long, the Cuban leadership was able to establish a good working relationship with the new strongman, Colonel Houari Boumedienne.

Ghana²⁵

After WWII, the British colonial officials in Ghana allowed natives of the colony to take part in the administration of local government. In 1949, Kwame N'Krumah organized the Convention Popular Party (CPP) to demand additional reforms. Three years later, N'Krumah became the Prime Minister of the colony, and promised to fight against imperialism under a banner which mixed Socialism, Marxism and Christianity. He was successful in obtaining independence from the British in 1957.

After independence, N'Krumah became one of the principal leaders of the movement to free African countries from colonial rule. Internally, he carried out a revolutionary program to move the country toward Socialism. Relations with the Cuban revolutionary leadership were established soon after the victory of the Cuban revolution in 1959. By 1961, a Cuban military mission had arrived in Ghana and a training camp for African guerrillas was organized under Cuban control. Ernesto "Che" Guevara visited the training camp at least once in 1964, as part of a tour that took him to several African countries, including Algeria, Guinea and the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville). The camp seems to have been located near the border with Upper Volta in the northern part of the country.²⁶ The Cuban guerrilla training camp operated for several years until N'Krumah was overthrown in 1966 by a group of pro-British officers.²⁷

²⁵ Ghana is a small African country of about 238,537 Km² located between Ivory Coast, Upper Volta and Togo. The population of the country in 1983 was estimated at 12.7 million people. There are six major ethnic groups, of which the largest are the Ashantis with about 44 percent of the population. The official language is English and the capital is Accra.

²⁶ William J. Durch, The Cuban Military in Africa and the Middle East from Algeria to Angola, op. cit., p.14.

²⁷ In 1969, a new constitution was proclaimed and elections were held to transfer power to a civilian government.

Congo

The Congo is a vast area in West Central Africa, that was occupied by French, Belgian and Portuguese colonies for over a century. In the late 1950's movements for independence were started in the whole region and by 1958, the old colonies were giving way to several new independent nations. The development of the new independent nations is hard to follow since they shared the geographic name of the region and changed the names of the new countries several times.²⁸

Republic of Congo (People's Republic of the Congo)

Formerly known as French Equatorial Africa, this vast country became one of the overseas territories of the French Union after WWII. In November of 1958, the French granted autonomy and in August of 1960, full independence. Thus was born the new country of the Republic of Congo. The capital, which has also contributed to the name of the country is Brazzaville, located on the banks of the Congo River.²⁹ In 1970, it became the first African country to become Communist, and the name was changed once again to People's Republic of the Congo. The ruling political party is the Parti Congolais du Travail (PCT). The principal political forces are tribal groups in the north, the center and the south of the country, as well as Communist organizations and pro-western groups. It is difficult to tell whether regional tribal affiliations

N'Krumah's CPP was not allowed to participate in the elections or to return to the country. He died in Bucharest, Hungary in 1972. Another military coup d'etat brought Colonel Ignatius Acheampong to power later in 1972 and N'Krumah's memory was revived as the liberator of the country from colonial rule. Relations with Cuba were reestablished in 1974.

²⁸ The geographic area known as the Congo, includes a vast area presently occupied by Zaire, People's Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea (formerly known as Rio Muni), Central African Republic, southern Cameroon, northern Angola, parts of southern Sudan, and parts of Malawi, Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia), Mozambique and Zambia. The people of the region speak various Bantu languages which are closely related to one another.

²⁹ The country is often referred to as Congo-Brazzaville.

or political ideology have played a more important role in the politics of the country.

Cuban involvement in the Congo started under President Alphonse Massamba-Debat in the mid-1960's, when Cuba was asked to assist in the training of a militia or Civil Defense Corps. Formal diplomatic relations were established on May 10, 1964. Cuban troops provided a loyal presidential guard to Massamba-Debat to protect him against local political rivals. Cuban troops played an important role in June of 1966 when Captain Marien Ngouabi led an uprising demanding that President Massamba-Debat give up power and that all Cuban troops be sent back to their country. The uprising was defeated with about 200 Cuban troops playing a major role on the government's side. However, after this incident Cuban troops were moved to less visible areas outside of the capital and their numbers were reduced temporarily. One of their principal tasks in the Congo was to provide training to Angolan guerrillas of the MPLA starting in 1966. This could best be done away from urban areas.

At least 200 Congolese were given scholarships to go to school in Cuba in the mid-1960's. This was part of a long-range plan of the Cuban Government to make friends in Africa and increase its influence in regional affairs. Over the years many Congolese have been educated in Cuba and have returned to their country.

The support of the Cuban Government was not sufficient to keep Massamba-Debat in power forever. In August of 1968, he was overthrown by Captain Ngouabi and his followers. The Army troops involved in the coup d'etat attacked and destroyed a People's Militia that had been trained by Cuban troops. It is possible that this militia unit was a cover name used to hide the presence of a substantial number of Cuban troops, who formed the bulk of this military unit.

Ngouabi and the Cuban Government managed to establish a friendly relationship after the coup that was to last until his assassination in March of 1977. Ngouabi played a major role in moving the country to declare itself the first Communist country in Africa and received substantial coaching from Cuba to set up a state security organization and a revolutionary court of justice to prosecute enemies of the state. In 1975 and 1976, Ngouabi provided considerable assistance to Cuba during the Angolan operation. Congolese airports and other facilities were used by Cuba as a staging area for an air-bridge to transport combat brigades to support the MPLA in Angola. However, despite Ngouabi valuable assistance to the Cuban Government, his Cuban friends could not prevent his assassination. Massamba-Debat was implicated in the death of Ngouabi and was arrested, convicted and executed.

Ngouabi was replaced by J. Yhombi-Opongo, who was only able to retain power until 1979. He was replaced by Denis Sassou Nguesso, who had served as deputy head of state under Yhombi-Opongo. Sassou had close association with the Soviet Union, but also made an effort to improve the economy by establishing a closer relationship with France and other Western countries.

The Congolese Armed Forces are fairly small, consisting of between 8,000 and 9,000 men and a militia or paramilitary unit of about 1,500 men. About 400 Cuban soldiers were stationed in the Congo as of 1985. Military units are grouped under the Armée Populaire Nationale. The Congolese military has provided all the leaders of the country since independence. The principal military bases are located in the capital of Brazzaville and at Pointe-Noire.

Republic of the Congo (Zaire)

This territory was the old Belgian Congo, and borders on the southeast with the People's Republic of the Congo. On June 30, 1960, the old Belgian colony became the Republic of Congo with its capital at Kinshasa (formerly Leopoldville). Patrice Lumumba, a well-known leftist African leader became the country's first Premier under a coalition government headed by President Joseph Kasavubu. The following year, in 1961, Lumumba was removed from office and murdered. The murder by mercenaries from Belgium, possibly working for Moises Tshombe, was followed by civil war and United Nations' involvement to end the fighting. Tshombe took over as president replacing Kasavubu after the death of Lumumba.

Followers of Lumumba formed a revolutionary government in the province of Katanga under the name People's Republic of Stanleyville in September of 1964. This was followed by a bloody civil war in which rebels captured and killed hundreds of white hostages and natives alike. The political arm of the rebels was the National Council of the Revolution, headed by Gaston Soumaliot and Laurent Cavila. They established contacts with the Cuban Government and requested military assistance. Cuban troops led by Ernesto "Che" Guevara went to the Congo to train guerrillas fighting against President Moise Tshombe in Katanga. Possibly as many as 200 Cuban combat troops participated in this operation. Guevara remained with the guerrillas from about April to December of 1965. The Cubans entered the country from Tanzania in the spring of 1965. They had their headquarters at Kigona.

Belgian paratroopers were dropped from American planes to rescue hundreds of people who had been caught in the civil war. In the middle of the civil war, General Joseph D. Mobutu deposed Tshombe and began a campaign to regain control

of the country.³⁰ It has been alleged that Cuban exiles, who were veterans of the Bay of Pigs invasion, went to the Congo under the sponsorship of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency to assist the government troops fighting against the Communist guerrillas.³¹ Cuban pilots working for the CIA were allegedly piloting B-26 aircraft in regular bombing missions against the guerrilla strongholds.³² Eventually the revolutionaries arrived at a compromise with the government after Tshombe was deposed and the Cuban troops were asked to leave.

Guevara and some of the Cuban soldiers left Africa and went back to Cuba. Another group of Cuban troops went into the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville) to set up new training facilities. In these facilities they trained guerrilla units of Amilcar Cabral (PAIGC) and guerrillas of the Angolan MPLA. They concentrated in the training of guerrillas fighting against Portuguese colonial troops in Africa. At the time, Portugal was fighting to retain control of Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau and Angola.

The Republic of the Congo went on to become Zaire under the leadership of General Mobutu, who changed his European name to Mobutu Sese Seko and forced all his countrymen to do likewise. Mobutu also changed the names of the principal cities in the country. The capital of Leopoldville became Kinshasa. Stanleyville became Kisangani, and Elisabethville became Lubumbashi.

About 12 years later, in 1977 and again in 1978, Cuban trained Zairians were to invade the Shaba province (formerly Katanga) from Angola in an attempt to overthrow Mobutu. Zaire received help from French, Egyptian and Moroccan troops and defeated the invaders. The Cuban Government denied any involvement in these invasions. (See Phase III for more details).

³⁰ Tshombe was on board a plane that was hijacked to Algeria in 1967, where he was arrested and kept in jail until his death in 1969.

³¹ Victor Marchetti and John D. Marks, The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence, pp. 138-139.

³² Ibid. pp. 131 and 148. The Cuban pilots working for the CIA were allegedly hired by a company called Caramar (Caribbean Marine Aero Corporation), which was a CIA "proprietary."

Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique

Contacts between the Cuban Government and revolutionary organizations in these Portuguese colonies were started in the early to mid 1960's. Initial contacts between Cuban officials and Agostinho Neto, leader of the Angolan MPLA, took place during the Cuban adventure in the Congo (Zaire) during 1965. Within a year, Cuban troops were training MPLA guerrillas in Congo-Brazzaville and Neto had travelled to Cuba to meet with Fidel Castro. Guerrilla organizations fighting against the Portuguese in Guinea-Bissau also obtained Cuban assistance starting in the mid-1960's up to the time that the country obtained independence in September of 1974. Amilcar Cabral, leader of the Marxist PAIGC, fighting for the independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde maintained frequent contact with the Cuban Government during the revolutionary struggle against the Portuguese. At least one Cuban military officer, Major Pedro Rodriguez Peralta, was captured and imprisoned by the Portuguese for several years in Guinea-Bissau. Formal diplomatic relations between Cuba and Guinea-Bissau were established on October 1, 1973.

People's Revolutionary Republic of Guinea (Conakry)

Cuban Government officials established contacts with the People's Revolutionary Republic of Guinea and its President, Ahmed Sékou Touré soon after the overthrow of Batista. Diplomatic relations were established in 1960. This former French colony obtained its independence in 1958. Sékou Touré requested and received Soviet-bloc assistance so that he could move forward with the organization of a one-party Socialist state. Cuban troops were provided to work as body guards for Sékou Touré and to train local military units in the 1960's.

Rhodesia (Zimbabwe)

The Soviet Union had been providing assistance to guerrilla organizations in Rhodesia since at least 1961. Soviet aid was given to the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPO), headed by Joshua Nkomo. The People's Republic of China was providing assistance to the competing Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), headed by Mugabe. The role of the Cuban Government in the guerrilla warfare in this African country is clouded by considerable secrecy. However, it is known that members of ZAPO and ZANU maintained contacts throughout the revolutionary struggle to set up a black government with Cuba.

Tanzania, Zanzibar, Equatorial Guinea and Rio Muni

The Republic of Tanganyika and the Republic of Zanzibar, an island off the east coast of Africa, joined to form one country in April of 1964. They adopted the name of United Republic of Tanzania, with the capital at Dar es-Salam. Both countries had received their independence from Great Britain in 1961. Tanzania drifted slowly to the left until in 1967 the banks and major industries were nationalized. Cuban Government contacts with the leaders of Tanzania were established in the early 1960's and Cuban military operations in Africa have often either started and ended in Tanzania. Diplomatic relations between Cuba and Tanzania had been established in June of 1964.³³ There is some evidence that points to the existence of Cuban guerrilla training camps in Tanzania in the 1960's where FRELIMO members were trained.³⁴

Equatorial Guinea is located in the island of Bioko, off the west coast of Africa in the Gulf of Guinea. The island is about 10,832 square miles compared with Cuba, which has 42,827 miles. Rio Muni, located on the African mainland and the island of Bioko form the Republic of Equatorial Guinea. About 90 percent of the national territory is on the mainland, but the economy of the island province is stronger. The island was discovered by Fernando Po and became a Portuguese colony until it was ceded to Spain in 1778. A plebiscite was held in 1964 and the population of the Spanish territories then known as Fernando Po and Rio Muni elected for autonomy. Independence came on October 12, 1968.

Contacts between the Cuban Government and Communist leaders of Equatorial Guinea started in the 1960's, with the advantage of Spanish as a common language. The strategic location of the island can provide the Cuban military a refueling stop for airplanes carrying troops and supplies to and from Africa. Very little is known about early contacts between Cuba and Equatorial Guinea, but it is fairly certain that they had taken place since at least the mid-1960's.³⁵

³³ For example, Ernesto "Che" Guevara left Africa after participating in the guerrilla war in Zaire through the Dar es-Salam airport in Tanzania. He left on a commercial airline flight in December of 1965 or in January of 1966.

³⁴ FRELIMO: Mozambique Liberation Front.

³⁵ Masie Nguema Biyondo ruled the country from independence in 1968, becoming "president for life" in 1972. He was a ruthless dictator who drove the country into bankruptcy and forced the emigration of thousands of Europeans. Masie Nguema Biyondo was overthrown in August of 1979. A Supreme Military Council headed by Teoro Obiang Nguema Mbasasogo now

PHASE II (1966-1970)

Tri-Continental Congress

The Tri-Continental Congress, held in January of 1966 in Havana, concluded that wars of national liberation were justified and that all revolutionary groups with similar ideas and goals should unite to support each other. The Cuban leadership supported the formation of guerrilla organizations throughout Latin America to take power by armed struggle. Fidel Castro offered to cooperate with wars of national liberation all over the world. As a result of the Congress, a new organization, the Organization of Latin American Solidarity (OLAS), was formed in January of 1967, to promote the ideals of continental revolution, as expressed by participants in the Tri-continental Congress.

The congress became a battle ground of ideologies. The principal groups were: the Soviets and the traditional Communist parties allied with them; the delegates of the People's Republic of China and Maoist-Communist revolutionaries from all over the world; Trotskyite-Communists; members of the so-called "new left" from the United States and other countries; and Fidel Castro and his followers. The Cuban Government made every possible attempt to control the attendance at the congress to push for the approval of its own theory of revolution.

For example, despite the strong relationships which existed between Cuba and Mexico, a country that refused to break diplomatic relations with Cuba in the early 1960's, only Mexican revolutionaries who favored the Cuban line were invited to participate in the Tri-Continental Congress. Among the groups represented was the Mexican Movimiento de Liberación Nacional. The Mexican Communist Party and the Popular Socialist Party, led by Lombardo Toledano were not invited to participate because they supported the Mexican Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), which has governed in Mexico since the 1920's. The Cubans were exploring the possibility of exporting the revolution to overthrow a friendly government. Mexican leftists were not the only ones who had prob-

runs the country. Diplomatic relations between Cuba and Equatorial Guinea were established on December 27, 1972.

lems attending the Tri-Continental Congress. For example, a Bolivian delegation of several Communist organizations arrived in Havana but were not allowed to participate in the congress.³⁶

The 10 months that followed the Tri-Continental Congress were possibly the most militant in support of guerrilla movements in Latin America. Fidel Castro made repeated critical statements of Latin American Communist leaders and particularly Communist intellectuals who could not gather the strength to take power by force. He denounced these leaders as "right wingers" who did not belong in the struggle against imperialism. Castro was also critical of Communist countries, including the Soviet Union, for maintaining diplomatic ties with oligarchic regimes in Latin America. Several Cuban Communists who had ties to the pre-Revolution Cuban Communist Party and others who had close ideological affiliation with the Soviet Union had been jailed or demoted from government jobs for not supporting the efforts to export the revolution. Castro's attacks against anyone who did not share his views continued long after the end of the congress.

At a rally in April of 1967, on the 6th anniversary of the defeat of the Bay of Pigs invasion, Fidel Castro called for immediate revolution throughout Latin America. A few days later at a May Day rally, Castro and other Cuban Government leaders hinted that Ernesto "Che" Guevara was already leading a guerrilla force in Latin America to carry the revolution to the entire continent. When Soviet Prime Minister Kosygin visited Cuba in June of 1967, the Cuban and Soviet leaders seemed to have clashed over the Cuban policy of supporting armed struggle against imperialism and Cuban financing, training and equipping of guerrilla fighters from other countries.

Organization of Latin American Solidarity (OLAS)

The Tri-Continental Congress was followed a year later by a meeting of the Organization of Latin American Solidarity. In July-August of 1967, OLAS held a congress in Cuba in which pledges of support for guerrilla organizations in Latin America were made again. Delegates from revolutionary organizations attending the OLAS meeting called for the start of armed struggle even within the United States. Cuban leaders called for U.S. anti-imperialists to unite and cooperate in the struggle to spread the revolution. Stokeley Carmichael,

³⁶ Lydia Gueller and Lora and Ruiz González, representing the PRIN, PCM-L and POR were not allowed to participate in the congress. Source: Regis Debray, La Guerrilla del Che, (Mexico: Siglo XXI, 1975), p.36.

the struggle to spread the revolution. Stokeley Carmichael, a black student leader in the United States, was one of the invited guests. Carmichael called for the creation of many Vietnams in Latin America and the start of a black liberation movement within the United States. Several activists of the American "new left" and the anti-war movement attended the meeting and supported the calls for revolution in the United States.³⁷ Among the American radicals were members of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), who later formed the "Weathermen," an underground revolutionary organization responsible for several bombings in the United States in the early 1970's, including possibly a bomb that went off in the U.S. Capitol.

The OLAS meeting ended with additional Cuban pledges of assistance for armed guerrilla struggles and with a declaration that armed revolt was the fundamental political line for revolutionaries in Latin America. Previous Cuban financial and training support was expanded to include the active participation of Cuban military officers directly in guerrilla operations in Latin America. In Venezuela and Bolivia, Cubans were arrested or killed in combat with government forces. Despite frequent set-backs, Cuban support continued to flow out of the island.

Conflicts with the Soviet Union

Conflicts with the Soviet Union over the policy of the Cuban Government of exporting the revolution by providing direct assistance to revolutionaries in other countries surfaced in 1967. The Tri-Continental Congress and the OLAS meeting had served as forums to attack Communist parties for their failure to lead armed revolutionary struggles. They were dismissed by more militant revolutionaries associated with Cuba as ineffective organizations whose members lacked the courage to take up arms. Fidel Castro strongly criticized the Communist leaders and called them "pseudo-revolutionaries." These parties were supported by the Soviet Union and their leaders had close ties to the Soviet Communist Party. With this kind of rhetoric a clash with the Soviet leaders was inevitable.³⁸

³⁷ The Cuban Government continued to invite American black radicals to Cuba during the late 1960's and early 1970's. Among the leaders invited were Eldridge Cleaver of the Black Panther Party and Angela Davis of the Communist Party U.S.A.. Both had served time in jail for criminal activities in the United States. Cleaver eventually turned against the "New Left" and the Cuban Government and has become an anti-Communist activist in the United States.

³⁸ For more information on the Cuban-Soviet differences, between 1966 and 1968, see: William Ratliff, Castroism and Com-

Before long, a series of attacks on the Cuban leadership began to appear all over Latin America. The Venezuelan Communist Party answered Castro, demanding that he restrain his language when referring to Communists who were struggling against American imperialism and demanded that he censure the terrorist tactics that were being used by his followers. The Venezuelan party asserted its right to form its own policy and rejected Castro's interference in its internal affairs. Castro and his followers were called an "anarcho-adventurist" bunch which had lacked the courage to raise the red flag when they were fighting in the mountains against Batista. However, he demanded that other revolutionaries identify themselves as Communists and take chances that he himself was not willing to take. Castro was also accused of being two-faced for maintaining diplomatic and commercial relations with the Franco regime in Spain and with the same British Government that ran the colonial racist government in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia).³⁹

Within four months, in August of 1967, the Colombian Communist Party issued a similar protest against the Cuban Government. In Bolivia, where Cuban guerrillas led by Ernesto "Che" Guevara were operating, the split between the Communist Party and the Cuban leadership contributed to the defeat of the revolutionaries. On October 27, 1967, days after the capture and execution of Guevara in Bolivia, an article written by Luis Corvalán, leader of the Chilean Communist Party was published in Pravda, dismissing the Cuban revolutionary thesis as adventurist. The following month, when the Soviet Union celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Russian Revolution, the Cuban leadership was not invited to participate.

Despite all the literature on the strong differences of opinion between the Cuban and Soviet leadership during this period, the author has also uncovered some evidence that the Soviets did provide support to Cuba so that it could carry out an aggressive program to export the revolution. For example, while the Cuban leadership was openly arguing with Communist Parties throughout Latin America and the Soviets were providing a forum to criticize Cuban tactics, Soviet officers were building training centers in Cuba. Colonel Wadim Kotscherigine, a KGB officer seems to have been in charge of building several training camps on the island for revolutionaries from other countries. Revolutionaries from most Latin American countries, as well as Africa and the Mid-

munism in Latin America (Washington, D.C.: Hoover Institution, 1976), chapters 1 and 2.

³⁹ "Respuesta del Partido Comunista a Fidel Castro," El Nacional, (Caracas, Venezuela, March 17, 1967), p. D 7.

die East have been trained at these facilities. Cuban officers, with Soviet assistance, were also sent to North Africa and the Middle East starting in late 1967 to train member of the PLO and other Arab organizations. Cuba continued to receive Soviet weapons and Cuban officers continued to be trained in the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries throughout this period. Thus the whole question of Cuban-Soviet differences has to be taken with a grain of salt.

By 1968, Cuba had over 300 heavy and medium-weight tanks, 200 armored personnel carriers, 100 assault guns, 600 surface-to-surface missiles, a large Air Force with Mig-15's, Mig-17's and supersonic Mig-21's, in addition to a large number of training aircraft. The Navy had also been expanded with 18 Komar and five Osa patrol boats with Styx missiles. All of these weapons had been supplied by the Soviet Union and its Eastern European allies.

Conflicts with the People's Republic of China

The conflict with the Soviet Union and Communist parties which supported the Soviet line was not unique. The Chinese Government had a substantial diplomatic delegation in Cuba. They directed a strong propaganda campaign with the goal of reaching all levels of the Cuban bureaucracy. Members of the military were particular targets of the Chinese Communists, who made it a point to reach every military installation in Cuba with their literature. In February of 1966, Fidel Castro attacked the Chinese Embassy for interfering in the internal affairs of Cuba. In March of 1967, the final break came, after Castro made a major speech critical of the activities of the Chinese in Cuba. He seemed to take sides with the Soviets in the well-known dispute between the two Communist giants, despite his own problems with the Soviet leaders. The Chinese and their "Maoist" organizations throughout the world counterattacked with a strong campaign against Castro. For example, in the United States, the Progressive Labor Party, a Maoist organization of the "new left" with hundreds of followers among young college students in the the northeast and California, published strong attacks against Cuba. They found plenty of reasons to claim that the Cuban leadership was a farce and its ideology misguided from true forms of Socialism that would eventually lead to Communism.

Cuban-Led Guerrillas in Bolivia

Starting around March of 1966, several Cuban military officers, veterans of the revolution against Batista, began to arrive in Bolivia. They included Captain Harry Villegas

Lieutenant Carlos Coello and Captain José María Martínez Tamayo, who had made the preliminary arrangements several months before to start a guerrilla unit. They were all closely allied with "Che" Guevara and had fought under his command in Cuba. Before long, at least 15 Cuban officers had arrived to form the vanguard of what was to be a large revolutionary army operating in the heart of South America.

According to recounts of the history of this period, Guevara's goal was to use Bolivia only as a platform to move to Peru, where he hoped to join established guerrilla forces in that country. However, the demise of the Peruvian guerrillas in 1965 and 1966, forced a change in plans and Bolivia became the prime target for revolution. Guevara arrived in November of 1966 via Madrid, Sao Paulo and Montevideo, using false papers. Several Peruvian and Bolivian Communist revolutionaries joined Guevara and his Cuban followers. By February of 1967, 15 Cubans and 12 Bolivians formed the backbone of the small guerrilla army.⁴⁰

The Cubans soon found out that the environment in Bolivia was not like what they had found in the Sierra Maestra Mountains in Cuba during the revolution against Batista. The peasants were natives who spoke Guarani, and not Spanish. Natives in other parts of Bolivia spoke Quechua and Aymara. Communication was difficult and the local population was not friendly. In Cuba they had not faced the dangerous animals that were present in the South American jungles (snakes, for example). Although the vegetation was lush, they did not find oranges, mangoes, and other tropical fruits like in Cuba. They could not find animals to hunt for food and there were no friendly

⁴⁰ According to the account of Regis Debray in his book La Guerrilla del Che, the following Cubans were part of the guerrilla army in Bolivia:

1. Maj. Vilo Acuña Núñez (Joaquín) killed 31 Aug. 1967
2. Maj. Sánchez Díaz (Marcos)
3. Maj. Gustavo Machín (Alejandro)
4. Capt. José María Martínez Tamayo (Papi, Ricardo)
5. Capt. Daniel Alarcón (Benigno) escaped to Chile
6. Capt. Alberto Fernández (Pacho) killed 8 Oct. 1967
7. Capt. Manuel Hernández
8. Capt. Orlando Pantoja (Antonio)
9. Capt. Eliseo Reyes Rodríguez (Rolando) killed 25 April '67
10. Capt. Suárez Gayol (El Rubio - had been Vice-Minister of Industry in Cuba) killed 10 April 1967
11. Capt. Harry Villegas (Pombo) escaped to Chile
12. Lt. Octavio de la Concepción (El Moro- Cuban military MD)
Killed in combat 4 August 1967
13. Lt. Carlos Coello (Tuma)
14. Lt. Israel Reyes (Braulio) killed 31 August 1967
15. Lt. René Martínez (sic) Tamayo (Arturo)

local farmers to donate or sell food to the guerrillas. In addition, the Bolivian Army rangers, recruited among the native population proved to be good fighters, particularly against foreigners. By contrast, Bolivian members of the guerrilla unit were city dwellers who did not even know how to swim. Several died fording frequently swollen rivers in the jungle. It was easy to see that a disaster was in the making.

The Secretary General of the Bolivian Communist Party, Mario Monje demanded political and military control of the revolution. Guevara refused to give up control and demanded complete authority. The Central Committee of the Communist Party backed Monje. The Communist Youth League expelled any members who joined the guerrillas. Guevara was left with the support of a small splinter group of the Communist Party and limited to non-existent assistance from abroad.

Before long, in early March of 1967, members of the guerrilla force clashed with Bolivian Army units of the IV Division based at Camiri. The guerrilla camp at Nanchahuasú was discovered and from about March 23, 1967 on, the guerrillas were on the run.⁴¹ They won some skirmishes but began to lose keymen experienced in guerrilla warfare and new men did not fill their numbers. Several Bolivians deserted and others were killed in combat, including Moises Guevara, one of the principal Bolivian leaders. He was killed on August 31st. In September of 1977, evidence began to be made public in Bolivia to the effect that Ernesto Guevara and several Cuban military officers and other foreigners had been leading a guerrilla force in that country since 1966.⁴² Within a month the Bolivian military reported that "Che" Guevara had been killed in the jungles in the southeast of Bolivia by Army rangers.

On October 8th, the guerrilla force fell into an ambush at Quebrada del Churo, and seven guerrillas were killed or captured. Guevara was captured suffering from a wound to a leg and was later executed by Bolivian Army officers. Only six members of the guerrilla force managed to escape, arriving in

⁴¹ During April of 1967, as the problems of the Bolivian guerrillas began to mount; another guerrilla organization in neighboring Brazil was also in trouble. A guerrilla unit that had been operating in Minas Gerais and Espiritu Santo in the Caparaó Mountains, was discovered by the Brazilian military and routed.

⁴² Among the Cubans who were said to to have accompanied "Che" Guevara was Major José Nivaldo Causse Pérez. He is now a Brigadier General in the Cuban Army. The author has not found hard evidence that he participated in the Bolivian adventure. Moises and Ernesto Guevara were not related.

Chile in December of 1967. Only three of the fifteen Cubans survived the experience.⁴³

The story of how Guevara was tracked down by the CIA and the participation of Cuban exiles in his capture and execution is a classic in intelligence operations. According to published reports, Special Operations staffers of the CIA suspected that Cubans were involved with the guerrillas operating in Bolivia, but could not get a receptive ear from their principals in the agency. However, when the guerrilla camp at Nancahuazú was overrun by Bolivian troops, captured documents provided sufficient evidence to prove that Guevara and a group of Cubans were in Bolivia. Guevara's fingerprints and a picture served to establish his presence. A few days later Regis Debray was captured by Bolivian troops. His life was allegedly saved by the CIA with promises that if he cooperated he would be protected from the Bolivians who wanted to kill him. In an attempt to save his life Debray talked.⁴⁴

CIA Director Richard Helms and Clandestine Services head Thomas Karamessines put in motion a major operation to capture Guevara. American troops were sent to Bolivia to train Bolivian rangers in anti-guerrilla operations. Cuban exiles, including veterans of Bay of Pigs, who were familiar with Cuban military tactics were also sent to Bolivia. Before long, the guerrillas were on the run, suffering defeat after defeat. Another break in the case came when "Tania" an East German member of the guerrilla band was killed in late August of 1967. Tania had helped with the preparations to start the guerrilla operations as an agent of the Cuban Government. She may have been, in addition to a Cuban intelligence officer, a counterintelligence officer working for the Soviet Union and given the task of keeping an eye on what the Cubans were up to. Finally, Guevara was captured on October 8th. The CIA attempted to save his life in exchange for his cooperation in disclosing details of Cuban operations around the world. However, the Bolivian Government did not want Guevara alive for fear that he would create political problems for them and execution orders were given, overruling the CIA.⁴⁵ It seems that Guevara was not willing to cooperate anyway.

⁴³ The members of the guerrilla force who managed to reach the Chilean border were received by Salvador Allende, who was then a member of the Chilean Senate. He provided them help to leave Chile unharmed.

⁴⁴ Victor Marchetti and John D. Marks, The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence, pp. 138-145.

⁴⁵ Ibid. Among the alleged CIA men involved in the capture of Guevara were Hugo Murray (station chief), John S. Hilton, Colonel Ed Fox, Larry Sternfield and Nick Lendiris. Among

Guevara's failure in Bolivia cannot be separated from the failure of the theory of the "foco" which had become a fad among some Marxist revolutionaries in the mid sixties. They believed that it was possible to start a revolution with only a handful of dedicated revolutionaries who would form the vanguard of a large movement which would follow after the masses became radicalized. They expected that the process of radicalization would come about from the experience of innocent civilians suffering the expected repression carried out by the government against the revolutionaries.

The defeat of Guevara and the other Cuban guerrilla leaders was a major setback for the plans to export the revolution. Castro eulogized Guevara and praised his dedication to the struggle against imperialism. But he pointed out that he had differed with Guevara over guerrilla tactics and called Guevara impetuous. Castro also pointed out that Guevara had a scorn for danger and believed that individuals were not important; that as men died new leaders would come up from the ranks and take their place in the vanguard of the revolutionary struggle.

With the defeat of Guevara the militancy of the Cuban leadership was restrained. It is estimated that over 2,500 Latin Americans had been trained to lead guerrilla forces. But the Latin American Armed Forces were also receiving training from the United States military on anti-insurgency operations. The experiences gained in the Vietnam war were being used to train special forces for counterinsurgency operations in Latin America. In the 1950's the Cuban military under Batista was weak, ill-trained and had corrupt and inept leadership. The situation that Cuban-sponsored guerrilla forces faced in the late sixties was much different. The Cuban military had to go back to the drawing board and rethink the concepts which had been used to export the revolution.

Cuba and the American New Left in the 1960's

The Cuban efforts to export the revolution did not spear the United States. The anti-war movement in the United States and the American "new left" were very much influenced by the Cuban revolution and Fidel Castro. Leaders of the new left, including the leadership of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and members of the Black Panther Party, were invited to Cuba to see first-hand the progress of the revolution. Members of these groups were converted to the Cuban political line and trained by Cuban military and intelligence

the Cuban exiles who assisted in tracking down Guevara was Julio Gabriel Garcia.

officers to carry out terrorism in the United States. Cuba not only became a source of training but also a place to hide from American authorities and a source of funds. In addition to American leftists, even common criminals found refuge in Cuba. One of the favorite avenues to reach the island was by hijacking airplanes in domestic flights in the United States, risking the lives of many innocent people.

Although the Cuban Government did not have the funds to promote revolution in the United States, friendly groups in the American new left were provided tons of Cuban propaganda which they could sell in college campuses to raise needed cash. However, despite the Cuban efforts to promote revolution in the United States, they failed in their goals. Before long, the "conservative" nature of the Cuban regime, opposed to drugs, homosexuality and inherent internal racism in Cuba turned off the American young people who had flocked to Cuba seeking a political guru. The Cuban Government promoted social disorganization, including sexual freedoms, homosexuality, drugs, etc. in the United States. However, Castro would not tolerate these activities in Cuba. The young "new left" members often became disillusioned and returned home.

The Viet Nam War

The Cuban Government provided the North Vietnamese Government moral and material support throughout the war from the arrival of American troops in 1965 to the fall of Saigon in 1975. Cuban medical doctors and other technical personnel were sent to Vietnam to lend a hand in the war effort. Details of the extent of Cuban involvement have never been researched and published.

One interesting aspect of Cuban participation in the war is that American prisoners of war reported upon their release that they had seen and heard people whom they believed to be Cubans in their prisons. Some even reported having been interrogated by men whom they believed to have been Cuban military personnel.

In a radio address on September 19, 1977, President Ronald Reagan quoted from the experiences of one American prisoner of war in North Vietnam. Colonel George E. Day, holder of the Congressional Medal of Honor, wrote that Cuban Embassy officials in Hanoi inflicted some of the worst tortures on American prisoners. According to Colonel Day, the Cubans sold the North Vietnamese the idea that they were experts in brainwashing and could re-educate American POW's so that they would go back home preaching the Communist line. When they failed in their mission, they turned to plain brutality. Colonel Day related the story of an American POW who was raped, bullied and tortured for a whole day until his mind

gave out. He was then subjected to electric shock treatments with an old machine that left him with massive burns on his body and finished him off mentally. The POW was last seen by his fellow POW's in October of 1970.⁴⁶



ERNESTO "CHE" GUEVARA

These pictures show "Che" Guevara as a guerrilla fighter in Cuba after the overthrow of Batista in 1959, as a bureaucrat in Havana in the early 1960's and as a guerrilla fighter in Bolivia a few days before he was captured and executed.

⁴⁶ Radio address by President Ronald Reagan, September 19, 1977. Reagan on Cuba, (Washington, D.C.: Cuban National Foundation), pp. 13-14.



FIDEL CASTRO ADDRESSING THE 4TH SUMMIT MEETING OF THE UNALIGNED COUNTRIES IN 1973



FIDEL CASTRO WITH PRESIDENTS BOUMEDIENNE OF ALGERIA AND SEKOU TOURE OF GUINEA IN MAY OF 1972 DURING A TOUR OF AFRICAN COUNTRIES.



THE FIVE "FRONT LINE" AFRICAN LEADERS

Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, Agostinho Neto of Angola, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Seretse Khama of Botswana and Samora Moises Machel of Mozambique. The Cuban Government provided military support and technical assistance to all five of these leaders. (Neto died of cancer in September 1979, and was replaced by Jose Eduardo Dos Santos; Khama died of cancer in July of 1980, and was replaced by Quett Masire; Machel was killed in October of 1986 in a plane crash.)

PHASE III (1970-1975)

As was stated in the introduction to this chapter, Cuba made a major effort in the early 1970's to re-establish diplomatic relations with Latin American countries and to open relations with newly independent African countries. In Latin America, diplomatic relations were re-opened with Chile in 1970; with Barbados, Peru, Jamaica, Guyana, and Trinidad Tobago in 1972, and with Bahamas, Venezuela and Panama in 1974. In Africa, diplomatic relations were established with Mali, Equatorial Guinea and Mauritania in 1972. In 1973 relations were established with Guinea-Bissau. In 1974 relations were opened with Senegal, Nigeria, Gabon, Benin, Burundi, Cameroon, Ghana and Liberia. In other parts of the world, Cuba opened diplomatic relations with South Yemen in 1972 and Madagascar and Laos in 1974. For a small country with limited resources the cost of opening all of these diplomatic missions was substantial. The funds were obviously coming from the Soviet Union. In addition to the normal expenses associated with operating an extensive diplomatic service, Cuban military advisors were sent to many of these countries, particularly those in Africa.

Cuba and the Unaligned Movement

Fidel Castro became one of the leaders of the so-called Unaligned Movement.¹ Castro attended the Fourth Summit Conference of the movement, held in Algeria in September of 1973, and made an important speech which is credited with triggering a movement towards an alliance with Socialist countries. Castro's speech represented a radical departure

¹ The founders of the Unaligned Movement were Gamal Abdel Nasser (Egypt), Jawaharlal Nehru (India) and Josip Broz Tito (Yugoslavia). The movement, which is everything but unaligned, began its preliminary organization in 1956. In 1960, during the XV General Assembly of the United Nations in New York, final preparations were made for inviting the 21 original members of the movement for the First Summit Meeting of the Unaligned Countries, which was held in Belgrade in September of 1961. Cuba was one of the founding countries. The Second Summit Meeting was held in Cairo in October of 1964, with 47 member countries and 10 more as observers. The Third Summit Meeting was held in Lusaka, Zambia in September of 1970, with 54 member countries. At all of these meetings, members of guerrilla organizations fighting anti-colonialist wars in Africa as well as Palestinian and other revolutionary and terrorist groups were present. The rhetoric and the accords reached at these meetings became more anti-American and more pro-Soviet with each meeting.

from the traditional goals of the Unaligned Movement. His efforts to become a leader of the organization blossomed when he became the president of the organization in 1979.

A total of 75 countries participated in the 1973 conference as members of the organization. Eight other countries participated as observers. By 1979, the number of member countries had reached 95. In addition to the member countries and observers, several "Liberation Movements" attended as invited observers. These organizations were:

- Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA)
- National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA)
- African Party for the Liberation of Guinea and
Cape Verde (PAIGC)
- Popular Union Party of Seychelles (SPUP)
- National Liberation Movement of Comoras (MOLINACO)
- Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO)
- South West Africa Popular Organization (SWAPO)
- Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO)
- Commission for the Liberation of Sao Tome
and Principe (CLC)
- Puerto Rican Socialist Party (PSP)
- Movement for the Liberation of Djibuti (MLD)
- African National Congress (ANC)
- Pan African Congress (PAC)
- Zimbabwe Popular Union (ZAPU)
- Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU)

The Unaligned Movement issued a declaration of solidarity with people fighting Portuguese colonialism and issued a pledge of economic, political and military support to them. This declaration was instrumental to justify Cuban military assistance to most of the groups listed above.

Cuba and Latin America

In Latin America, leaders of several countries began to call for an end to the economic and political isolation of Cuba. In 1972, President Raul Velasco Alvarado of Peru called for an end to actions taken by the Organization of American States against Cuba and asked that individual countries be able to individually lift sanctions against Cuba. President Luis Echeverria of Mexico also called for an end to the isolation of Cuba. Argentina provided large credits to Cuba to buy Argentinean products.

Cuban military tactics for exporting the revolution were revised based, on the experience of the 1960's. First, urban areas were seen as more viable for guerrilla warfare. The concept of rural guerrillas, although not entirely abandoned,

had been a failure, causing the loss of life to many Cuban military officers, as well as to native political leaders. The two principal tacticians who replaced the ideas of "Che" Guevara and Regis Debray were not Cuban.² They were Abraham Guillén and Carlos Marighella. They proposed the formation of urban guerrilla organizations to carry out kidnappings of prominent businessmen, American Government officials; executions of prominent local officials and business leaders; ambushes of police and military units and acts of sabotage. Another tactical change was that the Cuban Government was now seeking to form coalitions of revolutionary organizations. The "infantilism," as Lenin may have called the Cuban attempt to put down anyone who did not fully endorse the Cuban view of the world, was replaced with an emphasis to bridge differences between revolutionary groups so that they could work together for their common goals.³

The principal practitioners of the new urban warfare tactics were based in Latin America. The Tupamaros were formed in Uruguay and increased their activity between 1969 and 1972. One of their principal tools was kidnaping. Their activity prompted the Uruguayan military to take power and to place in motion a bloody anti-insurgency campaign that, within a short period of time, resulted in the destruction of most of the revolutionary cells of the Tupamaros. However, many innocent civilians lost their lives in the process. In Argentina at least two organizations formed urban guerrilla groups. They were the Montoneros and the Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo (ERP). The Montoneros were formed by members of the old Peronist party. The ERP was a Trotskyist organization. Both groups used kidnaping, ambushes and sabotage as their primary tools of the trade. Their activities resulted in the military coup d'état and a bloody anti-insurgency campaign in which possibly as many as 10,000 people were rounded up, interrogated, tortured and executed. Many innocent civilians died in the process but the urban guerrilla cells were wiped out. Many Uruguayan and Argentinean urban guerrillas ended

² Please note that although Guevara was Argentinean and Debray French, their theories of revolution were regarded as "Cuban," because of the support given to them by the Cuban Government.

³ In Argentina, the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias (FAR), a pro-Cuban organization made an effort in the early 1970's to form a coalition with other revolutionary organizations. In the late 1970's the Cuban Government organized Nicaraguan leaders into a coalition to overthrow Somoza. In the 1980's the Cuban Government has promoted coalitions of revolutionary organizations in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala. In fact, Cuban military assistance is not provided to groups that are not willing to endorse the Cuban attempts to unify revolutionary organizations.

up finding their way to Cuba seeking refuge. These organizations now maintain their headquarters in Havana.

Marighella, author of the Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla ended up dead like Guevara trying to implement his theories. He was killed in Brazil leading an urban guerrilla organization. The principal tactics of the Brazilian guerrillas were also ambushes, executions, sabotage and kidnaping. They even managed to kidnap the American Ambassador to Brazil. But despite much publicity gained by some of their extraordinary deeds, they failed. The Brazilian military and police forces were able to wipe out most of the guerrilla organizations.

Fifteen years later, Cuba has once again established diplomatic relations with Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil and the old attempts to actively promote the violent overthrow of the government of these countries would seem to have been set aside. The emphasis has been now placed in re-establishing economic and political relations and seeking support for Cuba's admittance to regional organizations. However, the long term goal of assisting Communists to take power in these countries is as strong today as it ever was. Only the tactics have changed.

Cuban Economic and Military Assistance

Another tactical change was the use of Cuban troops to perform civic duties, such as building hospitals, schools, airports, roads, etc. This was not a major discovery since American troops, particularly U.S. Navy seabees, have been performing similar tasks for many years. Cuban troops were sent to Peru after the earthquake of 1970 to assist in building new hospitals and delivering health care to the needy. In Africa, Cuban troops were sent not only to train local military forces, but also to build roads, airports and hospitals and the like in Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Tanzania. After 1975, Cuban troops as well as civilians have been involved in similar civic duties in Angola, Ethiopia and in Grenada. Some of these construction projects may also have had a secondary military purpose. For example, the construction of airports would also provide Cuban military aircraft important operational stops for support of future military missions.

A major emphasis was also placed on military training and general education for potential revolutionary leaders in

⁴ Marighella's organization was the Action for National Liberation of Brazil. For a listing of his works see the bibliography.

WESTERN HEMISPHERE

Chile

With the election of Salvador Allende in Chile in 1970, diplomatic relations were re-established with Cuba. Allende was a declared Marxist who had been a supporter of the Cuban revolution from its inception in 1959. He was responsible for saving five men from Guevara's guerrilla force in Bolivia who managed to reach the Chilean border. He had arranged for their safe trip out of Chile. He may also have assisted in other Cuban military operations before becoming President of Chile.

Allende ran for the presidency in 1964, but was defeated by Christian Democratic candidate Eduardo Frey, who received substantial help from American companies and the U.S. Government. In 1970, Allende was able to form a coalition of Socialists, Communists and other leftist to capture the presidency by plurality. Although his party was unable to get over fifty percent of the vote he was able to capture control of the government with the votes cast for other parties in his coalition.

Soon after taking power, Allende began to take actions leading to his perpetuation in power. Foreign companies were expropriated. Peasants in several parts of the country invaded large farms. Preparations were made for a plebiscite to abolish Congress and set up a one-house "assembly of the people." Freedom of the press was slowly restricted. Radio stations of the opposition were closed down. Prominent members of the opposition were assassinated. As the government increased its radical political program the economy deteriorated. Unemployment increased and serious food shortages began to hurt the public.

The direction taken by Allende to set up a Communist government in Chile was obvious. Revolutionaries from neighboring countries sought refuge in Chile. Diplomatic relations were established with Cuba, the People's Republic of China and other Communist countries. In April of 1971, Fidel Castro pledged financial and military support to Allende.⁵ A few days later an article by R. A. Ulyanovsky, in Izvestia, urged developing countries to follow Chile's example in creating united fronts of Communists and others opposed to the capi-

⁵ "Cuban Premier Castro pledges financial and military support to Chile commenting on Bay of Pigs fiasco," New York Times (April 20, 1971), p.11, col. 1.

other countries. Thousands of students from Africa, the Middle East and Latin America have been provided with scholarships to study in Cuba. Thousands more have been trained by Cuban officers both in Cuba, as well as in Middle Eastern countries, mainly Lebanon, Iraq, Libya and South Yemen. Many of the men who were trained in the early 1970's later surfaced leading the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua and guerrillas in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala.



Castro visits Allende in Chile in November of 1971.



On the return trip from Chile, Castro visited with Gen. Velasco Alvarado of Peru.



Castro with Michael Manley during a visit to Jamaica.

talist system and take power. At the end of a visit of Soviet Premier Kosygin to Cuba in November of 1971, a joint USSR-Cuba communique was released expressing both countries' solidarity with Allende.⁶

In addition to public declarations of support to the Chilean Government, Cuban military officials began to arrive in Chile. Foreign Minister Raúl Roa and two "comandantes," Carreras Rojas and Raúl Argüello, arrived in Chile in August of 1971 for a one-week visit, possibly to prepare for a visit by Fidel Castro, but also to provide assistance to Allende.⁷

Fidel Castro arrived for a three-week visit to Chile on November 10, 1971, where he was received as a conquering hero by Allende and his followers. The two leaders rode in an open car through the slum areas of Santiago for two hours. Even the Chilean military rolled out the welcome mat for Castro. The Cuban Government made a major effort to develop friends within the Chilean military, which had a tradition of keeping out of politics and respecting the government in power. Chilean Brigadier General Carlos Araya Castro and other high-ranking officers had visited Cuba in January of 1971, under an invitation to see large-scale military training exercises.

Judging by pictures of the visit to the training exercises published in Granma and other Cuban periodicals, the Chilean officers were treated to an uncommon event in Latin America. Hundreds of tanks, armored personnel carriers, artillery, jet fighters, helicopters and thousands of troops participated in the exercises before their eyes. Thousands of rounds of ammunition were used. The visiting officials could not have been anything but impressed by this display of force which is well beyond the financial means of other Latin American countries.

Several days after Castro's arrival, over 5,000 women in Santiago de Chile protested his visit, food shortages and other problems in the deteriorating economy. The women were tear-gassed by the police and security forces. General Augusto Pinochet, who was in charge of internal security, banned all demonstrations after this incident. The visit that started with an enthusiastic welcome ended with public

⁶ The USSR urges developing countries to follow Chile's example," New York Times (April 28, 1971), p.3, col. 1. "Soviet Premier Kosygin during visit to Cuba expresses solidarity with Allende," New York Times (November 2, 1971), p.12, col.5.

⁷ "Min. Roa and high commanders of Armed Forces and Police arrive in Chile," New York Times (August 17, 1971), p.11, col. 1.

demonstrations of protest. Throughout his visit Castro spoke repeatedly about the need to unify revolutionary forces in the country. He warned of the danger presented by counter-revolutionaries. Castro finally left on December 5, stopping over for short airport visits with Peru's Velasco Alvarado and with the President of Ecuador at the Guayaquil airport.

The economic situation in Chile continued to deteriorate rapidly between 1970 and 1973. Food shortages, strikes, balance of payment problems and efforts by anti-Communists to overthrow Allende led to a military coup d'etat in September of 1973, allegedly with CIA help, although this has been denied. Allende died at the Presidential Palace. Between 500 and 1,000 people were killed in heavy fighting between members of an armed workers militia that had been formed with Cuban assistance and the military. As soon as the military took power, the Cuban Embassy was closed down and over 150 Cubans were told to leave Chile.

The Chilean experience taught Fidel Castro and other Cuban leaders several lessons. It was possible for Communists to take over a government through constitutional elections. However, they could not hold power unless steps were taken right away to replace the Armed Forces with new men and create a large para-military force and an effective state security system to prevent the overthrow of the Communist government. The lessons were applied in Nicaragua after the Sandinistas took power. The Sandinistas took quick steps to avoid a repeat of the Chilean experience and imported hundreds of Cuban military advisors to form a strong military and internal security force.

Peru

On October 3, 1968, a military coup d'etat led by Velasco Alvarado against President Fernando Belaunde Terry brought to power a group of leftist military officers. They carried out a number of economic reforms, including the nationalization of the principal industries in the country, namely oil, fish meal, mining and the banks. They also attempted to implement an agrarian reform program. The tone of the Peruvian administration turned anti-American and pro-Soviet. Diplomatic relations were re-established with Cuba on July 8, 1972, and with the new relationship, Cuban military officers began to visit Peru. Soviet weapons and technicians began to arrive in Peru, together with delegations of Cuban officials.

On May 31, 1970, Peru was hit by a strong earthquake that killed over 50,000 people. The quake provided an opportunity to the Cuban Government to make friends in Peru. Cuban disaster relief teams, including military personnel, were sent

to provide assistance to the victims. In addition, Cuba sent food, clothing and thousands of pairs of shoes to assist the poor. When the author visited Peru in April of 1978, people in Lima were still talking about the thousands of pairs of Cuban shoes that had been distributed in the city.

Peru received a substantial amount of Soviet weapons. In 1973, Peru purchased Mi-8 helicopters and T-55 tanks. In addition, they obtained SA-3 anti-aircraft missiles. Over 3,000 Peruvian soldiers were sent to the Soviet Union to receive military training. The Soviet fishing fleet called on Peruvian ports and the Soviet airline Aeroflot obtained landing rights.

Food shortages, a serious economic downturn, Velasco Alvarado's ill health and excesses such as banning Santa Claus at Christmas time led to a second bloodless coup d'etat on August 29, 1976. General Francisco Morales Bermudez, leader of the coup, promised to restore civilian rule. Four years later, elections were held and Fernando Belaunde Terry was once again elected President in July of 1980. Within one year guerrilla operations with Cuban support started once again in Peru, and continued during the entire administration of Belaunde Terry and the new government of President Alan García Pérez, who was elected in 1985.⁸

Mexico

Perhaps due to the fact that Mexico was the only Latin American country that refused to go along with the economic blockade of Cuba sponsored by the Organization of American States in 1964 or to break diplomatic relations, the Cuban Government has not been as active in promoting revolution in

⁸ During the 1970's the old branch of the FLN in Huamanga that had become the Partido Comunista del Peru-Bandera Roja, was working quietly, developing relationships with the peasants in the remote mountain regions of Ayacucho. As the country moved back to civilian rule, this group began to operate as "Sendero Luminoso." Although some small-scale guerrilla operations had been started as early as 1973, Sendero Luminoso did not start a full-scale armed struggle until about 1978. Two guerrilla organizations are now active in Peru. They are the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA), which appeared in Peru in mid-1984, and the Sendero Luminoso (SL) guerrillas. There is evidence to the effect that the Cuban Government has provided assistance to the MRTA. Cuban connection with the SL guerrillas seems to have been limited due to the ultra radical politics of this group. Tupac Amaru also seems to be linked to the M-19 movement in Colombia, which in turn has received help from Cuba.

Mexico as it has in other countries in the region. However, the Cuban Government has maintained close contact with Mexican Marxist revolutionary groups since at least 1959.

Readers may remember that Castro organized his guerrilla force in Mexico in 1956 and departed from the port of Tuxpan, near Veracruz with 82 men in November of that year to start guerrilla warfare directed at overthrowing the Batista dictatorship. During the months that he spent in Mexico, Castro made contact with Mexican, as well as foreign revolutionaries living in that country, including Ernesto "Che" Guevara. Castro and his followers were arrested by Mexican police during this period and kept under watch by the Mexican authorities, but he was able to complete his mission nevertheless.

Despite the Mexican policy of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other countries and the friendly relations which have been maintained with Cuba, there are many instances in which the Cuban Government has meddled in Mexican internal affairs and offered assistance to Mexican radicals. For example, during the Tri-Continental Congress in Cuba in 1966, Mexican Communists who were associated with the PRI were not allowed to participate. Instead, more radical Marxists were seated.

Some guerrilla activity was also experienced in Mexico, both in urban and rural areas in the late sixties and early seventies. Their tactics included bank robberies, bombings, kidnappings and assassinations of Mexican Government officials, members of the police and military, foreign and national business leaders and American diplomats. Their relationship with the Cuban Government was clear, although they also received assistance from the People's Republic of China, North Korea and the Soviet Union.

To illustrate the extent of the Cuban connection to the Mexican guerrillas, here are some details of the kidnapping of American Consul General Terrance E. Leonhardy in Guadalajara on May 4, 1973, as he was returning home from work. Consul General Leonhardy was kidnapped by elements of the Fuerza Revolucionaria Armada del Pueblo (FRAP). This Trotskyist guerrilla organization with Cuban connections had not obtained notoriety before this incident, which they called "Operación 15 de enero de 1972-Chihuahua."

In their communique, issued several hours after they captured Mr. Leonhardy, they called for the release of 30 political prisoners being held in Mexican jails and their safe conduct to Cuba. They called the American Consul a "member of the exploiting class and representative of American capitalism." The kidnapers demanded that their long communiques be published in the principal newspapers in Mexico and threatened to kill Mr. Leonhardy if their demands were not met. The

communiques ended with classical Cuban revolutionary slogans: Por la Revolución Proletaria. ¡Venceremos!⁹

The Mexican Government, headed at the time by President Luis Echeverria, called on the Cuban Embassy in Mexico City seeking assistance to solve the crisis. At the time, the Cuban Ambassador was not present in Mexico, and the negotiations were handled by Chargé d'Affairs Jorge Reyes Vega, who was still stationed in Mexico in 1981 as First Secretary of the Cuban Embassy. The Cuban authorities agreed to receive the 30 prisoners. They were released from jail, taken to Mexico City and flown to Cuba on a Mexican Air Force DC-6, arriving in Havana at 15:43 hours on May 6, 1973. They were received by Adalberto Quintana, Director of the Instituto Cubano de Amistad Con los Pueblos (ICAP), an organization controlled by the Cuban intelligence services. After their arrival, the 76-hour kidnapping came to an end with the release of Consul General Leonhardy.¹⁰

The prisoners released on this exchange had been held in Mexican jails throughout the country. Two had been in jail in Chihuahua, three in Sonora, one in Guerrero, one in Monterrey, one in Morelia and 20 in Mexico City. Although they claimed to be political prisoners, they were being held for their participation in criminal acts, including assassinations, kidnappings, bank robberies and the like. Most of them were members of different Communist organizations.¹¹

According to press reports, FRAP was a small organization with less than 200 members. It was one of about nine guerrilla organizations that had been operating in Mexico since about 1968. One of the principal guerrilla figures of the

⁹ "Fue Secuestrado el Cónsul de EU en Guadalajara," El Informador, (May 5, 1973), p.1. This article also provides Mr. Leonhardy's background in the U.S. Foreign Service. He had entered the service in 1942 and had been in charge of Cuban Affairs at the Department of State in Washington from 1955 to 1958, during the guerrilla warfare directed at overthrowing Fulgencio Batista. He served as Consul General in Nogales, Sonora and Mexico City and in Washington as head of the Mexican Affairs desk. He had also served as Deputy Chief of Mission in El Salvador between 1971 and 1972. He was 58 years old at the time of his kidnapping. As this incident started, Secretary of State William Rogers was on his way to Mexico as the first stop on a trip to several Latin American countries.

¹⁰ "Acepta Cuba Recibir a los Presos," El Informador (May 6, 1973), p.1; "Llegaron los presos a Cuba; se cumplió la última exigencia," El Occidental (May 7, 1973), p.1.

¹¹ Most of these people have been back in Mexico for several years.

time was Lucio Cabañas, who operated in the mountains of the state of Guerrero and had killed 18 soldiers in an ambush. He was an assistant to another guerrilla leader, Genaro Vazquez Rojas, who was killed in a car accident in 1972. The Cabañas/Vazquez organization was the Movimiento Acción Revolucionaria (MAR). This group joined with the Frente Urbano Zapatista (FUZ) to form the "Partido de los Pobres" in Guerrero.

Another prominent guerrilla organization was the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias (FAR), which operated in Monterrey, Mexico's third largest city. They carried out assassinations, bank robberies and kidnappings in that city. The Comando Armado del Pueblo (CAP) operated in Mexico City and was composed mostly by criminals. The Central de Acción Revolucionaria Armada (CARA), Movimiento 23 de Septiembre, the Liga de Comunistas Armados (LCA), the Maoist Unión del Pueblo (UP) and the Acción Cívica Nacional Revolucionaria (ACNR) were the other principal guerrilla organizations. The UP was led by José María Ignacio Ortiz, a Guatemalan who had been a militant member of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Guatemala, prior to going to Mexico. This Guatemalan guerrilla group had a long standing relationship with the Cuban Government going back to the early 1960's.

The kidnapping contributed to building a general awareness among Mexican officials as well as the Mexican society about the danger faced by all when criminal acts are excused under the banner of revolution. The Mexican Government took the military initiative and was able to defeat all of these guerrilla organizations. Their security forces had eliminated the guerrillas within two years. The final assault on Mexico probably will wait until other Central American countries are taken over by Communists.

Venezuela, Panama and Caribbean Countries

Panama and Cuba re-established diplomatic relations in August of 1974. Diplomatic relations with Venezuela were re-established on December 29, 1974. This followed the establishment of diplomatic relations with a number of newly independent ex-European island countries in the Caribbean. Trinidad and Tobago, as well as Jamaica, had opened diplomatic relations with Cuba in December of 1972. Both countries had obtained their independence from Great Britain in 1962, but had not opened relations with Havana for ten years. Barbados, another former British colony that had obtained its independence in 1966, opened diplomatic relations with Cuba on December 8, 1972. The Bahamas, which obtained its independence on July 10, 1973, opened diplomatic relations with

Cuba on November 30, 1974.¹² All of these countries were governed at the time by left-of-center political parties. Some wanted to perhaps to avoid internal problems by re-establishing relations with Cuba, while others were sympathetic to the Cuban revolution.



Fidel Castro visiting Tanzanian President Julius K. Nyerere. On the other side is Gen. José Abrahantes, Castro's personal body guard and currently Cuban Minister of the Interior.



President Fidel Castro and Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam of Ethiopia.



Castro and Agostinho Neto during Castro's visit to Angola in 1977.



¹² Six years later, on May 10, 1980, Cuban Air Force planes attacked and sank a Bahamian Navy ship. For more details on this incident see Phase V of this chapter, p. 437.

AFRICA

Fidel Castro went on a two-month tour of Africa and Eastern Europe in 1972. He visited Guinea, Algeria, Sierra Leone, Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. This long trip was part of a major effort to win more friends throughout Africa and establish closer ties to Communist countries in Europe. He arrived in Conakry, capital of Guinea, on May 3, 1972, where he visited three cities with President Sekou Touré. Castro put on local dress (white pants, shirt and cap) and received enthusiastic and well-orchestrated welcomes. The press reports of neighboring African countries carried the stories of how the "man from the Sierra Maestra Mountains" had arrived on African soil. Algerian newspapers rejoiced at having Castro for the first time visiting Africa.

Guinea-Bissau

In 1973, on the eve of the independence of Guinea-Bissau, Amilcar Cabral, the Communist leader of the PAIGC, was assassinated. The PAIGC was the principal guerrilla organization fighting against Portugal to obtain independence for Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde. He had been a friend of Fidel Castro and other Cuban leaders for several years and had received Cuban military assistance despite his Maoist tendencies. His brother, Luis L. Cabral, became the first president of the country after Portugal decided to pull out in 1974. He was also the recipient of Cuban military assistance and in turn helped Cuba to carry out military operations elsewhere in Africa. For example, in 1975 Guinea-Bissau provided assistance to Cuba and the Angolan MPLA to defeat South African forces and the UNITA and FNLA guerrillas. In 1976, they also cooperated with Cuban forces assisting friendly Communists to take power in Sao Tomé.¹³

¹³ In November of 1980, Luis Cabral was deposed by a coup d'état led by Joao Bernardo Vieira, a member of the small Papel tribe, who had also been a prominent leader during the war against the Portuguese. He has been less friendly to the Soviet Union and possibly the Cuban Government, managing to survive several attempts to overthrow him. See Phase V of this chapter for more details, p. 425.

People's Revolutionary Republic of Guinea (Conakry)

In 1970 Portugal attempted to invade Guinea to put an end to assistance being provided to guerrilla organizations fighting in near-by Portuguese colonies. The invasion failed and thousands of local anti-Communists, as well as Portuguese allies, were arrested, tortured and killed. Cuban troops provided valuable assistance to the government during this period. The visit of Fidel Castro to the Guinean cities of Conakry, Kankan, Kissidugu and Faranah, with President Sekou Touré and Prime Minister Lansana Beavogui, helped to solidify the relationship between the leaders of both countries.

MIDDLE EAST

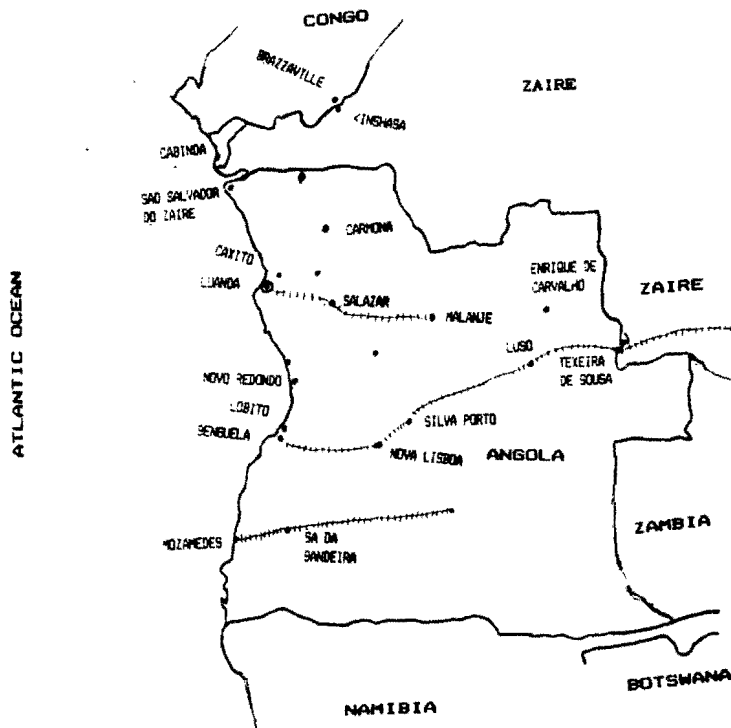
1973 Arab-Israeli War

After the 1967 Arab-Israeli war the Cuban Government offered to assist Arab revolutionaries, as well as Arab states, in their struggle against Israel and their American allies. When war broke out again in 1973 as many as 500 Cuban troops were stationed in Syria. Little is known about their participation in the conflict. The Cuban troops seemed to have been part of an armored brigade sent to Syria to provide training and logistical support to the Syrians and Palestinian revolutionaries. During the war they operated tanks and armored vehicles but did not go to the front lines. Although they took casualties they were very limited since they were kept behind the lines on rear guard duty.

Cuban Military Contacts with Arab Revolutionaries

Initial contacts between Cuban officials and Arab revolutionary groups date back to 1959, when the Cuban Government began to provide assistance to Algerian revolutionaries fighting against French colonial troops. Cuban military personnel had been active in Algeria since that country gained its independence. Algeria became an important center for training revolutionaries from the Arab world since the early 1960's. Members of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) had already made contact with Cuba before the Tri-Continental Congress in Havana in 1966. After that congress, members of the PLO and other Arab revolutionary organizations were invited to receive training in Cuba or offered scholarships to attend Cuban schools.

After the defeat of the Arab armies in 1967, the relationship between the PLO, Fatah, and groups commanded by George Habash and Abu Jihad and the Cuban Government became stronger. Cuban military personnel were sent to Libya, Lebanon, Iraq and South Yemen to train Palestinians. Other Palestinians have been given training in Cuba. Joint Cuban-Arab groups have received training in the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries. Diplomatic relations between Cuba, Lebanon, Iraq and Egypt had been established in 1960. Relations with South Yemen were established in May 1972, with Kuwait in 1974 and with Libya in March of 1976.



PHASE IV (1975-1980)

AFRICA

The War in Angola ¹⁴

The first known contact between Cuban Government officials and the leadership of guerrilla organizations fighting to end Portuguese colonialism in Angola is reported to have taken place in 1965. Ernesto "Che" Guevara and other Cuban officials met with Agostinho Neto, political leader of the MPLA, and his military commander-in-chief somewhere in present day Zaire or in the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville). About two hundred Cuban troops led by Guevara were then involved in providing support to anti-government guerrillas fighting against Moises Tshombe in Zaire.

Within a few months of this meeting in 1965, Cuban troops began to train MPLA guerrillas both in Cuba and in Congo-Brazzaville. Cuban ships delivered large quantities of weapons to the MPLA through Congo-Brazzaville for over ten years. One unit of Cuban-trained MPLA guerrillas was named after Camilo Cienfuegos.¹⁵ In 1966 Neto and other MPLA officials visited Cuba and from that time on the MPLA maintained close contacts with the Cuban Government. Angolan Communists were provided a safe haven in Cuba. Some were provided scholarships to attend Cuban schools.

The final assault to take over Angola came after the military coup d'etat in Portugal in 1974, which placed in power young officers interested in ending the colonial wars in Africa. The new Portuguese Government invited the principal guerrilla

¹⁴ Angola was a Portuguese colony from 1583 until 1975, when the colony was granted independence after several years of guerrilla warfare that started in 1961. The population of Angola is estimated at 6.8 million. The largest population groups are: Ovimbundo (38%), Kimbundo (23%), Bakongo (13%). Life expectancy at birth is 37 years for men and 40.1 for women. Literacy is estimated to be less than 15%. There are only 6 physicians per 100,000 inhabitants. The size of the Angolan Armed Forces in 1980 was estimated to number less than 35,000 men.

¹⁵ Major Camilo Cienfuegos was one of the principal guerrilla leaders during the revolution against Batista. He was killed when his plane crashed in 1959. For additional information see Index.

organizations fighting for the liberation of Angola to participate in the formation of a transition government until the final withdrawal of Portuguese forces from that country.

The three guerrilla organizations, which had fought for years for the liberation of Angola, clashed in a bloody civil war to take control of the government. Zambia was offering support to the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), led by Jonas Sabimbi. This group had also received aid from the People's Republic of China. The National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA), led by Holden Roberto, was receiving aid from Zaire, North Korea and the People's Republic of China.¹⁶ The FNLA was also receiving assistance from the United States, and had managed to take a large territory in the northeast and set up a capital at Carmona.

South African troops had also entered the southern part of Angola as of August of 1975 and was giving assistance to UNITA and the FNLA. They had provided weapons and assisted in the organization of a military force headed by Daniel Chipenda, a former member of the MPLA who had defected to the FNLA. The Soviet Union and Cuba provided support for the Communist faction of the MPLA led by Agostinho Neto.

MPLA and Cuban officials met in May of 1975 and worked out plans for substantial Cuban military assistance to the MPLA. Major Flavio Bravo and Agostinho Neto met in Brazzaville.¹⁷ At this meeting the MPLA asked for help from the Cubans to capture power after the departure of the Portuguese. A second meeting is said to have taken place five months later, in August of 1975, between Major Raul Arguello and Neto in Luanda. By then the struggle for power between the different guerrilla organizations had placed the MPLA on the run. The leader of the MPLA requested Cuban military assistance as soon as possible. The Soviets were waiting until the departure of the Portuguese before they intervened directly in providing assistance to their friends in the MPLA.

According to press reports, United States and Cuban officials held high level talks in 1974 and 1975 about the situation in Angola. Assistant Secretary of State William Rogers reportedly made it clear to Cuban officials at a meeting that took place in September of 1975 that the United States firmly opposed Cuban military involvement in Angola. The meeting did

¹⁶ Holden Roberto and President Mobutu of Zaire were relatives by marriage.

¹⁷ Flavio Bravo is now a member of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party and President of the National Assembly of the People's Government.

not have much effect.¹⁸ The Cuban Government was already in the process of sending military advisors and training personnel to set up four training bases for MPLA troops at Benguela, Saurimo, Cabinda and Delatando. They were trying to support the MPLA so that it could capture power upon the departure of the Portuguese which had been scheduled for November 11.

Three Cuban ships with men and an assortment of weapons and other equipment arrived in Angola in early October. The Cuban merchant ship "Viet Nam Heroico" arrived on October 4, the "Coral Island" on October 7 and the "La Plata" on October 11. But before they could establish their camps and train a large force of MPLA troops, the military situation grew worse for the Cuban allies. South African troops began to advance north toward the capital and the FNLA also began to close in from the north on MPLA held territory.

The Cuban Government then decided to send a battalion of special forces (650 men) to Angola by air to support the MPLA and the Cuban troops which had already arrived in October. The battalion was transported by air in 13 days, starting on November 7, 1975. They used old Bristol Britannia turbo prop airplanes, making refueling stops in Barbados, Guinea-Bissau and Congo-Brazzaville before landing in Luanda. Preparations began for sending thousands of additional troops by ship and air. This included at least one artillery regiment and a battalion of motorized troops.¹⁹

¹⁸ "U.S. and Cuba reportedly held high level talks," New York Times (March 28, 1977), p.8, col. 4.

¹⁹ Did Cuba decide on its own to send troops to Angola or were they ordered to send them by the Soviet Union? This critical question about the Cuban involvement in Angola has not yet been answered with any degree of accuracy by any of the scholars who write on Cuban issues. It is well-known that the Soviets were flying weapons into Brazzaville for the MPLA throughout most of 1975. At least two Soviet Il-62 were also provided to Cuba in December of 1975 or January of 1976 to assist in the transportation of soldiers to Angola. One thing is clear, however, Fidel Castro took a major risk when he sent thousands of troops to Angola weeks before the start of the Congress of the Communist Party, which was held in December of 1975. He could have found himself with a tremendous problem on his hands had Cuban troops been routed in Angola. They had suffered several costly defeats from October to December 1975. Had some members of the United States Congress not undermined the efforts to assist the guerrilla organizations fighting against the MPLA, Cuba would have suffered substantial casualties and possibly a significant military defeat in Angola. This is another instance in which the American political system may be difficult to understand for

They used Cuban merchant ships, fishing boats, and an assortment of airplanes. The logistics were fairly primitive but effective enough to transfer large quantities of men and materials. Commercial airplanes and small cargo vessels were often overloaded in an effort to carry large numbers of troops quickly to Angola. Considering that Cuba had never been involved in any operation of this type, the results were commendable. But the key to the success of the operation was the ambivalence and lack of direction of the United States on the Angolan situation. Cuba would not have been able to intervene in Angola had the United States taken a strong stand and blockaded Cuban troops on the island.²⁰

The Cuban forces entered combat almost from the time they arrived. The war in several fronts at the same time was not easy. They suffered several major defeats including one at Catofe, where South African forces surprised them and caused a substantial number of casualties. The months of November and December of 1975 were very difficult. Many mistakes were made and the Cubans losses included General Raul Argüello, a veteran commander of the revolution against Batista. Readers may remember that more or less at the time that the Angolan war was starting, the Cuban Government was in the process of going back to traditional military ranks. Thus, in some cases officers like Argüello are referred to as "Major" instead of his new rank of general.

foreigners. Nevertheless, the law is the law, and once it was decided not to take action against Cuban troops in Angola, the U.S. Government stopped all military assistance to the guerrillas fighting against the MPLA.

²⁰ United States policy on the Angolan situation took the form of a marriage of a classical tragedy and a comedy. John Stockwell, a former CIA official who had led the task force which provided covert aid to pro-western forces, defected and published a book with the title In Search of Enemies. He accused high-level CIA officials of misleading Congress and the public on U.S. involvement in Angola. U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Andrew Young made a public statement in February of 1977 to the effect that Cuban troops in Angola provided "certain stability" to the country. The Arms Export Control Act, the War Powers Act and the Tunney Amendment passed by the Senate on December 19, 1975, and the House of Representatives on January 27, 1976, were used to bar assistance to pro-western guerrillas. The possibility of ending the ineffective U.S. "blockade" of Cuba in exchange for Cuban withdrawal from Angola was openly discussed in the press by high-level U.S. Government officials. In the meantime, Soviet leader Leonid I. Brezhnev was pledging all-out support for Agostinho Neto and his followers. This general political environment made it possible for Cuba to set a new precedent in its military involvement overseas.

Cuban troop strength continued to increase. Most of the members of the General Staff were replaced by younger junior officers and sent to Angola to lead the battle. General officers like Victor Schueg Colas and Leopoldo Cintras Frias, Abelardo Colomé Ibarra, Raul Menéndez Tomassevich, along with the Casas Regueiro brothers (both Division Generals today) and many others took active part in the fighting.

By the end of January 1976, a total of between 6,000 and 7,000 troops were already deployed in Angola. Cuban planes used the Azores, particularly Santa Maria Island, between December 20 and December 30, 1975, as a refueling stop. Despite objections from the Portuguese Government, Cuban planes again used the Azores for the same purpose between January 10 and 15, 1976. The troops had been transported using Soviet manufactured IL-62 airplanes.

Cuban troops fought three campaigns in less than 12 months against the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) guerrilla forces in the north and south east and South African forces in the south. Cuban forces also joined MPLA troops in a bloody campaign to defeat the Front for the Liberation of the Cabinda Enclave (FLEC) led by Francisco Xavier Lubota.

South African Prime Minister Pieter Willem Botha sent troops and military assistance to pro-western forces in Angola starting in 1975 to prevent a Communist victory. However, he was without any international clout due to the racist policies of the South African Government. Their participation was doomed from the start.

In July of 1977, October of 1979 and August of 1980, and on several other occasions, South Africa has sent troops with limited military objectives. However, South African troops have not had a major, direct clash with Cuban troops. Most of their raids into Angola have been directed against bases of Communist guerrillas fighting for the independence of South West Africa (Namibia).

The Cuban forces have been successful in keeping the MPLA in power but have been unable to defeat UNITA guerrillas. Without the support of Cuban troops and military advisers from the Soviet Union and East Germany, the Angolan Government would not have been able to retain power with its small and incompetent Army. The total number of Cuban combat troops and technical and support personnel has reached as high as 36,000 in the past 10 years. A large number of combat troops, possibly well over 150,000, have been rotated since 1975, thus providing a large number of Cuban military personnel valuable combat experience. During the Third Congress of the Cuban Communist Party in February of 1986, several Cuban

generals sporting Angolan combat decorations sat among the 1,790 delegates to the congress in Havana's Convention Center. 21

Casualties in Angola have been relatively high considering the size of the Cuban population. However, in actual numbers perhaps about 3,000 Cubans have been killed and another two or three thousand have been wounded. Tropical diseases have also taken their toll, not only on the troops serving in Angola, but also back in Cuba where previously unheard of diseases imported from Africa have caused problems in agriculture, animal husbandry and in the general population, (i.e., dengue, conjunctivitis or red eye, rare strains of VD, and African swine fever, to mention only a few).22

Most of the fighting took place between 1975 and 1978, when the MPLA was able to consolidate its control of the Angolan capital and maintain most of the national territory with the support of Cuban troops. By March of 1977, the MPLA and Cuban forces had been able to stabilize their military control enough for Fidel Castro to visit Angola and several other African countries and brag about their victory. But two months later, in May of 1977, a coup was attempted against Agostinho Neto by Nito Alves and Jose Van Dunem with the support of several Army units. The bloody uprising was defeated, with Cuban troops playing an important role. Heavy fighting took place again in Cabinda Province in June of 1977 against FLEC guerrillas, who were routed. In July, about 4,000 more Cuban troops arrived to provide additional support to the MPLA. Despite the additional Cuban troops UNITA was able to launch a military offensive in December of 1977 against the government. New Cuban-supported military offensives against UNITA were carried out in April and June of 1978, but the guerrilla units led by Sabimbi had by then been able to consolidate their forces in tribal lands of people who support UNITA.

The Angolan Government was even able to survive the death of MPLA leader Agostinho Neto, who died after surgery in the So-

21 Marilyn Achiron and Ron Moreau, "Castro: No Cardboard Tiger," Newsweek (February 17, 1986), p.10 (International Edition).

22 The war in Angola may have also contributed to an increase in homosexuality among Cuban soldiers. The author has interviewed Cubans who served in Angola, as well as young people who knew other young Cubans who fought in Angola and heard several reports of homosexuality among Cuban soldiers in Angola. The problems may not yet be over since it has been discovered that there may be a linkage between African Swine Fever and AIDS, and many people in that part of Africa seem to have the disease.

viet Union in September of 1979. He was replaced by José Eduardo Dos Santos as head of state. Dos Santos is married to a Cuban and has had a long relationship with the Cuban Government. To further consolidate MPLA power in Angola, thousands of Angolan children have been taken to Cuba to receive schooling at the Isle of Youth (Isle of Pines), to create young Communist leaders for the future. Captured guerrilla soldiers and Angolans arrested for opposing the MPLA Government and its Cuban allies have been tried and given death sentences. In 1980, in particular, hundreds were executed for opposing the government. With the assistance of Cuban intelligence officers, the Angolan Government has set up a very effective state security organization which has been instrumental in implementing effective control of the capital and several major population centers.

Fidel Castro Visits Africa

In March of 1976, Fidel Castro travelled to Guinea to attend a meeting hosted by President Ahmed Sekou Touré, which was also attended by Agostinho Neto, leader of the Angolan MPLA and President Luis Cabral of Guinea-Bissau. This meeting took place as Cuban and MPLA forces were driving back into Namibia the South African troops which had invaded Angola. Holden Roberto's FNLA and his allies from Zaire were defeated and UNITA forces were retreating back to the southeastern part of the country. Cuban troops had performed well and a new chapter in Cuban-African relations was starting.

On the eve of the meeting in Guinea, American Ambassador Herbert Spiro and an American consular officer were declared persona non grata and forced to leave. The United States broke diplomatic relations in January of 1976, as a result of this incident. At the same time, Guinea was granting the Soviet Union use of the country's national territory to establish a naval base for reconnaissance squadrons. Internal persecution of political enemies of Sekou Touré was also on the rise, triggering United Nations Secretary General Waldheim and the Human Rights International League to intervene to stop a reign of terror in Guinea.

A year later, in March of 1977, Fidel Castro again visited Africa, this time travelling to Algeria, Libya, Angola, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Somalia and South Yemen. On this trip, Castro may have been trying to mediate a dispute between Somalia and Ethiopia. Cuban military personnel were stationed in both countries to provide training to local military units. The Soviet Union was also providing tons of military assistance to both countries in exchange for naval bases. The Somalian leaders wanted to expand the borders of their country to include Ethiopian territory inhabited for centuries by

ethnic Somalis. The Ethiopians wanted to protect their own national boundary.

The conflict between Somalia and Ethiopia dated back to 1969, when General Mohammad Siad Barre led a coup d'etat and took over the Government of Somalia. One of his political goals was to unify all ethnic Somali people who were living in Ethiopia, Djibouti and Kenya under the Somali flag. In 1974, Siad Barre signed a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union and provided the port of Berbera for a Soviet naval base. Tons of Soviet weapons and instructors from Communist countries soon began to arrive in Somalia. Cuban troops provided some of the training and the Cuban Government supported the Somali reunification goals. The Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF), fighting in the Ogaden desert of Ethiopia seeking separation from that country, also received Cuban assistance and political support.

As the Ethiopian Government turned further to the left after the overthrow of Emperor Heile Selassie, Communist relations with the new military leaders of Ethiopia improved. Diplomatic relations between Cuba and Ethiopia were established in 1975. Soviet interest in establishing new military bases in the Ethiopian ports of Massawa and Assad and an airfield in Asmara seemed to have been stronger than their interest in supporting the Somali reunification goals. After Mengistu Haile Miriam, a Communist, became the new Ethiopian strongman in a coup d'etat in mid 1977, the Soviets and the Cubans were forced to take sides. Somali troops had moved into the Ogaden on June 17 and were supporting a major military offensive of the WSLF. Cuban special troops were acting as bodyguards for Mengistu and at the same time providing military assistance to Somalia. Obviously the Cuban Government and the Soviets had to choose sides.



Cuban troops during the war in Ethiopia against Somalia.

Source: U.S. Department of Defense.

The War in Ethiopia²³

Some 3,000 Cuban troops took part in the Ethiopian war against Somalia in the Ogaden desert in 1977-78. They began to arrive in Ethiopia between July and September of 1977. The number of Cuban troops reached between 11,000 and 13,000 during the conflict, although press reports placed the number of Cuban troops in Ethiopia at 18,000. They spearheaded the Ethiopian offensive in February and March of 1978 and may have been the decisive factor in the defeat of the Somalian and Ethiopian recovery of the Ogaden province. Casualties were relatively high, not only from the war, but also from very unhealthy conditions in the region. Cuban pilots and tank crews, in particular, proved very important elements in the defeat of Somalia.

While the Cuban Armed Forces were being used in Africa, hundreds of Soviet pilots and technical personnel were transported to Cuba to take the place of Cuban soldiers that would have been employed in the island's defensive forces. In 1970, the number of Soviets in Cuba was estimated to be about 1,000. By 1980, the number of Soviets in Cuba had increased to about 5,000. In 1979, it was also disclosed that a Soviet combat brigade had been operating in Cuba for some time.

After Somalia was defeated the Cuban Government still faced another serious political problem. For many years, the Cuban Government had provided political support to the Eritrean separatists who had been fighting a guerrilla war against Ethiopia since the 1960's. The two principal guerrilla organizations were the Eritrean Liberation Front and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front. Cuban military personnel had trained members of these guerrilla organizations since the 1960's. Now the critical question was deciding if this assistance should continue or whether the Cuban Government should shift sides and support the Ethiopian Government in this internal conflict.

²³ Ethiopia, which has also been known as Abisinia, is located in the north eastern corner of Africa. It is a poor country, mostly mountainous and covered by deserts. Emperor Heile Selassie I ruled the country for over half a century until he was overthrown in the mid 1970's. Mengistu Haile Marian took power in 1977 and set up a one-party Socialist state. The population of Ethiopia is estimated to be about 33 million, with life expectancy for men of 37 years and women 40.1. There is only one physician per 100,000 people and the literacy rate is only about 8 percent. Thousands of people have died in the past 20 years from famine caused by draught and inefficient agricultural methods.

Although the Cuban Government denied supporting the Ethiopian Government at first, information began to come out of Cuban military involvement in Ethiopian campaigns in Massawa, Ghinda and Dongollo against the Eritreans. This was followed by public statements in which the Cuban Government began to criticize the Eritrean separatists as puppets of right-wing Arabs and American imperialists. Once again Fidel Castro proved that there are no permanent friends, only permanent interests. Support to the Ethiopian Government in the war in Eritrea has continued over the years. The EPLF claimed in April of 1986 that 5,000 more Soviet technicians and pilots had been sent to Asmara to support a large Ethiopian offensive against the separatists. It was also reported that between 50,000 and 60,000 more men had been conscripted by the Ethiopian Government to launch a large-scale offensive against the EPLF.²⁴

A three-week offensive in August of 1985, with considerable Soviet support, resulted in the capture of several important Eritrean strategic supply lines from Sudan and the key town of Barentu. But the offensive failed to capture the Eritrean stronghold of Nakfa, despite new APC's, T-55 tanks and additional Mig-23/FLOGGER fighters delivered to Ethiopia by the Soviet Union before the start of the offensive through the port of Aseb.²⁵

Relations between Cuba and Ethiopia are strong and the Cuban military presence continues in 1986. Mengistu visited Havana in April of 1978, on the eve of the victory over Somalia and again in the Fall of 1979, to attend the Sixth Summit Conference of the Unaligned Countries. At this meeting Fidel Castro was elected "President" of the organization for the 1979-1982 period.²⁶

Zaire Invaded

On March 8, 1977, an invasion force organized by the Congolese National Liberation Front (CNLF) entered the Shaba province of Zaire from Angola. This province is rich in important minerals, including copper, cobalt and uranium, which

²⁴ "Soviet Advisers Arrive in Eritrea," Jane's Defence Weekly (May 3, 1986), p.786.

²⁵ U.S. Department of Defense, Soviet Military Power: 1986, p. 132.

²⁶ Considering the close affiliation of the Cuban Government with the Soviet Union and the fact that Ethiopia has become the center of Soviet military activity in the Horn of Africa, the name of the organization is a farce.

are highly coveted by the Communists. President Mobutu claimed that this invasion had the support of the MPLA and Cuba and requested foreign assistance after his troops were routed. France, Belgium and Morocco came to his assistance. Morocco sent weapons and about 1,500 soldiers who played a major role in defeating the CNLF. Cuban participation in this operation was never proved but was very possible. The following year, in May of 1978, another CNLF force of about 2,000 men once again entered Shaba and pushed back the Zaire Armed Forces. As the government forces retreated, hundreds of whites and black civilians were killed by the advancing invasion force.

Once again President Mobutu requested international help. This time the United States supported his claim that Cuban troops had been involved in providing assistance to the CNLF and American planes were used to carry French Foreign Legion troops and Belgian paratroopers to rescue European whites and beat back the invasion. Within days the CNLF was on the run back to Angola.

MIDDLE EAST

South Yemen (People's Democratic Republic of Yemen)²⁷

In 1970, South Yemen declared itself a Marxist state. Relations with the Soviet bloc increased slowly until a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation was signed between both countries in 1979. The Cuban Government established diplomatic relations in May of 1972. When Fidel Castro visited South Yemen in March of 1977, he was given a very friendly welcome by President Salem Rubaya Ali and Abdul Fattah in the capital city of Aden. From this time on, Cuban military and technical assistance has been provided to South Yemen. By 1979, it is estimated that as many as 1,000 Cuban troops were stationed in the country. Hundreds of Soviet and Cuban military advisers began to arrive after the signing of the treaty and the port of Aden became a major center port of Aden became a major center of Soviet military operations. Cuban troops have been known to use this country to train Arab/Palestinian guerrillas.

Yemen Arab Republic

Relations between the Yemen Arab Republic (North Yemen) and its neighbor, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen have

²⁷ Formerly People's Republic of South Yemen.

been difficult in the past 20 years. On the eve of a visit to South Yemen on October 12, 1977, President Ibrahim al-Handi and his brother, Lieutenant Colonel Abdullah Mohammed al-Handi, were assassinated in the capital of Sang. A military junta formed by majors Ahmed Hussein al-Ghashmi, Abdul Aziz, Abdul Ghani and Adullah Abdul Alim took control of the country.

North Yemen for many years received Soviet and Western assistance and maintained a close relationship with the larger and wealthier Arab neighbors. The leader of the country, under pressure from tribal leaders, maintained a more conservative society than South Yemen. It followed along Moslem religious lines. South Yemen elected for a closer relationship with the Soviet Union. However, in October of 1984, President Ali Abdullah Saleh of North Yemen visited Moscow and signed a 20-year Treaty of Friendship with the Soviet Union. With this new treaty, one can expect a growing relationship with the Cuban Government and the present leadership of North Yemen. Diplomatic relations between Cuba and North Yemen have existed for many years.

WESTERN HEMISPHERE

Cuban support for guerrilla operations in the Western Hemisphere had stopped in countries such as Venezuela, which had re-established diplomatic relations with Cuba.²⁸ However, in other parts of the continent Cuban military personnel once again began to provide support to revolutionary groups. In Chile, after the overthrow of Salvador Allende, local revolutionary organizations began to receive Cuban assistance. Several hundred Chilean supporters of Allende had been given

²⁸ In October of 1976 a Cuban plane returning from Guyana and Venezuela was blown up by a bomb that had possibly been planted by anti-Castro Cubans. Several Cuban exiles, including Dr. Luis Orlando Bosch, a prominent leader of the anti-Communists were arrested and charged with the bombing. The Cuban Government demanded their extradition to Cuba but Venezuela refused to give in to the Cuban demands. In the United States and elsewhere Cuban anti-Communist terrorist organizations began to target Venezuelan property demanding the release of Bosch and the other Cubans. In New York City the Venezuelan consulate was bombed by OMEGA 7. In Miami, the Pedro Luis Boitel Commandos attempted to blow up a Venezuelan plane parked on a runway at the Miami International Airport. Within weeks, Venezuelan Communists began a wave of kidnappings and guerrilla attacks against small Army posts in Rural areas. The relative peace that had lasted several years came to an end obviously because the Cuban Government was trying to convey a message to Venezuela.

refuge in Cuba and provided jobs, schooling and places to live. Many of them began to receive military training to fight against the regime of General Pinochet.

In Central America, the Sandinista guerrillas obtained considerable support from Cuba. Nicaraguans were trained in Cuba on guerrilla warfare tactics. Salvadoran, Guatemalan and Honduran revolutionaries were also provided similar training. Weapons and logistical support were also provided to these guerrilla organizations in large quantities starting about 1977. By 1979, the Sandinistas had taken power in Nicaragua.

Nicaragua

The Cuban Government provided assistance to Nicaraguan revolutionaries since the early 1960's. Carlos Fonseca Amador, the principal founder of the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN), was given safe haven in Cuba during the 1960's to plan the revolution. Nicaraguan revolutionaries were invited to participate in the OLAS meeting in 1967 in Havana and provided a forum to declare war against Somoza. Sandinista leaders such as Tomás Borge were trained by Cuban officers in Lebanon alongside members of the PLO, as well as in Cuba as early as 1969. Finally, in 1977 leaders of the different groups fighting to overthrow Somoza were invited to a meeting in Cuba to discuss the formation of a revolutionary coalition. After the Nicaraguans agreed to put their differences aside, Cuban military officers stepped up the training of Nicaraguan guerrillas and weapons and logistical assistance were provided. Within two years the Sandinistas had been able to overthrow Somoza, who fled Managua in July of 1979.

Almost immediately after the overthrow of Somoza, Cuban military personnel began to arrive in Nicaragua. By the middle of 1980, within one year of Somoza's overthrow, at least 200 Cuban troops and 1,700 civilian technicians were working in Nicaragua. Cuban military specialists were also sent to Nicaragua to assist guerrillas fighting to overthrow the governments of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras.

El Salvador

The victory achieved in Nicaragua led the Cuban Government to promote a coalition of revolutionary organizations in other Central American countries. The prime target became El Salvador. Leaders of the three principal guerrilla groups, the Popular Revolutionary Army, the Democratic Revolutionary Front and the Popular Revolutionary Army were invited to meet

to discuss the formation of a common front. After about six months, they formed the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front. The formation of the front was followed by the building of training camps in Nicaragua staffed by Cubans to improve the fighting capacity of the Salvadoran guerrillas. American-made weapons, many of which had been captured after the fall of Saigon in 1975, were smuggled into El Salvador. By the end of 1980, hundreds of well-armed and well-trained guerrillas were active in the Salvadoran highlands and another revolution was well under way with Cuban assistance.



Fidel Castro and Col. Muammar Khaddafi horseback riding during a visit to Libya. Castro was "honored" with a medal by Khaddafi.



President Fidel Castro and Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam of Ethiopia.



Castro and Samora Machel during visit to Mozambique.

PHASE V (1980-1984)

During the 1980's, Cuban military involvement abroad has continued, with large numbers of combat troops and advisors stationed in at least eight countries. It is estimated that the total number of military personnel serving overseas in one capacity or another in 1985 was between 44,662 and 45,062+. In addition to military personnel, it is estimated that between 15,000 and 16,000 civilians were working in at least 23 countries throughout the world. Between 1980 and 1985, the number of Cuban military personnel serving overseas seems to have increased by about 15,000. These figures do not include Cubans serving in diplomatic missions in at least 138 countries and about 20 international organizations. Possibly as many as 1,000 more Cubans are currently serving in the diplomatic corps overseas. In addition, an unknown number of Cubans are also serving in a military capacity with guerrillas fighting in Africa, Central and South America.

The total number of regular and ready reserve troops in 1980 was estimated at about 200,000 men. In addition, Cuba had about 90,000 reservists. If these figures are correct, approximately 11 percent of the Cuban military was stationed in Africa. In addition to the troops stationed in Africa, between 200 and 300 additional troops and about 100 civilians were stationed in South Yemen. Possibly as many as 500 soldiers were providing assistance to the Sandinista Government in Nicaragua and another 300 military and civilian personnel were working in Grenada. Several hundred more Cuban soldiers were providing assistance to guerrilla organizations in Central America, Africa and the Middle East and/or receiving training in the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries.

By 1985, the regular and ready reserves had been expanded to about 297,000. The number of paramilitary personnel in the Youth Labor Army and Territorial Militia had been increased to an estimated 1,300,000. State security personnel and special forces under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of the Interior were estimated at about 21,000. Thus, although the total number of Cuban military personnel overseas increased from 1980 to 1985, they represented a smaller percentage of the total number of military personnel. The total strength of the Armed Forces were expanded to an estimated 1,618,000.¹

¹ Fidel Castro said in an interview for the McNeil-Lehrer Hour on February 12, 1985, that Cuba had tripled the weaponry of the Armed Forces since the 1983 invasion of Grenada and increased regular and reserve troops to over 500,000 and over one million in the territorial militia. "Every Citizen is Armed for Defense," Mexico City News (February 13, 1985), p.1. These figures are supported by U.S. Department of Defense estimates.

CUBAN MILITARY AND CIVILIAN PERSONNEL OVERSEAS²

| | MILITARY | | CIVILIAN | |
|---------------------------|-------------|----------------------|-------------|----------------------|
| | <u>1980</u> | <u>1985</u> | <u>1980</u> | <u>1985</u> |
| Western Hemisphere | | | | |
| Guyana | | | | 30 |
| Grenada | ? | | ? | |
| Nicaragua | 1,000 | 3,000 | 2,000 | 4,500 |
| Middle East-Africa | | | | |
| Algeria | ? | ? | ? | 100-150 |
| Angola | 19,000 | 35,000 | 5,000 | 5,000 |
| Benin | ? | ? | ? | 39 |
| Burundi | | | ? | 14 |
| Cape Verde | ? | 12 | ? | 14 |
| Congo (Brazzaville) | ? | 400-800 | ? | 100-200 |
| Ethiopia | 13,000 | 5,000+ | ? | 600-800 |
| Guinea | 50 | ? | ? | 50-100 |
| Guinea-Bissau | 50 | 50 | ? | 100-150 |
| Iraq | ? | ? | ? | 1,000 |
| Libya | ? | ? | ? | 2,500 |
| Mali | ? | ? | ? | 6 |
| Mozambique | 215 | 700 | ? | 600-700 |
| Sao Tome | ? | ? | ? | 50-100 |
| South Yemen | 500 | 500 | ? | 100 |
| Tanzania | ? | ? | ? | 50-60 |
| Seychelles | ? | ? | ? | 6 |
| Asia | | | | |
| Kampuchea | ? | ? | ? | 20 |
| Laos | ? | ? | ? | 100 |
| Vietnam | ? | ? | ? | 300 |
| 1985 TOTAL: | | 44,662/45,062 | | 15,270/15,880 |

Cuba was not alone in promoting revolution and supporting revolutionary Marxist governments overseas. The Soviet Union, East Germany, Poland, Bulgaria, North Korea and other Commu-

² Sources: U.S. Department of Defense and U.S. Information Agency. Figures come from several publications and only represent educated estimates of the total number of Cuban military and civilian personnel overseas.

nist countries were also very active in Africa providing military assistance to an increasing number of countries. Among these countries were Angola, Benin, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Guinea, Mali, Mozambique, Sudan, Tanzania and Zambia. Several revolutionary organizations also receive direct assistance from the Soviet Bloc, including the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa and the Polizario Front (Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia al Hamra and Rio de Oro).

Military Equipment

According to published reports of the U.S. Department of Defense between 1977 and 1982, the Soviet Union provided the following major equipment deliveries to Sub-Saharan African countries:

Major Soviet Military Equipment Delivered to Sub-Saharan African Countries 1977-1982 ³

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| Light Armor | 1,590 |
| Tanks/Self-propelled guns | 1,140 |
| Artillery (100-mm and over) | 3,510 |
| Major Surface Combatants | 5 |
| Minor Surface Combatants | 45 |
| Missile Patrol Boats | 4 |
| Supersonic Combat Aircraft | 220 |
| Subsonic Combat Aircraft | 80 |
| Helicopters | 125 |
| Other military Aircraft | 70 |
| Surface-to-Air Missiles | 1,575 |

The estimated value of this military equipment was placed at \$5.6 billion dollars. In addition, the Soviet Union shipped military equipment valued at \$25.7 billion to the Mideast and North Africa during the same time period. A substantial portion of the equipment shipped to Africa was either being operated directly by Cuban military personnel in the African campaigns and/or being used by them to provide training to Africans.

New weapons were also being shipped to Cuba. Between 1980 and 1985, the Cuban Government received large quantities of equipment from the Soviet Union. Over 265 thousand metric tons of military deliveries were received between 1980 and 1984 alone. The new equipment included at least 33 Mig-

³ U.S. Department of Defense, Soviet Military Power:1986, p.91.

23's, 20 Mig-21's as well as 30 L-39 training aircraft for the Air Force. The Army received another 280 T-54/55 and T-62 tanks, 200 armored vehicles and at least 75 new artillery pieces. While these weapons could be classified as defensive, Cuba also increased its resources for offensive operations in the first half of the 1980's.

In 1975 the Cuban Air Force only had 2 AN-26 transport planes. By 1980 the number of AN-26's had increased to 25 and by 1985 five more had been added. Two new IL-76 transport planes were added between 1980 and 1985. In 1975 Cuba did not own any submarines. By 1980 two Foxtrot submarines had been added to the Navy and a third one had been received by 1985. Between 1980 and 1985, the Navy also received two Koni frigates and two Polnocny landing craft capable of transporting six tanks each. The addition of this equipment has given an offensive capability to the Cuban military that it did not have in 1975 before the start of the Angolan and Ethiopian campaigns. While the Cuban military would still need the Soviet Union for logistical support for operations in Africa, Cuba now has the capability to project its power in the Caribbean and Central America on its own.⁴



Castro and Col. Mengistu during a visit to Ethiopia in 1977. Castro was presented with an album of pictures of the war with Somalia. On the picture in left, both men watch MIG airplanes flying overhead.

⁴ In 1975 and 1976 the Cuban Government sent thousands of soldiers and weapons to Angola using limited resources without much if any assistance from the Soviet Union. With the equipment now in the hands of the Cuban military it would be easier to carry out a similar operation.

AFRICA

The number of combat troops in Africa in the 1980's has remained high, but their location has changed somewhat depending on need. The largest concentration continue to be present in Angola and Ethiopia. About 1,000 soldiers were sent to Mozambique in the late 1970's to provide support to guerrillas of the Patriotic Front in neighboring Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. After the end of white-rule in Zimbabwe, the number of Cuban troops in Mozambique was reduced by about 300 men, but the number went back up by the mid 1980's. About 700 were stationed in Mozambique in 1985, and were engaged in providing assistance to the government of Samora Moises Machel. Cuban advisers are currently providing assistance to Polisario guerrillas fighting Moroccan troops in the Western Sahara and are present in about 15 African countries. Thousands of Cuban military and civilian advisors, medical teams, teachers and technical personnel are stationed all over the African continent.

Angola: War With No End

The Cuban military involvement in Angola has lasted over ten years and has turned out to be a seemingly interminable ordeal that has resulted in thousands of casualties. The war against UNITA guerrillas does not seem to be approaching an end any time soon. Possibly up to 70 percent of the Cuban troops in Angola are reservists who have already completed their military service in Cuba. A substantial number of these troops serve voluntarily, although regular officers do not have a choice and have been forced to serve contrary to their will. Although Fidel Castro and other Cuban leaders praise the dedication of Cuban soldiers to their internationalist duties in support of war of national liberation and in defense of friendly governments against imperialist powers and domestic right wing elements, the people of Cuba may not perceive the war in Angola the same way.

Cuban families and particularly young people often view the military campaigns in Africa as a punishment and not as a reward or a mechanism to get ahead in Cuban society. A long tour of duty in Africa often results in reduction of educational opportunities and a life in the future relegated to poorly paying jobs. In addition, upon their return to Cuba, the veterans do not receive many if any special material benefits for their sacrifice. Many of the soldiers return in poor health and some have deep psychological scars, typical of soldiers who have participated in any war. The fact that at times the government has sent men to fight in Angola as a

form of punishment reenforces the belief that there is nothing to be gained by participating in overseas military adventures. Troop morale has been reported low due to a number of factors, including danger, boredom, illness, lack of female companionship and even a higher than normal incidence of homosexuality.⁵

Over 200,000 Cuban soldiers, according to statements made by Fidel Castro in 1985, had already served in Angola. Possibly as many as 50 percent of these men have been blacks or mulattoes. In fact, there is some evidence that points out to the ability of the Ministry of the Armed Forces to have selected a large number of blacks from the Eastern, Western and Central armies in Cuba and their ready reserve organizations to serve in both Angola and Ethiopia in the late 1970's. Although the Cuban population has "darkened" over the past 27 years with the emigration of about 700,000 whites the percentage of blacks in the African wars seems to have been well above their representation in Cuban society. Although this may have been done in order to foster better relations with the native population in Africa, it has also resulted in Cuban blacks taking a higher number of casualties.

Regular military units remained in Cuba to defend the island against possible attack and to train more reservists and paramilitary troops. With the exception of the officer corps, most of the enlisted men who have fought in Angola have been reservists. Over the past ten years, MINFAR has been able to develop an efficient troop rotation system which has served to provide combat experience to many members of the Armed Forces. Although since mid 1976 most of the troops who have served in Angola have acted as garrison troops to free local forces to fight the counterinsurgency operation against UNITA, many Cuban officers and special troops have taken direct part in the war.

Military Organization in Angola

The organization of the Cuban combat troops seems to be very different from that of the units stationed on the island. For example, company strength of units in Cuba is reported to be around 100 men. In Angola Cuban forces operate with full company strength, reported to be about 220 men. Battalions

⁵ The fact that a group of military officers were court-martialed after their questionable performance in Grenada in 1983, demoted and sent to Angola as punishment for their sins, serves to reenforce the idea that there is nothing to be gained by participating in the war. The rhetoric of the leadership is far from the reality faced by the servicemen and the veterans.

in Angola are also operating at full strength, with about 665 men, which is twice the strength of units in Cuba.⁶ Regiments in Angola are reported to operate with about 2,000 men, which indicates that they may have three full battalions, plus a compliment of artillery and other personnel.⁷

The total number of Cuban combat troops in Angola at the end of 1985 were reported to total 25,000 by the Angolan Government. (U.S. Department of Defense estimates of Cuban troop strength in Angola are higher.) In addition, it is acknowledged that another 11,000 Cubans are providing technical support in health care, education and other critical areas of the economy. UNITA leadership claims that all 36,000 Cubans in Angola perform a military function, since all of them have received military training and are helping the Angolan Government in the war. Cuban military personnel are reported to operate the sophisticated SAM system in Angola. There are also Cuban pilots who fly some of the MIG 21's and all the MIG 23's and SU-22's in the Angolan Air Force.

Weapon Systems

In the first six months of 1985 a substantial number of new aircraft, including at least 25 MIG 23's were added to the Angolan Air Force. In addition, many modern combat helicopters arrived during this period, possibly to be used in a major offensive against UNITA which started in August. These aircraft continue to be piloted by experienced Cuban pilots

⁶ A typical infantry battalion in Cuba has about 365 men, divided into three infantry companies. Each company has about 77 enlisted men and six officers. Battalions in a war zone are expanded to include a mortar battery, an anti-tank platoon, a supply and maintenance platoon and possibly another infantry platoon for battalion headquarters. A representative infantry regiment has about 1,010 men, divided into two infantry battalions. In an active military campaign, the size of the regiments are increased by the addition of a reconnaissance platoon, an anti-tank platoon, a mortar battery, a transportation platoon, a supply and service platoon, a signal company, a medical unit and an AAMG company.

⁷ Almerigo Grilz, "The War in Angola: forces and organization," Jane's Defense Weekly, (November 16, 1985), pp. 1086-87. Also, report in Jane's Defense Weekly of February 1, 1986, p. 164.

despite the fact that many Angolans have been trained in the Soviet Union to take over this role.⁸

The Soviet Union has been the largest supplier of military hardware and technical training to the Angolan Government. However, several Western European countries have also sold military hardware to the Angolan Government. Spanish, Swiss and French equipment has been purchased and used in the war.

UNITA Guerrilla Organization

The FALA (Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola) of UNITA is reported to number about 60,000 men. Of these forces, about 26,000 operate in conventional units and 34,000 are reported to be engaged in guerrilla warfare. Their weapons are a mixture of captured Soviet weapons and weapons left over from the war against the Portuguese colonial regime. South Africa has also provided substantial military support to UNITA. New weapons, including missiles, are expected to be introduced in the war by UNITA, as a result of military aid from the United States.⁹ It was reported in the press that the United States would be providing anti-aircraft and anti-tank missiles to UNITA soon. This development is bound to produce a much tougher assignment for Cuban forces in Angola and produce many more casualties.¹⁰

Casualties

The extent of Cuban involvement and casualties in Angola can be best illustrated by a review of press reports on the war in the last days of 1984 and those during 1985 and 1986. At the end of 1984, on December 21, 1984, UNITA claimed that its forces had killed 196 government soldiers and 16 Cubans during fighting between December 8th and 12th. The fighting was reported to have taken place in the northern provinces of

⁴ In 1985, the Soviet Union delivered to Angola Mi-24/Hind and Mi-17/Hip H helicopters, additional Su-22/FITTERs, Mig-23/FLOGGERS and SA-13 SAMs. Source: U.S. Department of Defense, Soviet Military Power: 1986 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1986), pp. 131-132.

⁹ "Sabimbi Eyes U.S. Missiles Before April," Mexico City News (February 18, 1986), p. 2.

¹⁰ "Regan Decides to Send Weapons to Angola Rebels," New York Times (February 19, 1986), p. 1, col. 1.

Huambo, Bie Kwanza Sul, Kwanza Norte, Luanda and Uige.¹¹ Three months later it was reported in the press that 11 Cubans had been killed in the bombing of the Almirante Hotel in Huambo on March 25, 1985. In this bombing about 75 people were reported to have been killed, including high ranking Angolan officers and several Bulgarians.¹² In June of 1985, it was reported that 21 Cuban troops had been killed in clashes with UNITA forces.¹³

Between August 18 and September 11, 1985, the Angolan Army, with the support of Cuban combat troops and Soviet technical personnel started a major offensive in an attempt to capture Cazombo and UNITA headquarters at Jamba. Some of the heaviest fighting in the war took place in this offensive which resulted in heavy casualties for both UNITA and government forces.

In September of 1985 press reports carried stories of 11 Cubans having been killed along with Angolan and Soviet troops in action between August 23 and September 3, 1985, in combat with UNITA forces. Most of the fighting took place in the Cuando-Cubango province. One of the reports on the results of the offensive claimed that 41 Cubans had been killed and 52 wounded in August and September of 1985.¹⁴ These casualty reports were gathered from UNITA reports and could not be verified since the Angolan Government does not release details of casualties.

UNITA again reported in February of 1986 that they had shot down two MIG fighters that were being piloted by Cubans. The planes were reportedly shot down in Moxico (a province of Angola), between the villages of Dala and Kanje during a large government offensive against the guerrillas. UNITA also reported killing 13 Cubans in combat between February 1st and

11. "Angolan Rebels Claim 212 Gov't Cuban Troops Killed in Fighting," The Mexico City News (December 21, 1984), p. 12.

12. "Angolan Rebels Claim Hotel Bomb Kills 75," The Mexico City News (March 25, 1985).

13. "Angolan Rebels kill 224," Jane's Defense Weekly, (June 8, 1985), p. 1065.

14. Helmoed-Romer Heitman, "Angola: SA military may intervene," Jane's Defense Weekly (October 12, 1985), p. 776.

3rd, together with over 100 Angolan soldiers, large numbers of military equipment were also reportedly captured.¹⁵

According to UNITA reports, some 259 Cubans were killed in combat between January and November of 1985. It is possible that an average of 25 Cubans per month are losing their lives in Angola; roughly about 300 per year. There is no way to confirm the casualty figures, but it can be assumed that close to 10,000 Cubans have been killed fighting in Africa between 1975 and 1985. Thousands more have been wounded.¹⁶

A major offensive against UNITA has been expected in 1986. Soviet General Yuri Petrov, a counterinsurgency expert is said to be coordinating the preparations for the expected offensive. Without a doubt thousands of Cuban troops will participate in the offensive and casualties will increase before the year is over.

Indicative of the level of activity in the Angolan war was a report by UNITA to the effect that their forces had staged a massive preemptive strike against an Angolan/Cuban military air base at Cuito-Cuanavale. UNITA claimed that their forces had destroyed the base's radar, anti-aircraft guns and most of the artillery, bombs and munitions. The report also stated that in the 24 hours prior to the attack, Cuban-piloted MIG's had been conducting bombing raids against their positions. According to the report, thousands of Cuban-supported troops had been poised at Cuito-Cuanavale and Monongue to an offensive against rebel bastions in Kuando Kubango province.¹⁷

¹⁵ "Angolan Rebels Claim 2 Mig Jets Downed," The Mexico City News (February 6, 1986), p. 3. (This article was based on a UPI report from the Lisbon office.)

¹⁶ During the Vietnam war roughly 0.26 percent of the American population was killed in the conflict. In the past ten years, an estimated 0.11 percent of the Cuban population has been killed in African wars. These estimates are based on an average population in the United States between 1965 and 1975 of about 220 million people, and an average population of 9.3 million between 1975 and 1985 in Cuba. About 58,000 Americans were killed in Vietnam and about 10,000 Cubans have been killed in Africa.

¹⁷ "Angolan Rebels Hit Air Base On Eve of Expected Attack," The Mexico City News (August 12, 1986), p.9.

Projection for the Future

The Soviet Union has converted Angola into a major military operations center. The harbor of Luanda, one of the best in West Africa, has become the center of operations for the Soviet Navy's West Africa Patrol. They have moved a floating drydock to the harbor and have built a base at the Luanda airport for Tu-95/Bear D reconnaissance aircraft to patrol the South Atlantic sea lanes. A squadron of Soviet An-12/CUB transport planes stationed in Angola provides support to the Angolan and Cuban troops operating against the UNITA guerrillas. Luanda has also become an important transiting point for the Soviet Pacific Ocean Fleet. The Soviets and the Cubans are prepared to stay in Angola until they have full control of the entire country.

The Cuban presence in Angola can no longer be seen only in the context of domestic military developments in Angola. This African country has become the center of a vast network of intelligence and military operations organized and controlled by Cuba and the Soviet Union to promote Communist-style revolutions throughout the continent. Fidel Castro stated at the meeting of the so-called Nonaligned Movement in Zimbabwe in September 1986, that Cuban troops would remain in Angola until the South African Government was overthrown and the African National Union (ANC) captured power in that country. During a four-day visit to Angola after the meeting in Zimbabwe, Fidel Castro spoke to about 3,000 Cubans in Luanda and once again stated that Cuban troops would remain in Angola until apartheid is defeated in South Africa and that country stops sending assistance to UNITA and Namibia becomes independent.¹⁸ But even if this were to take place, the attention would be shifted elsewhere in Africa. The goal is to take over the entire continent and the Cuban military presence in Angola is an important element to reach this goal.

South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) and Popular Army for the Liberation of Namibia (PALN)

The territory South West Africa, also known as Namibia, was invaded by Germany under Bismark and William I, at the end of the 19th century. During WWI, British troops invaded the German colony from South Africa. After WWI, the League of Nations placed the territory under the protection of adminis-

¹⁸ "Cuba retirará tropas de Angola cuando desaparezca el apartheid: Fidel Castro," Uno Mas Uno (Mexico), (September 10, 1986).

tration of the Union of South Africa. After WWII, South Africa announced its intentions to annex the territory, despite objections from the United Nations.

In 1966, SWAPO led by Sam Nujoma, began a guerrilla war for the liberation of the territory. The PALN is the military arm of SWAPO. South African troops have managed to contain the insurgency, however, after the victory of the MPLA in Angola and of ZANU in Zimbabwe, the guerrillas of SWAPO/PALN have increased their activities. They have established training camps in Angola and have received substantial help from the MPLA and the Cuban Government. For example, they receive weapons, training and logistical support from Cuban military personnel based in Angola. Students from Namibia have also been provided scholarships to study in Cuba. Considerable Soviet assistance has also been provided over the last ten years.

South African regular soldiers, as well as troops of the South West Africa Territorial Force (SWATF), have raided SWAPO/PALN bases in Angola on several occasions in the past ten years and have come into battle with Cuban troops fighting alongside the guerrillas. SWAFT forces, consisting in about six infantry battalions, a motorized brigade and paramilitary organizations are the principal force used by South Africa to fight against the Cuban-sponsored SWAPO/PALN guerrillas.

South Africa

The conflict between Cuba and South Africa over political and military influence in Southern Africa dates back to at least 1975, when troops from both countries faced each other in Angola. The Cuban Government has been providing assistance to South African blacks fighting against the racist government of that country ever since. Cuban support for the African National Congress (ANC) is no secret. Oliver Tambo, President of the ANC, arrived in Cuba on March 23, 1986, and was warmly received at the Havana airport by a large number of South African blacks studying in Cuba on scholarships. He was received by Isidoro Malmierca, Minister of Foreign Relations, René Rodríguez, President of the Instituto Cubano de Amistad con los Pueblos (ICAP), Jorge Risquet, an important member of the Politburo of the Cuban Communist Party who handles African affairs for the Cuban Government and General Victor Schueg Colas, a veteran of the Angolan war. Upon his arrival in Cuba Oliver Tambo declared that "Cuba is present

in Africa, fighting shoulder-to-shoulder with us against the same enemy."¹⁹

Without a doubt, Cuban military personnel have been training ANC guerrillas and providing technical assistance and support to other groups fighting to overthrow the South African Government. Fidel Castro reiterated his support to the revolutionary movements in South Africa at the meeting of the Nonaligned Countries in Zimbabwe in September of 1986. In the future, now counting with strong world-wide public opinion opposition to racist policies in South Africa, the Cuban military support to the revolutionary groups in this country can be expected to increase.

Guinea-Bissau/Cape Verde

In November of 1980, Luis Cabral, an old friend of the Cuban Government was overthrown by a military coup led by Joao Bernardino Vieira "Nino," who had been one of the principal military leaders of the struggle against Portuguese colonialism. The Council of State and the National Assembly were disbanded. A Council of the Revolution under Vieira's control was formed to run the country in place of the old political system. Cabral was placed under arrest but was later released and allowed to go to Cuba to live. Plans for the unification of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, a pet project of Cabral's, were suspended and diplomatic relations between the two countries were broken.

In 1982, under the auspices of Samora Machel, leader of Mozambique, Vieira met with Aristides Pereira, head of state of Cape Verde. The meetings were held in Maputo. After this meeting diplomatic relations were re-established and Cabral went to live in Cape Verde.

At least two attempts were made to overthrow Vieira in 1981. On July 21, 1986, several officials who had been implicated in a coup attempt were executed. Vieira has been less friendly to the Soviets and possibly to the Cuban Government than Cabral. All the political problems in this country seem to be based on rivalries between leaders of the struggle for independence from Portugal and officers of the 6,000-man military establishment who are Marxists for the most part. A large number of these men have been trained in Cuba and Cuban advisers have been present in the country for several years. Cuban military personnel have also been present in next-door Guinea. However, the Cabral government and the Guinean

¹⁹ Orlando Gómez, "Llegó Oliver Tambo: cumple invitación del Partido Comunista de Cuba," Granma (March 24, 1986), Año 21, No. 13, p. 1.

Government had strained relations due to disputes over the location of the border between both countries in an area that may have oil.

Equatorial Guinea

As explained in Phase I (1959-1965), the Cuban Government made early contacts with Communist leaders of Equatorial Guinea. Masie Nguema Biyondo, who had been associated with high officials of the Franco government of Spain, took over as ruler of the country from independence in 1968 until he was overthrown by a military coup in August of 1979, led by Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasasogo. The Nguema Biyondo government was very repressive from the start, jailing and killing thousands of political enemies. In 1976 Amnesty International announced that there were at least 10,000 political prisoners in this small country. The Soviet Union, East Germany and the People's Republic of China as well as the Cuban Government, had maintained diplomatic and commercial relations with the dictator.

After the 1979 coup, Nguema was arrested, tried and executed for crimes against humanity. However, the new government continued some of the old practices. A new political party was formed. It was called the Democratic Alliance for National Reunification. It is the only political party in the country. New economic and commercial ventures were opened with France, Spain and the United States. Soviet and East German presence was reduced. Moroccan troops were invited to come in to provide military training. However, as of 1985, it is estimated that as many as 200 Cuban troops may be stationed in Equatorial Guinea providing military training to local troops, which may be facilitated by the fact that the official language of the country is Spanish.

As of 1983, the total strength of the Armed Forces was estimated at 1,550 men. If this is the case, a unit of 200 well-trained Cuban troops with thousands more in near by countries represents a potentially strong force in local affairs.

Guinea

The 26-year presidency of Sekou Touré in Guinea came to an end with his death at age 62 while receiving medical treatment in a hospital in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1984. His body was taken back to Guinea for burial and the funeral was attended by Vice President George Bush, President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, Yasir Arafat, leader of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and a number of other world leaders. Considering the political background of Sekou

Touré, a close associate of Cuban leader Fidel Castro over most of his 26-year rule, the funeral looked like a political fruit cocktail, with all political persuasions represented.

Prime Minister Lansanda Beavogui took over as acting president upon Sekou Touré's death, but did not last very long. Armed forces leaders took power by coup d'état in April of 1984, promising to reverse the actions of Sekou Touré, whom they qualified as a bloody and ruthless dictator who had killed thousands of people. The principal military leaders, Colonels Lasana Conte and Diara Traore, also promised that they would encourage free enterprise in Guinea. They called the revolution led by Sekou Touré a failure. He had hoped to turn the country toward Socialism. The political turmoil did not end with this coup. In July of 1985, another coup d'état attempt was foiled. It was led by Colonel Diara Traore .²⁰

In 1977, after flirting with the Soviet Union and providing a base in Guinea to the Soviets for their BEAR reconnaissance aircraft, Sekou Touré withdrew the permit. However, the Soviets have continued to use the port of Conakry even after Sekou Touré's death as a regular port of call for their African naval patrol. The Conakry airport also continues to be used by the Soviet Union and Cuba as a refueling stop in flights carrying military supplies to Angola and rotating troops serving in that country.

Colonel Konté, despite his relationship with the Soviet Union, has taken steps away from Socialism in order to improve the economy of the country. Government-owned enterprises have been sold back to the private sector and assistance has been requested from France, Japan, West Germany, the United States and other western non-Communist countries.

Sao Tome and Principe Democratic Republic

This small country is composed of the islands of Sao Tome and Principe and several smaller islands in the Gulf of Guinea. The total national territory is not more than 1,000 square miles and the population numbers about 100,000 people. The official language is Portuguese and most of the people seem

²⁰ "Guinea's military assumes control; seals nation; says Sekou Toure was dictator," New York Times (April 4, 1984); "Coup attempt foiled in Guinea; Army searches for rebel leader Col. Diarra Traore," New York Times (July 6, 1985), p.1.; Charles T. Powers, "Guinea renewing contacts with outside; Sekou Toure dead, his revolution a failure," Los Angeles Times (August 23, 1984), p.9. col. 1.;

Portugal maintained a very strong and repressive colonial government in these islands, which led to the formation of the Sao Tome and Principe Liberation Front (MLSTP) in 1969. This organization developed strong ties to the Angolan MPLA, the PAIGC of Guinea-Bissao and Frelimo of Mozambique. After the military coup d'etat in Portugal in 1974, the country obtained its independence in 1975.

The leaders of the MLSTP declared themselves as Communists and took over the banking, expropriated the land owned by foreign companies, formed a militia and began to receive help from Cuba and other Communist countries. An attempt by right wing elements to invade the islands from Gabon failed in 1978 with assistance from the Soviet block. Miguel Trovoada, the first Prime Minister after independence, was deposed by more radical members of the MLSTP. In 1981 another movement to overthrow the government was also defeated. Mass organizations, an internal security force and a militia have been organized to maintain power in the hands of a National Assembly, which has been led by president Manuel Pinto da Costa since 1980.

Cuban public health specialists, teachers and technical personnel have been providing assistance to the government since independence. With the departure of most of the Portuguese technicians after independence the economy deteriorated rapidly. Substantial Cuban civilian and military assistance have served to establish excellent relations between the two countries.

People's Republic of Benin (Dahomey)²¹

This former French colony became independent in 1960 under the name of Republic of Dahomey. In the next twelve years, the country suffered a tremendous level of political turmoil, with about one new ruler every year. In 1972, a coup d'etat led by Major Aymed Kerekou was able to take control of the country. Within two years, Kerekou had nationalized foreign property, declared himself a Marxist, changed the name of the country to People's Republic of Benin, and established close contacts with the Soviet Union and other Communist countries.

²¹ This small and poor African country has a per capita income of about \$310 and an international debt of over \$600 million. About 17 percent of the population is illiterate and there is only one doctor per every 17,000 people. The size of the population in 1983 was estimated at 3.7 million people. The Armed Forces had an estimated 3,200 men in 1983. The capital is Porto Novo.

In 1977, Kerekou was able to survive an attempted invasion which seems to have been organized with help from France, Morocco and Gabon. After this attempt to overthrow his government, Kerekou has taken additional steps to strengthen his military with help from Cuba. Cuban troops have provided training for the Army of Benin and have assisted in the organization of a strong state security apparatus. Indicative of the support being provided by Cuba was a visit in the first week of September 1985, of Jorge Risquet Valdés, the top Cuban official on African affairs to Benin.²²

Mozambique People's Republic

The Mozambique Liberation Front (Frelimo) was formed in 1963 by Eduardo Mondlane, an official of the United Nations, born in Mozambique. In September of 1964, the first guerrilla actions of Frelimo against the Portuguese Government of Mozambique started and continued until independence was obtained in June of 1975. By then Mondlane had been killed during the revolutionary period and Samora Moises Machel had emerged as the leader of the revolution.²³

There were two principal political groups within the Frelimo movement. One wanted to obtain independence from Portugal and set up a nationalistic African state. The other, led by Machel, wanted to set up a Marxist state. Although Machel identified with the People's Republic of China and Maoism, the Cuban Government established close ties with the revolutionaries almost from the start of the guerrilla war against Portuguese colonialism. Cuban military officers assisted in the training and general education of Frelimo leaders.

After independence, Cuban troops were sent to Mozambique to assist in the organization of a new military establishment, as well as to set up bases to train guerrillas fighting to overthrow the white-ruled Government of Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). After Zimbabwe revolutionaries capture power from the white minority government in 1980, Cuban troop strength in Mozambique was reduced to about 250 men. However, as a counterrevolutionary guerrilla force of the National Resistance of Mozambique (RENAMO) picked up strength with assistance from South Africa, Cuban military presence increased once again to between 700 and 900 by 1985.

²² U.S. Foreign Broadcast Information Service, FBIS Report, September 4, 1985.

²³ As this book was being prepared to go to press, Samora Moises Machel was killed in a plane crash on October 20, 1986. "Mozambique's Leader Killed in Plane Crash," Chicago Tribune (October 21, 1986), p.1, col.2.

tance of Mozambique (RENAMO) picked up strength with assistance from South Africa, Cuban military presence increased once again to between 700 and 900 by 1985.

Several military offensives in 1981, 1982 and 1984 have failed to defeat RENAMO. The economy of the country has not only been affected by the nationalization of key industries and the migration of the European population but also by the continuing guerrilla war and draught. South African raids against suspected bases of guerrillas of the African National Congress in Mozambique and assistance to the MNR have contributed to the deterioration of the economy.

The United States has made several attempts to improve relations with Mozambique to the point of sending not only economic and humanitarian assistance to the victims of draught, but also increasing military assistance for Machel. Thus, the approximately 13,000 members of the Armed Forces are sporting Soviet and American weapons and receiving military assistance from the Soviet Union, Cuba and the United States. (It is too early to tell what will happen in the future as a result of Machel's death.)

The Soviet Union has provided millions of dollars in military equipment to Samora Machel. In 1985 alone, the Soviets have sent to Mozambique Mi-24/HIND helicopters, PT-76 light tanks, BTR-60 APC's, artillery pieces, BM-24 multiple rocket launchers, SA-3's, SO-1 patrol boats and many other weapons. In addition, the Soviets have approximately 850 advisors and technicians in Mozambique helping the government in the war against RENAMO.²⁴

Zimbabwe (Rhodesia)

The war between the white-controlled Government of Rhodesia and black guerrillas reached a high point between 1978 and 1979. The war spread to neighboring Mozambique and Zambia, when Rhodesian troops attacked guerrilla sanctuaries in those countries, where some Cuban military advisers were providing assistance to the black guerrillas. Casualties in the war mounted with the increasing violence of the war.

The government of Ian Smith sought to find a peaceful transition to black rule and called for elections with black participation for the first time in 1979. Bishop Abel Muzorewa, of the United African National Council was elected as the new head of state by the parliament. These elections were followed by a cease fire and new elections in 1980,

²⁴ U.S. Department of Defense, Soviet Military Power: 1986, p. 132.

which signaled the full transition to a black government. Robert Mugabe, leader of the ZANU was elected as the new head of state.

Joshua Nkomo, leader of the ZAPU, and several of his followers were offered participation in the government. However, within a year, problems began to arise between the leaders of the old guerrilla organizations. In February of 1981, members of ZANU and ZAPU fought inside Army barracks at Balawayo. Nkomo was stripped of his position as Minister of Interior although he was allowed to remain in the cabinet. But the problems continued, as ZAPU began to receive covert assistance from South Africa to take power.

In 1983, fighting broke out again in Matabele, an area where the predominant ethnic group supported ZAPU. Troops of the 5th Brigade, trained by North Koreans, were used to slaughter followers of Joshua Nkomo, who fled to Botswana after being arrested in Harare. Since then, Mugabe has been able to increase his control of the country.

The Cuban Government and Robert Mugabe have excellent relations, which stem from Cuban military assistance which started during the war against the white government. Mugabe arrived in Havana on October 7, 1985, invited by the Cuban leadership.²⁵ Although Cuban troops do not seem to be present in large numbers at the present time in Zimbabwe, they could be providing training in Zimbabwe to guerrilla organizations operating in South Africa and Namibia.

Relations between the United States and Zimbabwe deteriorated in September of 1986, and resulted in the cancellation of economic assistance programs through the Agency for International Development (AID). Several anti-American statements, insults and a series of incidents prior to the meeting of the Nonaligned countries in September of 1986, led to relations cooling off. The Reagan Administration called the attacks against the United States by Zimbabwe officials "highly offensive and counterproductive" and cut off further economic aid. These incidents may signal a move to the left and the start of a much closer cooperation between Cuba and the Government of Zimbabwe.²⁶

Middle East and North Africa

²⁵ U.S. Foreign Broadcast Information Service, FBIA Report, October 8, 1985.

²⁶ Sheila Rule, "Sanctions Test Mettle of the Leaders at Harare," New York Times (September 7, 1986), p. E3.

Cuban troops are present in South Yemen, Syria, Libya and possibly Lebanon and Afghanistan in the Middle East and North Africa.²⁷ Their presence has been acknowledged by Giraldo Mazola, Cuban Deputy Foreign Minister for Africa and Asia and confirmed by many other independent sources. Nevertheless, their numbers and specific assignments are clouded in secrecy.

However, it is well known that Cuban military personnel have provided in the past and continue to provide at the present time assistance to several Arab revolutionary organizations throughout the Middle East and North Africa. The following section provides a breakdown of the most prominent of these revolutionary organizations which have received Cuban assistance.

Polisario Front (Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia al Hamra and Rio de Oro)

The Cuban Government has officially recognized the Saharan Democratic Republic led by President Mohammed Abdelaziz and named Raul Barzaga as Cuban Ambassador.²⁸ Cuban military personnel are providing support to the guerrillas fighting for independence of the old Spanish Sahara in their war against Morocco. Some training has been provided in Cuba and some in Algeria. Cuban and Moroccan troops have been clashing in different conflicts in Africa since 1963.

The war in the Sahara dates back to at least 1975, when the government of Francisco Franco arrived at a compromise with King Hassan of Morocco, to pass control of the Spanish colony to Morocco and Mauritania. A large Moroccan Army invaded the territory and has been fighting ever since to defeat the Polisario guerrillas. The guerrillas were estimated to have about 15,000 members in 1983. The Moroccan Army has kept about 50,000 men fighting in the Sahara for several years, but suffered several major defeats at Mahbes, Uarkaziz and

²⁷ Cuban forces may have participated in the bloody civil war in South Yemen in February of 1986, or may have simply been caught in the fighting. No specific information about Cuban involvement has been available in the press, but considering that over 13,000 people have been reportedly killed in a fairly small country, it is reasonable to believe that Cuban casualties are a very strong possibility.

²⁸ Cuban radio carried the story of a meeting between Ambassador Barzaga and President Abdelaziz in March of 1985, and reaffirmed Cuban support for Polisario. FBIS Report (March 30, 1985).

Guelta Zemmur. But the Moroccan Army has developed a new method of fighting the guerrillas in the past three years.

The new tactics consist of the building of walls of sand miles long, with fortifications in the north of the Sahara. These walls of sand are moved forward slowly as the Moroccans secure the areas behind. With the use of sophisticated radars and modern weapons, they have been able to keep the guerrillas out of a large area. King Hassan also signed accords with Libya and made efforts to neutralize leftist Arab organizations which had provided assistance to Polisario in the past. Most of these accords are now dead.

Representatives of the POLISARIO movement were invited to attend the Third Congress of the Cuban Communist Party in Havana in March of 1986. They received pledges of support from Fidel Castro during his keynote speech to the delegates. Castro pledged his continued support for the war of liberation being waged by POLISARIO against Morocco. He accused the United States and other western countries of arming King Hassan's armies to oppress the people of the Sahara. Further pledges of support were made at the meeting of the Nonaligned Movement in Zimbabwe in September of 1986.

Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO)

The history of the PLO goes back to 1947, when the United Nations approved a plan to create two new countries, one Arab and one Jewish, in Palestine. The territory had been under British control from the end of WWI until the end of WWII. At the time, there were about 1.25 million Palestinian Arabs and about 500,000 Jews in the area. More Jews began to arrive in large numbers after WWII and began to join radical Zionist organizations which wanted to establish a strong Jewish state. Arabs and Jews clashed and war broke out as the surrounding Arab countries attempted to invade the area and put an end to terrorist attacks against Arabs conducted by Irgun, a radical Zionist group. The Israelis defeated the Arab armies and were able to establish a Jewish state.

Palestinian Arabs by the thousands began to leave the area and moved into Jordan and other countries in the region. In 1965, under the leadership of Ahmed Shuqairy, the PLO was formed, as an umbrella organization, to fight for a homeland for the Palestinian Arabs. The creation of the PLO was followed by the creation of several guerrilla organizations including:

-Al Fatah-Movement for National Liberation, formed in 1965 and led by Yasser Arafat. Associated with Al Fatah was Al Yassifa, as the military branch of the organization.

-Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), formed in 1967 by Dr. George Habache, a self-declared Marxist.

-Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), formed by Nayef Hawatmeth. This Communist led group has some connections with the Israeli Communists Party.

-Al Saika, formed in 1967 and led by Zuheir Moshen. This group has strong ties to Syrian organizations and possibly to the Syrian Government.

Several of these organizations were invited to participate in the Tri-Continental Congress, in Havana, in 1966. At least since this meeting in Havana, the Cuban Government has been providing assistance to Palestinian revolutionary organizations.

After the defeat of the Arab armies of Jordan, Egypt, Syria and Lebanon in 1967, the Palestinian Arabs became more radical and intensified their guerrilla efforts against Israel. Cuban military personnel intensified their training of Palestinian guerrillas both in Cuba, as well as in Lebanon and in North Africa. Hundreds of Palestinians have received military training and logistical support from the Cuban military since 1967.

In 1969, Yasser Arafat was elected president of the PLO. After his rise to this important position, his visits to Cuba and his contacts with the Cuban Government increased. But as his organization was picking up strength, conflicts developed between the PLO and the Jordanian Government. In September of 1969, the Jordanian Government expelled the PLO and thousands of Palestinians from Jordan after several days of bloody fighting. This conflict brought about the creation of new guerrilla organizations which increased their use of terrorist tactics. One of them was the Black September movement, named after the fighting in Jordan.

War broke out again between Israel and its neighbors in 1973. As was stated in Phase III, about 500 Cuban troops were present in Syria and provided support to the Syrian Armed Forces. After the war, in 1974, the Arab League recognized the PLO as the representative of the Palestinians and this was followed by an invitation to join the United Nations as an observer. With these developments, the Cuban Government further increased its relationship with the PLO. However, the PLO leader has faced mounting challenges to his leadership from more radical leaders. In addition, an Israeli invasion of Lebanon in July of 1982, led to the destruction of the PLO headquarters and the transfer of the headquarters to Tunis. These new headquarters were also

raided by the Israeli Air Force, after several terrorist attacks against Israeli targets.

Cuban training of Palestinian guerrillas seems to have been transferred to new camps in South Yemen in the 1980's to avoid attacks by Israel. PLO headquarters were also moved to South Yemen in mid 1986.

South Yemen

About 1,000 Cuban military and civilian personnel have been stationed in South Yemen since about 1979. In January of 1986, civil war broke out as two Marxist groups attempted to control the government. The Soviet Union first publicly supported the Marxist government of South Yemen and then attempted to bring about a cease fire. Finally, the Soviets threw their support behind the rebellious troops who had more radical Marxist politics than the government. Cuban forces followed closely the position of the Soviets. Before the fighting came to an end, thousands had been killed and widespread damage was inflicted in this poor country. Without a doubt, the Cuban personnel in South Yemen suffered casualties in the fighting, but the numbers of dead and wounded have not been made public. However, they ended up on the winning side.

Libya

As has been covered in previous sections, the Cuban and Libyan Governments have maintained a close working relationship for several years. Fidel Castro has visited Libya and key Libyan officials have travelled to Cuba. The Libyan Government has provided military assistance to the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and has worked with Cuban military officers to support countries and revolutionary organizations with which both governments have strong ties. Very little is known about the presence of Cuban military personnel in Libya, although it has been alleged that Cuban troops have provided training on Libyan soil to radical Arab guerrillas groups.

On July 11, 1984, the Cuban and Libyan governments signed an agreement calling for cooperation in the areas of economics, housing, construction, transportation and culture. The Cuban Government also pledged solidarity with the "Libyan people's struggle against imperialism and Zionism." Although military cooperation was not specifically spelled out, it is understood that the "solidarity" includes military cooperation. For example, Libya and Cuba have cooperated with the Sandinista government in Nicaragua by supplying weapons and techni-

cal military personnel. They have also worked together in support of Palestinian guerrilla organizations.

The Soviet weapons and training that have been provided to Libya over the past ten years is similar to that provided to the Cuban military. These include SA-5 surface-to-surface missiles and Mig supersonic fighters and bombers. The destruction of several long-range and medium-to-high range missile sites, military aircraft on the ground and in the air, as well as missile-firing patrol boats by the U.S. Navy and Air Force in April of 1986, show that these systems are not invincible. In fact, they proved to be rather weak against modern and sophisticated American weaponry.

The U.S. invasion of Grenada in 1983 and the attacks on Libyan targets in 1986 in retaliation for terrorist attacks have been used by Fidel Castro to support his concept of "war of all the people." The failure of Soviet weapons to defend the Libyan military against American technology may have also shaken up Castro's military. In the future this may result in more redundant anti-aircraft defense systems in Cuba and anywhere Cuban troops are deployed.

During the meeting of the Nonaligned countries in Zimbabwe, Muammar Khaddafi, Daniel Ortega and Fidel Castro met and offered support to each other in the struggle against the American imperialists and their allies. Khaddafi stated that he had attended the meeting to meet with other revolutionaries, such as Fidel Castro and Daniel Ortega and not the heads of state of African countries who belong to the British Commonwealth or former French colonies still associated with the French Government. He threatened to lead a movement out of the organization of unaligned countries to form a new organization of anti-imperialist nations, calling the unaligned movement "useless" and "funny." It is possible that before long the trend started by Fidel Castro at the meeting of the nonaligned countries in Algeria in 1973, which called for closer cooperation with the Communist, and current moves by Khaddafi, will spell an end to the organization. It would be followed by a new organization of countries waving the anti-imperialist flag and in open support of the Soviet Union against the United States. Castro once again urged at the meeting in Zimbabwe that the Soviet Union be anointed as the "natural ally" of the developing countries.²⁹

²⁹ Sheila Rule, "Sanctions Test Mettle of Leaders at Harare," New York Times (September 7, 1986), p. E3.

WESTERN HEMISPHERE

Bahamian Navy Attacked³⁰

On May 10, 1980, a Bahamian Navy patrol boat was attacked by Cuban MIG's in international waters near one of the Bahamian islands. Four Bahamian sailors perished in the attack and the patrol boat sank. The air attack by MIG's was followed by a helicopter assault and landing on a nearby Bahamian island in an attempt to capture members of the Bahamian Navy boat who had managed to escape after the boat was sunk and reached the small island.

The Bahamian vessel Flamingo had intercepted two Cuban fishing boats fishing illegally in Bahamian waters and arrested eight men on board. As the Flamingo was towing the boats to Ragged Island, two MIG's attacked with rockets and machine guns, sinking the coast guard vessel. When the crew started to swim toward the fishing boats the planes opened fire on the Bahamians. However, the Bahamians managed to reach a small island with their eight prisoners. This incident started about 6:45 p.m., on Saturday May 10, 1980. The following morning about 9:30 a.m., Cuban aircraft harassed Duncan Town, flying at tree top level.

When the Bahamian Government protested the incident, the Cuban Government sent Raul Castro, Raul Roa Kouri and Vice-Minister of Foreign Relations Pelegrin Torras to the Bahamas in an attempt to solve the problem. They stated upon their arrival that "we will never be arrogant toward the Bahamians." The Bahamian Government demanded reparations and apologies and protested the incident in the Security Council of the United Nations. The Cuban Government answered that the fishermen thought that they were being kidnapped by pirates and the pilots did not recognize the coast guard vessel as being Bahamian.³¹ The incident quietly came to an end and within a year the Bahamian Prime Minister was visiting Cuba as a guest of the Cuban Government.

³⁰ The Bahamas is a small country formed by about 700 small islands between Cuba and Florida, of which only about 30 are inhabited. The size of the population is less than 270,000 people.

³¹ FBIS Reports, (May 12 and 13, 1980).

The War in Nicaragua³²

Since 1980, Cuban troops and advisers have been stationed in Nicaragua in large numbers. The first group of Cuban military advisers arrived a year before, hours after the fall of the Somoza regime. By 1985, at least 3,000 combat troops and 4,500 civilian and military advisers were working in Nicaragua giving assistance to the Sandinista Government. According to U.S. Department of Defense estimates, there were between 2,500 and 3,500 Cuban military and security advisers in Nicaragua at the start of 1986, as well as between 50 and 70 Soviet advisers.³³

The Cuban Government has become the principal source of support for the Nicaraguan Government. Cubans organized and trained personnel for the Nicaraguan state security apparatus. They have also trained thousands of Nicaraguan soldiers both in Cuba and in Nicaragua. The figures on the number of Cuban military personnel in Nicaragua are deceiving since all the civilians working either as teachers, construction workers or technicians of one kind or another have received military training in Cuba and would probably pick up weapons and join the Nicaraguan military to defend the Sandinista government.

The U.S. Department of Defense estimates that between 1980 and 1985, at least \$580 million in military aid from Communist countries was delivered to Nicaragua. By the end of 1984, at least 66 T-55's, 26 PT-76's, 63 BTR-152's and 26 BRDM-2's had been delivered to Nicaragua. Other sophisticated military equipment included 8 Mi-24/25 HIND helicopters, 5 Mi-8 HIP helicopters and a large number of artillery pieces and rocket launchers. Cuban military personnel, as well as members of the PLO, Libyan and North Korean soldiers and an assortment of other revolutionary Marxist

³² This small Central American country has a population of less than 2.5 million people. Nicaragua was ruled by General Anastasio Somoza-Debayle and his family for over 30 years until his overthrow on July 17, 1979, after a seven-week campaign by an invasion force of Sandinista revolutionaries. In 1980 the size of the Nicaraguan Armed Forces was placed at 8,000 regulars and about 4,000 paramilitary forces. Since the beginning of 1986, the Nicaraguan Armed Forces have reached over 100,000 well-trained troops with modern weapons.

³³ U.S. Department of Defense, Soviet Military Power: 1986, pp. 130-131.

guerrilla organizations have cooperated in training Nicaraguans on the use of these weapons.³⁴

By mid-1986, the stock of Soviet weapons in Nicaragua had been expanded to include even more sophisticated weapons. The Sandinista Air Force had tripled the size of the helicopter fleet with as many as 15 new Mi-17's. With these new heavy lift helicopters, the mobility of the Nicaraguan Armed Forces to combat areas has been increased substantially. Together with the Mi-24's, this helicopter fleet has turned the tide in favor of the government. They have been the key to Sandinista's military successes.³⁵

Cuban Combat Troops

Some of the best troop commanders in the Cuban Armed Forces have been sent to Nicaragua to train local commanders and to direct counterinsurgency operations. For example, General Arnaldo T. Ochoa Sánchez was sent to Nicaragua in 1983 to head the Cuban military contingent assigned to assist the Sandinistas. General Ochoa is a veteran of the revolution against Batista and a graduate of training academies in the Soviet Union. He was one of Cuba's top commanders during the war in Angola in early 1976 and was later sent to Ethiopia in December of 1977 as commander of the Cuban combat forces in the war against Somalia and guerrilla forces in the Ogaden Desert. Prior to Nicaragua, General Ochoa was in charge of combat readiness in Cuba. A year after his arrival in Nicaragua, he was awarded the title of Hero of the Republic of Cuba and the Order of Máximo Gómez. He was replaced in Nicaragua by General Nestor López Cuba, whose prior assignment had been as Chief of the Southern Army Corps of the Eastern Army, perhaps one of the most prestigious positions in the island's armed forces.

Reports of direct participation of Cuban troops in military operations in Nicaragua are sketchy. However, some information has begun to come out about Cuban casualties on both sides of the war. In December of 1985 it was reported that a Nicaraguan MI-8 helicopter was shot down, killing 14 troops. According to press reports two Cuban pilots were killed in

³⁴ U.S. Department of Defense, Soviet Military Power 1985 and 1986 editions.

³⁵ "15 New Soviet Copters Reported in Managua," Mexico City News (July 10, 1986), p. 1.

this incident although the Nicaraguan Government denied that Cubans were piloting the aircraft.³⁶

Cuban Exiles Fighting in Nicaragua

Anti-Communist Cubans are directly involved in supporting the Nicaraguan counterrevolutionary movement or "contras." For example, in June of 1986, it was reported that two Cubans, 26 and 33 years of age, were taken as prisoners in combat by Sandinista troops in Nicaragua. They claimed that they had left Cuba in 1980 during the Mariel boat lift and had been recruited in Miami by a veteran of the Bay of Pigs 2506 Brigade to join the contras. According to press reports, they claimed that they had met other Cuban exiles who were planning to go to Nicaragua to fight the Communists. No details were given as to whether or not they had received military training in Cuba prior to going into exile.³⁷

After a C-123 cargo plane delivering weapons to the "contras" was shot down in Nicaragua in September of 1986, new information points to a considerable amount of direct involvement of Cuban-Americans in the war against the Sandinistas. The captured American pilot of the plane, Eugene Hasenfus fingered several Cuban exiles as being deeply involved in the war against the Sandinistas. An effort has been made by the Sandinistas and their friends in the United States to categorize their actions as illegal. However, there is a long tradition of American citizens participating in wars overseas. For example, Americans fought in Spain during the Civil War (1936-1939) against Franco and his followers. Many Cubans also signed up in New York City with the International Brigades at that time and fought side-by-side with American Communists in Spain. At the present time, many Americans and Cubans are working in Nicaragua in support of the Sandinistas. If pro-Sandinistas and Communists can engage in "internationalism," as they call their activities, it would seem to be also "legal" for anti-Communists to engage in similar activities.³⁸

³⁶ Larry Boyd, "Nicaragua helicopter shot down with S-7," Jane's Defense Weekly (December 21, 1985) p. 1337.

³⁷ "Nicaragua Seizes 2 Cubans, Say they enlisted in U.S.," New York Times (June 26, 1986), sec. Y, p.7. The two Cubans were Ubaldo Hernández Pérez, 26, and Mario Eugenio Rejas Lavas, 33. They claimed that they were recruited by René Corvo, a veteran member of the 2506 Brigade. Both captured Cubans were still Cuban citizens.

³⁸ For more information see: "Sam Dillon, "Fugitive may be contra supplier; Cuban exile waging 'war' under new identity,

The Clash in Grenada³⁹

Cuban involvement in the Caribbean Island of Grenada started after Prime Minister Eric Gairy was overthrown in March of 1979 by Maurice Bishop. Bishop's New Jewel Movement (NJM) became closely allied with several international revolutionary groups and the Governments of Libya, Nicaragua, North Korea, Vietnam, Cuba and the Soviet Union. The revolutionary government headed by Bishop slowly began to move to the left and toward the establishment of a Socialist government patterned after the Cuban version.

The Armed Forces were increased and Cuban military personnel began to arrive in Grenada to provide military training. Other Grenadians were sent to Cuba or the Soviet Union to receive military training in sophisticated modern weapons of Soviet manufacture. Hundreds of Grenadians received training from Cuban military technicians. Secret military agreements were signed with Cuba, the Soviet Union, and with other Communist countries including North Korea. This was followed by the arrival of thousands of weapons, including rifles, machine guns, BTR-60 armored personnel carriers and anti-aircraft guns.

The United States Government began to make public statements on developments in Grenada after Cuban personnel began to build an airport at Point Salines. The Grenadian Government claimed that the new airport was needed to expand tourism. The U.S. pointed out that such an airport with military operational capabilities would make it possible for Cuban aircraft to expand their radius of action throughout the whole region. It also would have made it possible for weapons to be ferried from Europe and Africa to Nicaragua and Cuba without a need for refueling stops. The airport could also have been used as a staging area to provide military supplies to revolutionary groups in South America.

The end of the Cuban-Grenadian connection came after a power struggle among members of the NJM led to the assassination of Maurice Bishop in the fall of 1983. Bishop, his Secretary of Education, Jacqueline Creft (who was pregnant with Bishop's

friends say," The Miami Herald (October 21, 1986), p.1. col. 1.; Doyle McManus and William R. Long, "Bay of Pigs Veteran Still Fighting Communism in Nicaragua," The Mexico City News (October 17, 1986), p. 10. (This article was syndicated by the Los Angeles Times.)

³⁹ Grenada is a small country in the Eastern Caribbean, which obtained its independence from Great Britain on February 7, 1974. The population of this small island-nation is 109,000.

child) and several other prominent government officials were lined up against a wall and shot by radical-pro-Cuban military officers. The bodies were dumped in an open pit, doused with gasoline and set afire. Possibly as many as 100 close supporters of Bishop were rounded up by the radicals and shot. This coup d'etat led to a military intervention to overthrow the radicals who had taken control of the government. The United States and members of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States landed over 7,000 troops in Grenada on October 25, 1983. Within 48 hours resistance by Cuban and Grenadian military units came to an end and about 600 Cubans surrendered.

Fidel Castro personally went to the airport in Havana to receive the dead and wounded Cubans after they were released by the United States, reportedly looking tired and angry. They were given heroes' receptions, with bands playing and troops in formation.⁴⁰ The ones who surrendered without having received a scratch in the fighting did not seem to fare so well.

Cuban President Fidel Castro ordered his men in Grenada to fight until death, together with Grenadian troops, to defend the island against imperialist aggression. But the outnumbered Cuban and Grenadian troops surrendered after token resistance. The Cuban officer in command of the troops in Grenada was Colonel Pedro Tortolo Comas, who prior to his arrival in Grenada had held the position of Chief of Staff of the Cuban Central Army. Another high-ranking Cuban officer was Julian Torres Rizo, who had held the post of Ambassador to the Commonwealth of Dominica and St. Lucia in 1980, and was one of Cuba's experts on the Eastern Caribbean. In May of 1984, it was reported that both men had dropped out of sight and had been punished for not following orders and surrendering.⁴¹

⁴⁰ "Castro welcomes wounded Cubans; looking tired and dazed they receive somber greetings - military band plays," New York Times, (November 3, 1983), p. 10.

⁴¹ "2 Cubans involved in Grenada drop out of sight (Julian Torres and Pedro Tortolo Comas)," New York Times, (May 14, 1984), p. 6. According to the FBIS Report of June 19, 1984, Colonel Pedro Tortolo and at least 42 other soldiers in Grenada were court-martialed. The number of soldiers court-martialed may have been as high as 54. Tortolo was demoted to private and sent to join Cuban troops fighting in Angola. Fellow officers received similar sentences but no details were provided. It seems that Tortolo and the others found their way to the Soviet Embassy in Grenada, while several civilians fought to their death. Tortolo and the others became the butt of public ridicule. At the Third Congress of the Cuban Communist Party, it became clear that several high-

According to the Cuban Government, when U.S. forces landed in Grenada on October 25, 1983, there were 784 Cubans in Grenada, including diplomatic personnel, women and children. Reportedly, 24 Cubans died fighting against the American troops. An analysis of information published in Cuba on the background of the 24 men who were killed in combat revealed that only four of them were old enough to have participated in the revolution against Batista. These men were 51, 49, 45 and 44 years of age when they were killed. Their ages in 1959 when Batista was overthrown ranged between 17 and 24 years. Three were members of the Communist Party and one was "aspirante" to become a member. Twelve of the men killed in combat ranged in age from 28 to 41 years. This means that they were from one to 14 years of age in 1959. Four of them were members of the Communist Party and one belonged to the Young Communist Union. The rest, 8 in total, were born after 1959 and ranged in age from 23 to 27 years. Three were members of the Young Communist Union.

The highest ranking official killed was Carlos Andrés Díaz Larrafaga, 41 years old, and Chief of the Caribe Section, of the America Department of the Central Committee of the Communists Party. He had only been in Grenada a few hours before the landing of U.S. forces. At least two officers in the Armed Forces were among the men killed in combat. Sergio Erico Grandales Nolasco, 49 years old, was a member of the CCP and a captain in the transportation corps of the MINFAR. Oscar A. Nuñez Gil, 30 years old, was a first lieutenant in the reserves. However, all the men in Grenada at the time of the landing had been members of the Armed Forces at one point or another, since a compulsory military service law has been on the books in Cuba since 1963.

The racial composition of the 24 men killed is also interesting. Four appear to have been black. Two may have been mulattoes, but the other 18 were caucasian. They were fairly representative of the racial composition of Cuba. From the pictures, which must have been taken months before they were sent to Grenada, they seemed to be older than their ages when they were killed. They obviously suffered some hardships in their lives.

ranking members of the Ministry of the Interior (MININT) were being fired, demoted or had their membership in the Central Committee of the party stripped from them. These men included Minister Ramiro Valdés, who was replaced, and General José Joaquín Méndez Cominches, who was ousted from the Central Committee. They were blamed for the intelligence failure in detecting the coup against Bishop and activities leading to the American landing. Failure is not tolerated in Cuba.

The Grenadian incident is of tremendous historical significance because it is the first encounter between Cuban and American military forces. Cubans and Americans had always fought on the same side before. Despite close to 25 years of Communist rule in Cuba and numerous confrontations, Cuban and American troops had never come head-to-head in combat, particularly with so many men involved. The over 7,000 American troops could have defeated the approximately 600 Cubans with baseball bats, considering that they outnumbered the Cubans by a ratio of about 12 to one. However, even though the Cubans in Grenada were not regular troops and were not prepared to fight, they put up a strong resistance. If regular troops had been in Grenada the fighting could have produced many more casualties to the invaders.

Another significant military outcome of the battle for Grenada was that only about five U.S. servicemen were killed by enemy fire and about 15 were killed in accidents when their helicopters crashed or when special forces drowned because they were dropped into the water with equipment that was inadequate. However, accidents like this can be expected in an operation of this size.

Cuban-Sponsored Guerrillas in Central America

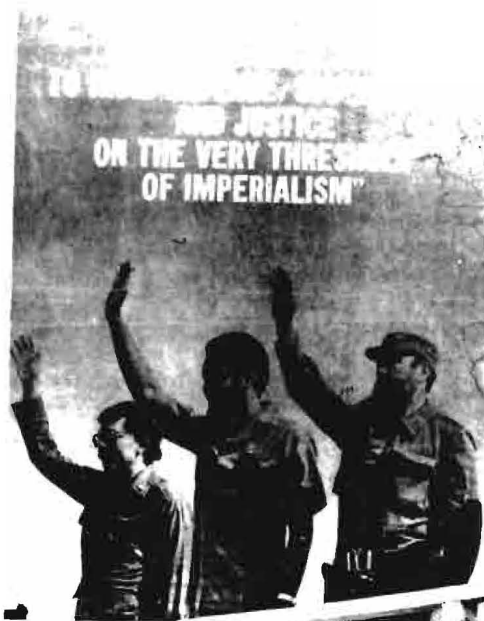
At the present time there are Cuban-sponsored guerrilla organizations active in El Salvador, Guatemala and to some extent in Honduras. The principal group in El Salvador is the Farabundo Marti Popular Liberation Forces (FPL). It has between 5,000 and 10,000 members. The Cuban Government has trained a substantial number of members of this organization in Cuba and Nicaragua. The Cuban and Nicaraguan Governments have also supplied the Salvadoran guerrillas a substantial amount of weapons, ammunition and other military supplies. In Guatemala the principal guerrilla organizations are the Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP) and the Rebel Armed Forces (FAR). Both have received substantial assistance from the Cuban Government. In Honduras the two principal guerrilla organizations are the People's Revolutionary Union/ Popular Liberation Movement (URP/MPL) and the Popular Revolutionary Forces - Lorenzo Zelaya (FPR). The first one is active mostly in San Pedro Sula and the second in the capital of Tegucigalpa.

Cuban support for these revolutionary guerrilla organizations is open and strong. Fidel Castro has worked through his operatives to unify the different revolutionary organizations to strengthen them and increase their effectiveness. Hundreds of Central Americans have been trained in Cuba and been supplied with weapons and logistical support. It is even possible that Cuban military personnel may be fighting alongside some of these guerrilla organizations in El Sal-

vador and Guatemala. Despite the open Cuban support for the guerrillas, evidence of direct Cuban involvement is difficult to gather. Nevertheless, there are plenty of examples of Cuban involvement in the region. For example, about 100 Honduran guerrillas trained in Cuba were defeated while trying to infiltrate back to Honduras from Nicaragua in June of 1983. Captured guerrillas provided details of their training and of other assistance provided by Cuba and the Sandinista Government of Nicaragua.

Cuban-Sponsored Guerrillas in South America

Cuban-sponsored political organizations exist in all the countries in South America. However, guerrilla organizations are active in only a few countries, mostly in Chile and Colombia. One of the most active guerrilla organizations counting on Cuban support is the Manuel Rodríguez Patriotic Front (FPMR) in Chile. This organization is very active in its efforts to overthrow the government of General Pinochet. Although rural activity is very limited, the group has been active in urban terrorism. The two principal areas of activity are the capital of Santiago and the city of Concepcion. Many Chilean exiles who had been supporters of Salvador Allende were given refuge in Cuba after the military coup d'etat led by Augusto Pinochet. Many of these Chileans have been given substantial training in guerrilla warfare.



ORTEGA, BISHOP AND CASTRO

Colombia

Perhaps the most active guerrilla war in South America at this time is in Colombia. One of the most unique characteristics of the Colombian guerrilla bands is that they co-exist with bands of drug smugglers, with whom they have worked out mutual assistance pacts. At least some of the guerrillas have entered the drug trade as a means of supporting their guerrilla armies. The principal guerrilla bands now active are:

| NAME | AREA OF ACTIVITY |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 19th of April Movement (M-19) | - Bogotá, Medellín and Cali |
| Ricardo Franco Front (RFF) | - Bogotá and Medellín |
| National Liberation Army (ELN) | - Bogotá and Medellín |
| People's Liberation Army (EPL) | - Santander |
| Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) | - Barrancabermeja |

The tactics used by these organizations are very similar. They include kidnapping, extortion, bombings, armed attacks and drug smuggling.

The current leader of the M-19 is 35-year-old Carlos Pizarro León-Gómez, whose father was a vice-admiral and commander-in-chief of the Colombian Armed Forces in 1959 and a former military attaché in Washington. The headquarters of his organization appears to be located somewhere in the Valle del Cauca. Pizarro took over as head of the M-19 after Alvaro Fayed was killed in a shootout with police in March of 1986, in Bogota. Also killed with Fayed was his second-in-command, Israel Santamaría. Like Fidel Castro, Pizarro and his brothers attended a Jesuit school and comes from a conservative background.

In the 1960's, Carlos Pizarro joined student activists and later became a member of the Communist Party of Colombia. However, feeling that the party was not sufficiently revolutionary, he joined the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the nation's oldest and largest guerrilla organization until the creation of the M-19. FARC had been formed in 1964 by Communists closely affiliated to the pro-Soviet Colombian Communist Party. Possibly because Pizarro felt that the group was not active enough, he joined a group that formed the M-19.⁴² The M-19 has managed to survive the death of several prominent leaders within one year. Pizarro's own

⁴² "M-19 Leader: A Lifetime of Military Ties," Mexico City News (July 8, 1986), p. 10.

second-in-command, Gustavo Arias Londono, was killed in July of 1986, in Antioquia, in a gun battle with police.⁴³

One of the M-19's accomplishments was the assault on the Dominican Embassy in Bogota on April 14, 1980, which resulted in the kidnapping of U.S. Ambassador Diego Asencio and a large number of diplomats accredited in Colombia. The 61-day affair ended with the departure of the M-19 kidnapers to Cuba. This incident ended in the same way as many other similar incidents in Latin America, with Cuba providing the mechanism and escape route to terrorists. A more recent major action of the M-19 was the invasion of the Colombian Supreme Court building and a major gun battle with security forces that left dead several judges and leaders of the M-19.

Several articles have been published linking the M-19 with the Cuban Government and drug runners. For example, Arnold de Borchgrave and Robert Moss, in an article in the New York Post in 1982, linked one Jaime Guillot of the M-19 with Raul Castro, Daniel Ortega and alleged Cuban intelligence officers Gonzalo Bassols Suárez and Roberto González Egana. The article provides details of an alleged drug and weapons smuggling operation conducted through Panama, Mexico City, Nicaragua and Cuba.⁴⁴ These and other similar charges have been received with skepticism due to lack of hard evidence. Even FBI Director William Webster and DEA Administrator Francis Mullen denied that they had hard evidence of a concerted effort by Cuba to finance revolutions with drug money.

Hernando Pizarro, one of Carlos Pizarro's brothers, also formed part of the FARC organization, and like his brother, left the organization to help form the Ricardo Franco Front.⁴⁵ One of the ugliest incidents in Colombia's guerrilla history, took place when about 160 members of the Ricardo Franco front were executed by the leadership of the organization, accused of working for the Colombian security forces. One of the characteristics of Marxists guerrilla organizations is the tendency toward extreme paranoia, with visions of intelligence agents behind every door. This often turns them against each other.

⁴³ "Top M-19 Strategist Killed in Struggle With Police," Mexico City News (July 25, 1986), p.9.

⁴⁴ Arnold de Borchgrave and Robert Moss, "Skimming the Top Off the Drug Trade," New York Post (June 22, 1982). Reprinted in Castro and the Narcotics Connection, op. cit. Bassols-Suarez was the Deputy Chief of Mission (Minister-Counselor) of the Cuban Embassy in Colombia. Jaime Guillot-Lara was arrested in Mexico City and was under indictment in the United States. The Mexican Government later released him.

⁴⁵ "M-19 Leader: A Lifetime of... op. cit.

The EPL was formed by former members of the Maoist (Marxist-Leninist) Colombian Communist Party. The ELN was formed in the 1960's by a pro-Castro group that attempted to carry out a Cuban-style insurrection in Colombia. Although the group was very active in the 1960's and attracted many members, by the mid-1970's like other pro-Cuban guerrilla organizations in Latin America, it was decimated by security forces. Most of the leaders and cells were captured or killed. The group is still active in urban areas in the capital of Bogota and in Medellin.

All of these Colombian guerrilla groups have ties to the Cuban Government and have received assistance in one form or another from the Cuban military. Colombia broke diplomatic relations with Cuba again on March 23, 1981, in part due to the capture of a band of M-19 guerrillas, who had been trained and provided weapons in Cuba after they landed on Colombia's Pacific coast. The M-19 is said to have working relationships with the PLO and the Shinning Path guerrillas in Peru, as well as with drug rings.

Chile

Cuban support to guerrilla groups fighting to overthrow the government of General Augusto Pinochet is well-known and acknowledged by the Cuban leadership. Fidel Castro, in a keynote address to the Third Congress of the Cuban Communist Party saluted the presence of prominent leaders of the Chilean Marxist revolutionaries as invited guests. Castro compared his own promise in 1956, thirty years earlier, to overthrow Batista before the end of the year, to the statement made by Chilean Communists to the effect that Pinochet would be overthrown in 1986. Castro told the delegates that even if it did not happen this year, it would happen next year of the year after, but eventually they would be successful. Castro acknowledged that he failed to deliver on his own promise to overthrow Batista until the early hours of January 1, 1959.

The principal guerrilla movements in Chile are the Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (MIR), the Milicia Popular de Resistencia (MPR) and the Manuel Rodriguez Patriotic Front (MRPF). MIR was formed in 1965 and revived in the 1970's with Cuban assistance after being practically wiped out by Chilean security forces.⁴⁶ Hundreds of members of this

⁴⁶ Members of the MIR, known as Miristas, were defiant of President Salvador Allende and pushed for more radical steps to carry out a revolution in Chile. Allende and his followers often clashed with the Miristas, who refused to accept

organization have been trained in Cuba and provided weapons and logistical support in their effort to overthrow General Pinochet. The MPR is also pro-Cuban and has received substantial military assistance from Cuba. This organization used terrorist tactics, including assassinations and kidnappings, as frequent tools of the trade.

Cuban assistance to Chilean Marxist revolutionaries has been repeatedly documented. For example, in August of 1986, Chilean security forces uncovered a large stockpile of weapons that allegedly were delivered to the Chilean coast by Cuban or Soviet fishing trawlers. Whether or not Cuban military personnel took an active part in the landing of the weapons, using rubber dinghies, is not known. The Chilean secret police (Centro Nacional de Información) reported that security forces had discovered 10 tons of weapons and explosives near a beach on the northern part of the country near Carrizal Bajo. The weapons were mostly American M-16's used in Vietnam and Soviet anti-tank rockets and enough ammunition to arm about 600 men. One of the three guerrillas captured during the operation was said to have been trained in Cuba for 13 years.⁴⁷

Twenty-Seven Years of Overseas Adventures: An Analysis

At any given time in 1986, between 40,000 and 60,000 Cuban military personnel have been or will be serving outside of Cuba as advisors, body guards, combat troops or receiving advanced military training in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. These numbers are equivalent to almost twice the size of the Cuban military establishment before the triumph of the revolution in 1959. Over 200,000 troops served overseas between 1975 and 1985 alone. The Cuban military's overseas activities have come a long way from the romantic efforts to export the revolution of the 1960's. It is now a well-coordinated intelligence gathering organization, with excellent training apparatus, competent logistical support systems, and an even better international public relations machine dedicated to glorify the military achievements of the Cuban Government.

his leadership. They seized the city of Concepción in the in 1972 and carried out other similar acts which helped to radicalize and unify the opposition to Allende leading to his overthrow by General Pinochet.

⁴⁷ "Chile Intercepts Soviet Arms Aimed for Rebels," The Mexico City News (August 12, 1986), p. 8.

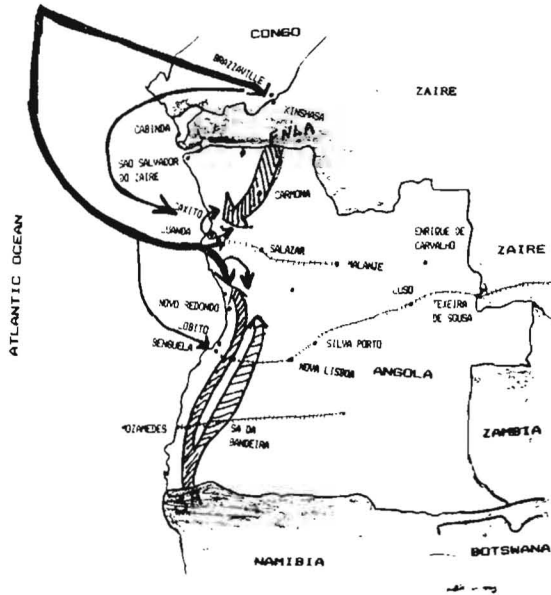
Cuban military personnel have become the primary backers of Marxists revolutionaries throughout the world. Cuban "internationalists" have been participants, generally in the forefront of all major military events of the past ten years throughout the world. They have trained and lead guerrilla groups, carried out counterinsurgency operations and used classical Soviet "steamroller" tactics with massive usage of artillery and armor in conventional warfare. Cuban officers and enlisted men are well-trained, literate, indoctrinated politically to be loyal and disciplined, and are well aware that cowardice or failure to meet goals will be severely punished. Nothing but success in overseas missions is tolerated by Fidel Castro and principal commanders of the Armed Forces.

Even for military personnel with low morale, who may feel that participation in overseas adventures is a form of punishment and not an honor, violations of disciplinary rules seem out of the question. They are well aware that severe penalties are applied to those who do not fulfill their obligations. They live and work in an atmosphere of unquestioned obedience. Abandonment or surrender of troops, equipment, or ground to the enemy is punished with sentences of 10 to 20 years in prison or death by firing squad.

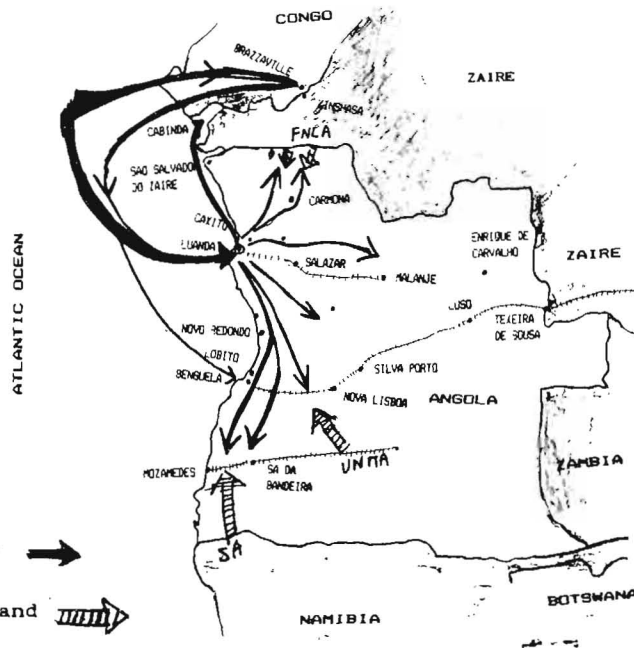
Despite some failures, as for example in Grenada in 1983, the Cuban military will probably continue to expand its overseas role in the future. If anything, Fidel Castro has taken steps in the 1980's to expand the Cuban military to limits previously never considered possible. New concepts, such as the "War of All the People," have become the driving force for the total mobilization of Cuban society, and are directly linked to internationalist duties to export the revolution. Castro is willing to postpone programs and the accomplishment of major domestic goals to become militarily and ideologically stronger to fulfill internationalist duties. Despite the tremendous costs of following these interventionist policies, Castro has the resolve to continue expanding Cuban overseas military activities.

The only thing that would stop Cuban overseas adventures would be a major thrashing, an abysmal failure resulting a substantial loss of prestige both within Cuba, as well as in the eyes of world public opinion. A major defeat in Africa or Central America, leading to widespread surrender of enlisted men and officers, might force a reconsideration of the internationalist policy of the Cuban Government. Only major shock waves throughout Cuban society, as a result of a clear defeat, would stop Cuban expansionism with Soviet support. Cubans dare to win all the time, while western powers normally retreat when faced with a challenge. As long as the Cuban daring goes unchallenged the major military defeat needed to stop Cuban adventures overseas will never take place.

THE WAR IN ANGOLA 1975-1976



Cuban ships with troops and weapons began to arrive in Angola in October of 1975. Their goal was to set up four training camps for MPLA forces at Benguela, Saurimo, Cabinda and Delatando. However, before the camps could be set up, South African, UNITA and FNLA troops began to advance toward Luanda. The Cuban Government sent between November 7 and 25, a battalion of special forces (650 men) to Angola by air to support the MPLA and the other Cuban troops already in Angola. The planes made refueling stops in Barbados, Guinea-Bissau and Congo-Brazzaville before landing in Luanda. Additional troops were sent by sea, including at least one artillery regiment and a battalion of motorized infantry. They entered into combat from the time they arrived, suffering major defeats including one at Catofe. However, by January of 1976, the Cuban and MPLA had managed to push back FNLA troops toward the Zaire border and South Africans back to Namibia. By March of 1976, the South Africans had retreated to the Namibia border. UNITA had retreated to the south eastern corner of Angola.





Fidel Castro and Daniel Ortega in 1985 in Nicaragua. The old man behind Castro is Carlos Rafael Rodríguez Rodríguez, Vice President of Cuba.



A few days after the victory of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua in 1979, several of their leaders went to Cuba to participate in the celebrations of the 26th Anniversary of the assault of the Moncada Army barracks on July 26, 1953. They are shown in the picture above with Fidel Castro, their mentor and supporter for close to 20 years.

Granma

La Habana, 30 de marzo de 1986
Año del XXX Aniversario
del Desembarco del Granma
Año 21 / Número 13

OLIVER TAMBO

● Cumple invitación del Comité Central del Partido Comunista de Cuba

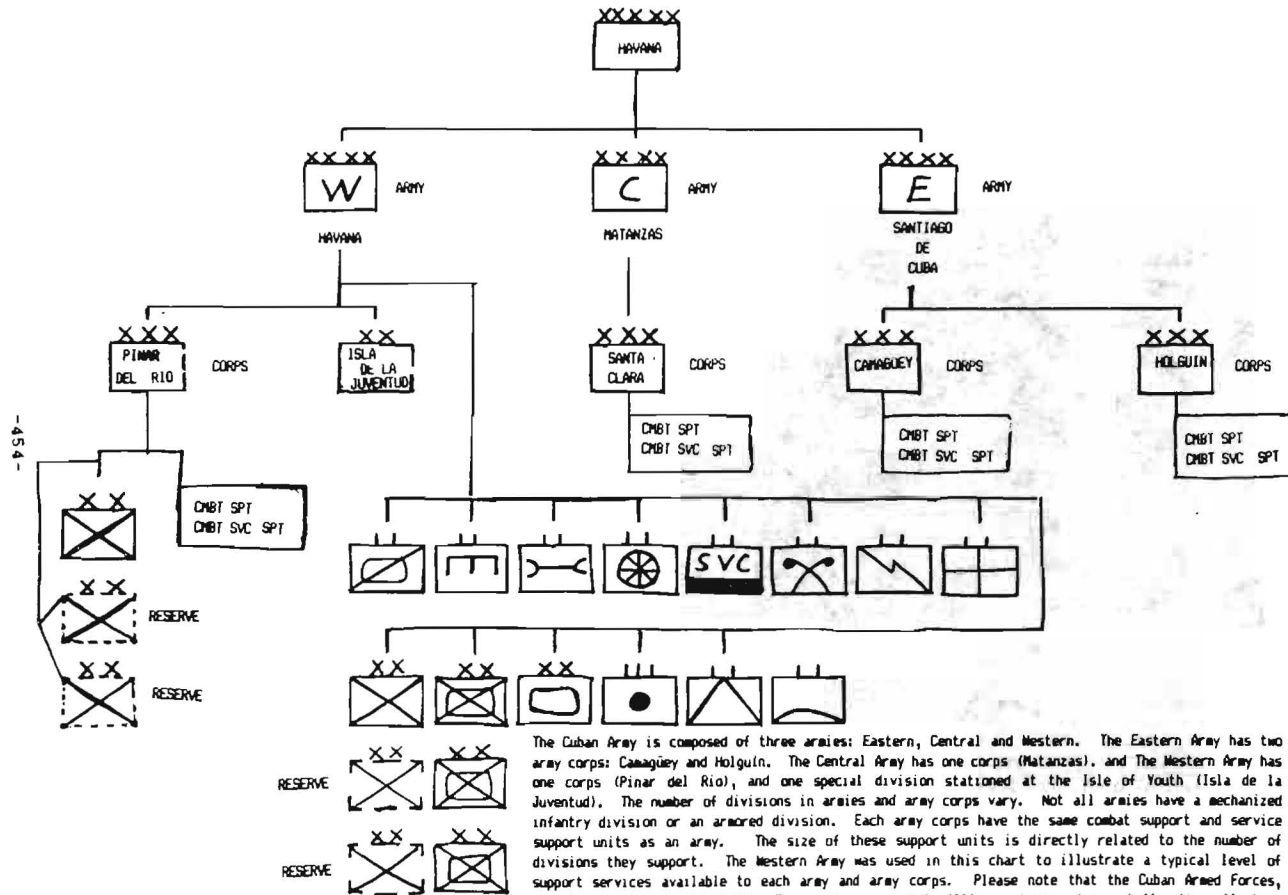


Oliver Tambo, President of the Executive Committee of the ANC arrived in Havana on March 21, 1986, heading a delegation invited to visit Cuba by the Cuban Communist Party. They were received at the airport by Jorge Risquet, Esteban Lazo, Isidoro Malmierca, René Rodríguez and General Victor Schueg Colás, Eloy Valdés and Castuera Torres. Blanca La Guma, representative in Cuba of the ANC, and a large number of black South African students that have been granted scholarships to study in Cuba were also present for the arrival of Mr. Tambo.

On April 14, 1980, members of the Colombian guerrilla organization M-19, took over the Dominican Embassy in Bogota during a reception. This action resulted in the kidnapping of U.S. Ambassador Diego Asencio and a large number of diplomats accredited in Colombia. The 61 day affair ended with the departure of the M-19 kidnapers to Cuba. The picture above shows M-19 leader Rosenberg Pabón Pabón as he came out of the airplane that took him to Havana. Behind him is General José Abrahantes Fernández, present Minister of the Interior and head of the Cuban intelligence services.

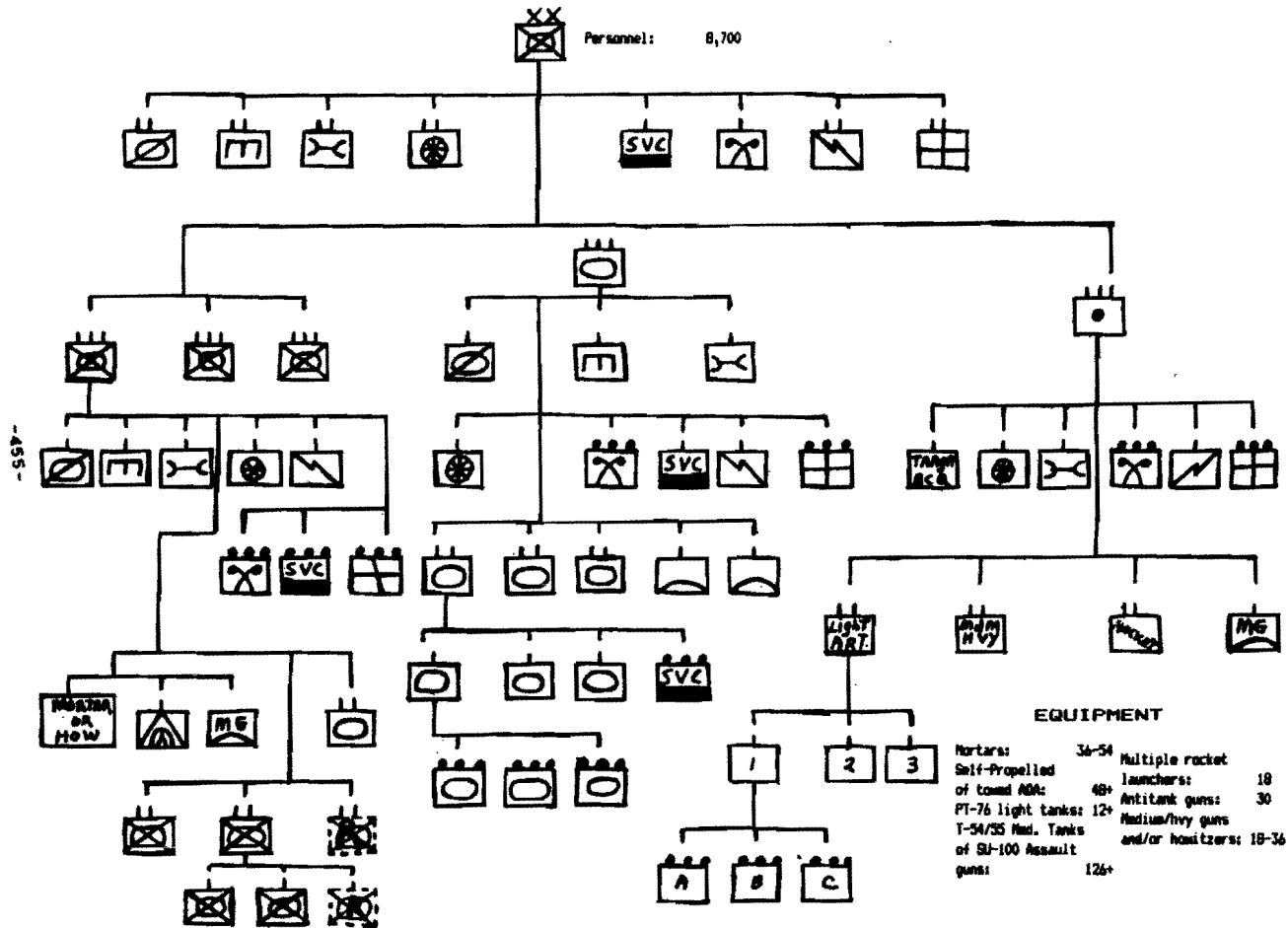


ORGANIZATION OF THE CUBAN ARMY

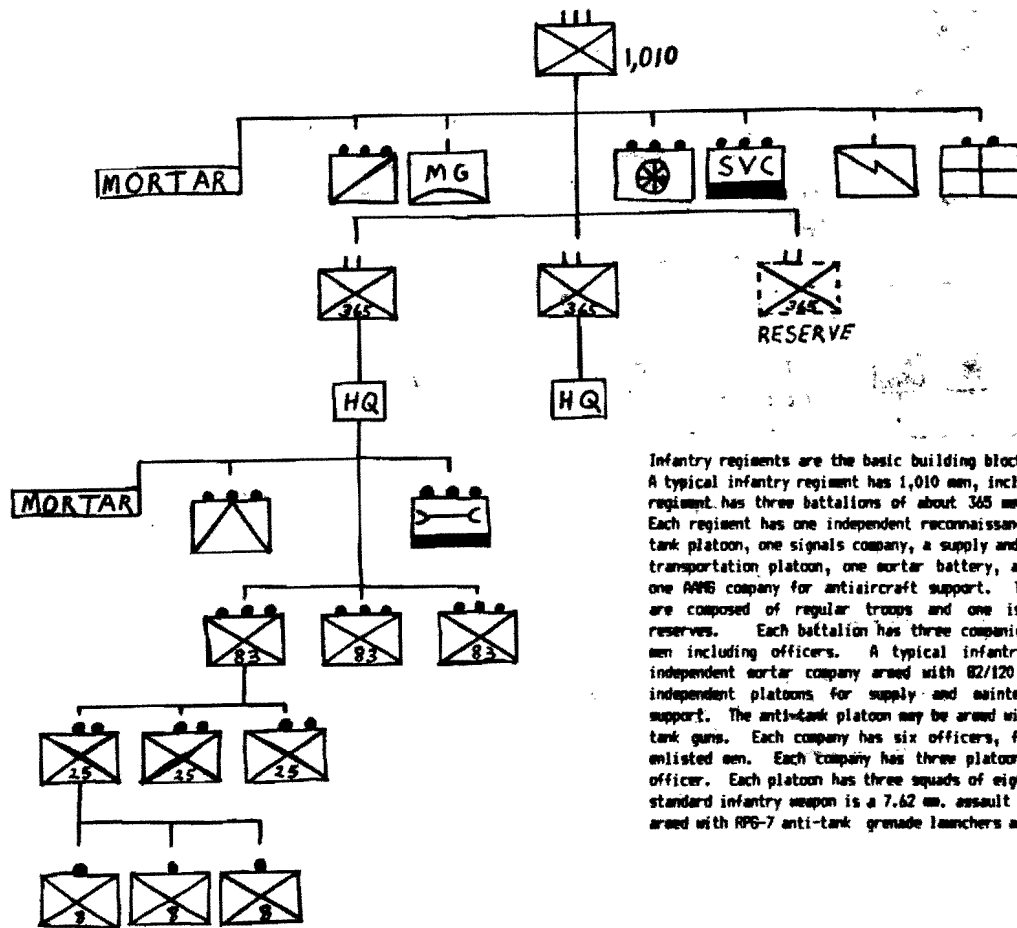


The Cuban Army is composed of three armies: Eastern, Central and Western. The Eastern Army has two army corps: Canagüey and Holguín. The Central Army has one corps (Matanzas), and The Western Army has one corps (Pinar del Río), and one special division stationed at the Isle of Youth (Isla de la Juventud). The number of divisions in armies and army corps vary. Not all armies have a mechanized infantry division or an armored division. Each army corps have the same combat support and service support units as an army. The size of these support units is directly related to the number of divisions they support. The Western Army was used in this chart to illustrate a typical level of support services available to each army and army corps. Please note that the Cuban Armed Forces, counting the Territorial Militia Troops, have over 1.6 million members and can staff units well above the level shown here. This organizational chart only takes into account regular and ready reserve forces.

TYPICAL ORGANIZATION OF A CUBAN
MECHANIZED INFANTRY DIVISION



TYPICAL ORGANIZATION OF A CUBAN
INFANTRY REGIMENT



Infantry regiments are the basic building blocks of the Cuban Army. A typical infantry regiment has 1,010 men, including officers. Each regiment has three battalions of about 365 men including officers. Each regiment has one independent reconnaissance platoon, one anti-tank platoon, one signals company, a supply and service platoon, one transportation platoon, one mortar battery, a medical section and one APMG company for antiaircraft support. Two of the battalions are composed of regular troops and one is composed of ready reserves. Each battalion has three companies of about 83-to-100 men including officers. A typical infantry battalion has one independent mortar company armed with 82/120 mm. mortars and two independent platoons for supply and maintenance and anti-tank support. The anti-tank platoon may be armed with 57/76/85 mm. anti-tank guns. Each company has six officers, four sergeants and 73 enlisted men. Each company has three platoons of 24 men and one officer. Each platoon has three squads of eight enlisted men. The standard infantry weapon is a 7.62 mm. assault rifle. They are also armed with RPG-7 anti-tank grenade launchers and 9 mm. pistols.

APPENDIX I

ORGANIZATION OF THE CUBAN MILITARY AND POLICE FORCES

Cuban military and police forces, including intelligence and counterintelligence organizations are under the jurisdiction of two ministries or departments of government. They are: the Ministerio de las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias (MINFAR) and the Ministerio del Interior (MININT).

The complexity, redundancy and compartmentalization of the entire security apparatus of the Cuban Government is such that it is difficult to make generalizations about these two ministries. However, MINFAR is for the most part in charge of military forces, such as the ARMY, NAVY, AIR FORCE and Territorial MILITIA troops. MININT is a modification of the pre-revolutionary Ministry of Government (Ministerio de Gobernacion), which had jurisdiction over the National Police Force and the Secret Police. MININT administers the National Police and the Department of State Security including a vast intelligence organization, Special Forces, Border Guards and fire fighters. The following is a description of these two key branches of the Cuban Government.

1. Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (MINFAR)

The Cuban Armed Forces come under the jurisdiction of the Ministerio de las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias (MINFAR). The Minister of the Armed Forces is Lieutenant General (Also referred to as General of the Army) Raul Castro, President Fidel Castro's brother, who is regarded by most scholars on Cuba as the apparent heir to take over the government upon Fidel Castro's retirement or death.

It is estimated that over 30,000 civilians work for MINFAR in addition to a large number of military personnel performing civilian jobs. The total strength of the Armed Forces could be as high as 1.7 million strong, counting the ARMY, NAVY, AIR FORCE, Border Guards, paramilitary organizations such as the Territorial Militia Troops and the intelligence organizations of the Cuban Government.¹

The following breakdown of troop strength represents the best estimates available in the public domain at this time. However, they may be short of the actual current manpower due to recent growth. For example, President Fidel Castro in February 1985, stated in the MacNeil-Lehrer News Hour that Cuba

¹ Several of these military units are part of the MININT.

has over 500,000 regular troops and over one million in the Territorial Militia and other paramilitary organizations. He also claimed that the Cuban military had vastly expanded its equipment during 1984 and that the military budget for 1985 would be expanded by about 25 percent over 1984.

MINFAR TROOP STRENGTH

| | |
|--|---|
| ARMY (Ejército Revolucionario) | 130,000 Active duty 135,000 Ready Reserves |
| NAVY (MGR) | 13,500 Regulars ? Ready Reserves |
| AIR FORCE (Defensa Antiaerea y Fuerza Aerea Revolucionaria): | 18,500 Regulars ? Ready Reserves |
| Civil Defense | 100,000 Paramilitary |
| Territorial Militia (MIT) | 1,200,000 Paramilitary |
| Youth Labor Army | <u>100,000 Paramilitary</u> |
| TOTAL | 1,697,000 |

Organization of MINFAR

In addition to the Minister, MINFAR has three First Vice Ministers, who hold the rank of division general. They are at the present time:

- 5-1/ Div. Gen. Senén Casas Regueiro
- 3-1/ Div. Gen. Abelardo Colomé Ibarra
- 53-1/ Div. Gen. Ulises Rosales del Toro

There are also ten vice ministers who hold the rank of brigadier, division general or vice admiral. Each vice minister has a specific directorate or branch of the military under his command. The current holders of these positions are:

- 112-1/ Div. Gen. Sixto Batista Santana, Chief, Central Political Directorate
- 4-1/ Div. Gen. Rogelio Acevedo González, For the Rear Services
- 6-1/ Div. Gen. Julio Casas Regueiro, Chief of the Antiaircraft Defense and

Revolutionary Air Force

620-^u Brig. Gen. Francisco Cruz Bourzac, Armament and Technology +

6^u Div. Gen. Pedro M. García Pelaez, Combat Training

2-^u Div. Gen. Rigoberto García Fernández, Chief of the Youth Labor Army

8^u Div. Gen. Raul Menéndez Tomassevich, Chief of the Territorial Militia Troops

685- Col. Rafael Morales Velázquez, For Construction and Troop Housing

+6^u Div. Gen. Arnaldo T. Ochoa Sánchez, who has served as military adviser in Nicaragua
Fusilado 7/13/89

88 Commodore Pedro M. Pérez Betancourt, Chief of the Revolutionary Navy²

Quadrado m 4/12/89

Among the units of the MINFAR are:

Directorate of Foreign Relations
Economic/Administrative Directorate
Directorate of Human Resources
Patriotic Military-Education Commission
Society for Patriotic-Military Education
Civil Defense
Central Directorate for Construction and Housing
Directorate for Territorial Militia Troops
Central Political Directorate
Directorate for Propaganda and Agitation
Directorate for Organizational Work
Propaganda
Press, Radio and Television Section
Social Science Section
FAR film studios
Union of Young Communists
Directorate for Combat Training and Military Training
Directorate for Rear Services
Directorate for Armaments and Technology
Youth Labor Army

² The position of Chief of the Navy was held for many years by Vice Admiral Aldo Santamaría Cuadrado. He was removed from office late in 1984 or in the first weeks of 1985. He seems to continue on active duty but was stripped from the position of Chief of Staff, possibly due to excessive drinking or other unknown problems. Two commodores have served since then in the position vacated by Santamaría, but have not been promoted in rank to vice admiral.

NAVY (MGR)
Antiaircraft Defense and Air Force (DAAFAR)
Geodesic and Cartographic Institute

General Staff of the FAR
Security and Service
Directorate for Gen. Staff
Political Section
Directorate for Cadres
Finance Directorate
Tenth Directorate
Directorate for Military Prosecution
Directorate for Military Tribunals
Directorate for Military Training Centers and
Noncombat training
Directorate of Operations
Directorate of Artillery
Directorate of Armor
Directorate of Chemical Defense
Directorate for Engineering
Directorate for Organization and Mobilization
Military Counterintelligence Directorate
Planning and Economic Directorate
Communications Directorate
Security and Operations Battalion

Coordinator of Cuban Forces Overseas: ?

283
Commander, Cuban Troops in Angola *Samuel Rodiles 9/90*
41 - Division General Leopoldo Cintas Frias - BAJA
465 - *GUSTAVO FLEITA RAMIREZ - BAJA 12/87*
Commander, Cuban Troops in Ethiopia
196 - Brigadier General Miguel A. Llorente León - BAJA
MANUEL PEREZ HDEL - BAJA 1989
Commander, Cuban Troops in Nicaragua
363 - Brigadier General Nestor López Cuba

2. Ministry of the Interior (MININT)

The Ministerio del Interior (MININT), established in 1961, is the principal branch of the Cuban Government in charge of domestic intelligence and counter intelligence. It is estimated that between 10,000 and 15,000 employees of MININT work in intelligence areas. Several thousand more are part of special troops, police and fire fighting organizations.

En 12/7/87 - *Arnaldo Pechoa Sanchez - 6 Mandado*
conferiam ante para Angola
Leopoldo Cintas Frias - 41 - Jefe de la Agrupacion
de Tropas del Sur en Angola - BAJA

MININT TROOP STRENGTH

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Policia Nacional Revolucionaria | 10,000 |
| Civilian Auxiliary Corps to National Police: | 52,000 |
| Departamento de Seguridad del Estado (DSE) | 15,000 |
| Special Battalion of Police | ? |
| Special Troops | 2,000+ |
| Border Guard Troops (TGF) | <u>4,000</u> |
| TOTAL 83,000+ | |

In late 1985 the long time Minister of the Interior, Ramiro Valdés Menéndez was replaced by former First Vice Minister, Division General José Abrahantes Fernández. There are several versions of why Valdés was removed from MININT. A reason for the change may have been Valdés's membership in the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. According to Communist sources, it was determined that membership in the politburo and the holding of important offices in the bureaucracy provided a shelter from criticism of performance by the Politburo. One recent area of concern has been an increase in the crime rate and the inability of the police forces to control its growth. Valdés was removed from both, the Politburo and MININT. General Abrahantes was not given membership in the Politburo at the Third Congress of the CCP in February of 1986. Another more credible version of why Valdés was removed from office is that it was the result of the intelligence failures before, during and after the Grenada invasion in 1983. Valdés and other MININT and CCP officials were fired or demoted and several MINFAR members were court martialed.

The Ministry of the Interior has in addition to the Minister one First Vice Minister and four Vice Ministers. Each Vice minister heads one of the principal components of the ministry.

1- Minister: ✓ Div. Gen. José Abrahantes Fernández - *1980*

First Vice Minister: *3- Abelardo Colome J. J. J.*

Vice Ministers:

108 ✓ Col. Haydee Diaz Ortega, Chief of the Identification

544 and Information Directorate
Div. Gen. Pascual Martínez Gil, Internal Order and
Crime Prevention
268 Brig. Gen. Angel Mariano Martir Carrión
14 Div. Gen. José Joaquín Méndez Cominches³

The principal components of MININT are:

Central Political Directorate

593 Director: Brig. Gen. Marcos A. Gutiérrez Belló
290 F. Dept.: Brig. Gen. Felix Veliz Hernández
948 Dept. D.: Col. Edermo Castillo Ruiz
354 Col. Federico Mora Díaz
732 Lt. Col. Ernesto Pérez Shelton
987 Lt. Col. Orlando Guerra González
8-SRALDIV. RAUL MENENDEZ TOMASEVICI - *Dep. Puntos
Política*
National Emulation Commission
Cultural Section
Union of Young Communists (UJC)

Directorate for Minors

Directorate for Services

446 Vice Ministry for Security

14 General Directorate (Brig. Gen. Pedro R. Pupo Pérez)

General Directorate for Intelligence (DGI)

Div. Gen. José Joaquín Méndez Cominches

Vice Ministry for Internal Order and Crime Prevention

544- Div. Gen. Pascual Martínez Gil

General Directorate for Counterintelligence

General Directorate of the National Revolutionary Police

73 Director: Brig. Gen. Luis Felipe Denis Díaz †

Dept. Dir.: ALBERTO GARCIA ENTENZA-1028

225 Col. Raul García Rivero

946 Col. Lain Martín González

408 Col. Eduardo Reyes

863 Lt. Col. Raimundo Rodríguez Rocha

-Political Section

-Criminal Investigations Office

-Central Criminology Laboratory

-Embassy Protection Unit

-Public Safety Office

-Traffic Safety Office

-Police Training Department

(School "Antonio Briones Montoto")

-Department of Analysis and Planning

-Department of Crime Prevention

³ General Méndez was a member of the CCP Central Committee until the Third Party Congress in February of 1986. He may have been ousted due to the failure of intelligence units under his command to detect the events leading up to the Grenada invasion.

Directorate of Identification and Information
-Registration of Foreign Residents

National ID Card and Population Registration Section
General Directorate for Penal Establishments
428 Director: Brig. Gen. Arsenio Franco Villanueva

General Directorate for Fire Fighting and Prevention
365 Director: Col. Carlos Figueredo Rosales
General Directorate for Immigration and Naturalization
529 Director: Brig. Gen. Justo de Medina Hernández
Hurtado

National Protection Directorate
-National Physical Security
-State Secrets and Physical Security
-Physical Security for Construction
Sites

Directorate for Personal Security
Directorate for Training and Cadres
Directorate of Instruction
("Martires de la calle Patria Escuela Nacional")
(Instituto Superior del Interior)
Directorate of Construction

Border Guard Troops
401
388 Director: Brig. Gen. Amado Valdés González
Chief of Staff: Col. Miguel Bermejo Laredo
Political Section
Information Section
158 Western District: Col. Rolando Matos Bozán
520 Central District: Col. Humberto del Blanco
983 Eastern District: Lt. Col. Eligio Gómez

Directorate of Special Operations (DOE)
947 Director: Brig. Gen. Alejandro Marrero Ronda

At the provincial level MININT has a provincial headquarters under the direction of a FAR officer of either the rank of brigadier general or colonel. Each provincial headquarters has a Departamento de Seguridad del Estado (Department of State Security), which is also headed by a FAR officer with the rank of major or above.

Please note that all of these officers may have changed positions by the time this book is published. However, their names are important because despite Fidel Castro's directive to the Third Congress of the CCP in February of 1986, about the need to promote new people, not much has changed. The same people continue to hold all the key positions in the government. Even if the officers listed here have changed jobs, they are probably performing similar functions elsewhere.

APPENDIX II

REVOLUTIONARY ARMY (ER)

The Cuban ARMY (Ejercito Revolucionario) is the principal branch of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias (FAR). It has an estimated troop strength of 130,000 regulars and an estimated ready reserve of at least 135,000, organized into at least 15 infantry divisions, three armored brigades, and 8 independent brigades. The infantry "divisions" are in fact brigades which MINFAR chooses to call "divisiones."¹ Brigades were eliminated after the reorganization of the Armed Forces with Soviet assistance in the early 1970's. Regiments are now used as basic structural components of divisions. Regimental size units have also been organized to operate as independent special forces units.

The total strength of the ARMY is much higher than these figures indicate due to the large number of reservists and the relatively ease in which the reserves can be mobilized. In addition, most of the Cuban troops fighting in Angola, Nicaragua and elsewhere are often classified by the Cuban Government as composed of reservists and therefore not included in the count of the standing regular ARMY. It has been estimated that up to 70 percent of the troops that have fought in Angola and Ethiopia have been reservists.

The population of Cuba in 1981 was placed at 9.7 million people, of which about 50 percent are males. About 10 percent of the male population is between the ages of 15 and 24 years of age. Another 13 percent of the male population is between 25 and 44 years of age. Based on these figures, one can determine that about 2.2 million males are of military age. Considering that Cuba has an obligatory military service law and that all males should have undergone military service, the power of the Cuban Government to recall to active service a large force is substantial.²

The Militia (Milicia de Tropas Territoriales) is administered by the three Army Corps and is considered an extension of the regular Army. The officers in charge of coordinating regional militia units as part of the three Corps will be

¹ If one takes into consideration the estimated number of regulars and ready reserves, the Army could have as many as 32 divisions. If one considers the total potential strength of the Armed Forces, including the militia (MTT), over 2,000 divisions could be organized by MINFAR.

² See Chapter XX, p.325 for additional details on the estimated numbers of Cubans that will be available for military service in the late 1980's.

listed here. However, Appendix V covers in detail the history of the militia.

Deployment

The ARMY is deployed in three Field Armies: Army of the East, Army of the Center and Army of the West. The Eastern Army has two Army Corps: Camagüey Army Corps and the Southern Army Corp;³ The Central Army includes the Las Villas Army Corps, and the Western Army the Pinar del Rio Army Corps. Each Army Corps is composed of about five infantry divisions and one armored division. Several of these units may be part of the ready reserves. (Remember that a Cuban division is roughly equivalent to a conventional brigade).

According to fairly reliable sources, the Cuban ARMY has an estimated total of 59 infantry regiments and 8 independent infantry battalions, including 2 paratrooper battalions; 12 mechanized cavalry and armored regiments and 11 independent armored units; 12 independent motorized reconnaissance battalions and 24 artillery regiments.

Field Army

A typical Cuban field Army has about 70,200 men. It is composed of three mechanized infantry divisions; one Army Corps with three infantry divisions of which two are formed by ready reserves; one armored division; one artillery brigade; one antitank battalion; three infantry divisions of which two are part of the ready reserves; one medical battalion; one signals battalion; one chemical defense battalion; one service battalion; one transportation battalion; one maintenance battalion; one engineer battalion; one armored reconnaissance battalion; and one air defense artillery battalion.

Army Divisions

Each division is similar in composition to a Soviet motor rifle division with an artillery complement but without tanks. The size of each Cuban division is either 6,200, 8,200 or 5,900 men, depending on its main military mission.

³ The so called "Camagüey Army Corps" is also referred to in some literature as the "Holguin Army Corps."

Mechanized Infantry Division

A Mechanized Infantry Division has about 8,700 men. They consist of three Mechanized Infantry Regiments of about 1,560 men; one Tank Regiment with about 840 men; one Artillery Regiment with about 975 men; and one ADA Regiment. In addition, each Mechanized Infantry Division has one Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, one Engineer Battalion of about 300 men, one Maintenance Battalion of about 150 men, one Transportation Battalion, one Chemical Defense Company of about 45 men, a Supply and Service Company, one Signals Battalion of about 250 men and one Medical Battalion.

Mechanized Infantry Regiment

A typical mechanized infantry regiment has about 1,560 men. They consist of three mechanized infantry battalions of which one may be part of the ready reserves; one armored reconnaissance company; one engineer company; one maintenance company; one transportation company; one chemical defense platoon; one supply and service platoon; one signals company; one medical platoon; one mortar or howitzer battery; one tank battalion; one antitank artillery battery; and one antiaircraft artillery battery.

Mechanized Infantry Battalion

A typical Mechanized Infantry Battalion has about 450 men and consists of three mechanized rifle companies. Each rifle company has about 101 men (six officers and 95 sergeants and enlisted men). Each rifle company has three platoons of 30 men and one officer. Each platoon has three squads with ten men. The basic weapons are the 7.62 mm assault rifle, 9 mm pistols, RPG-7 antitank grenade launchers, 82/120 mm mortars and 57/67 light antitank guns. About 30 armored personnel carriers are assigned to each battalion as well as an assortment of trucks and other equipment.

Infantry Regiment

Each Infantry Regiment has 1,010 men including officers. Each regiment has three battalions of about 365 men including officers. Each Regiment has one independent reconnaissance platoon, one anti-tank platoon, one signals company, a supply and service platoon, one transportation platoon, one mortar battery, a medical section and one AAMG company for antiair-

craft support. Two of the battalions are composed of regular troops and one is composed of ready reserves.

Infantry Battalion

Each Infantry Battalion has three companies of about 100 men including officers. A typical infantry battalion has one independent mortar company armed with 82/120 mm mortars and two independent platoons for supply and maintenance and anti-tank support. The anti-tank platoon may be armed with 57/76/85 mm. anti-tank guns. Each company has six officers, four sergeants and 73 enlisted men. Each company has three platoons of 24 men and one officer. Each platoon has three squads of eight enlisted men. The standard infantry weapon is a 7.62 mm assault rifle. They are also armed with RPG-7 anti-tank grenade launchers and 9 mm pistols.

Armored Division

A typical armored division has about 6,600 men and is composed of three tank (armored) regiments, one mechanized infantry regiment, one antiaircraft artillery regiment, and one artillery regiment. In addition, each armored division has one armored reconnaissance battalion (230 men); one engineer battalion (270 men); one transportation battalion; one maintenance battalion; one chemical defense company; one supply and service battalion; one signals battalion and one medical company.

Armored (Tank) Regiment

Each armored regiment has between 720 and 840 men, including officers, and is composed of three tank battalions. In addition, each armored regiment has one engineer company; one transportation company; one armored reconnaissance company; one chemical defense platoon; one supply and service company; one signals company; two antiaircraft defense batteries and one medical platoon. Each armored regiment has between 63 and 100 medium tank and SU-100 assault guns, three + PT-76 light tanks and about 12 self-propelled or towed antiaircraft guns or missile batteries. They are also provided an assortment of armored personnel carriers and reconnaissance vehicles, trucks, bridging equipment and mine-clearing devices.

Tank Battalion

Each tank battalion has between 110 and 150 men and between 20 and 30 medium tanks and SU-100 assault guns. They are organized into three tank companies with between 26 and 36 enlisted men and three to five officers. A typical tank company operates between seven and ten medium tanks and assault guns in addition to armored personnel carriers, armored reconnaissance vehicles and mine-clearing devices. One of the tank companies may be a ready reserve unit. Normally a tank company has three platoons with three medium tanks or assault guns divided into three squads of about 12 men. Each tank battalion also has a supply and service platoon.

Independent Units

Most independent units are classified by MINFAR as "brigades." Their size and equipment depends on the purpose of the organization. The eight independent regiments include a "Brigada de Aterrizaje y Asalto" and a "Contingente de Tropa Especial."⁴

Independent Artillery Brigades

A typical independent artillery brigade has about 1,200 men and six battalions: one light artillery battalion, one medium/heavy artillery battalion, one rocket launcher battalion, one transportation battalion and one maintenance battalion. The strength and equipment of each battalion is similar to regular artillery battalions. Each independent artillery brigade has a complement of armored personnel carriers, reconnaissance vehicles and air defense guns. They may have one signal company, one reconnaissance company, one service company and one medical unit.

Other Military Units

In addition to the three Field Armies, the Army operates military schools and industrial enterprises throughout the country. The "tail" of the Cuban Army is very long. The rear services and intelligence units, for example, employ thousands of men. Another 30 to 40 thousand troops are also

⁴ Landing and Assault Brigade (BDA) and special forces or commando units.

serving in several countries in Africa and in Central America.

General Staff (Estado Mayor General, FAR)

Chief of Staff of the FAR:

53 Div. Gen. Ulises Rosales del Toro⁵

Deputy Chiefs: Brig. ⁵⁷Gen. Urbelino Betancourt Cruz⁶
246 Brig. Gen. Victor Chueg Colas (?)

Security and Service Unit: Col. R. Hernández Suárez
Chief of Troops: Col. Angel Martínez Sierra 948

Directorate of the General Staff

Political Section: Frig. Capt. Alfredo Salas Labrada 560

Directorate for Cadres

Chief: Brig. Gen. Gustavo Chui Beltrán 339

Finance Directorate

Chief: Brig. Gen. Juan Antonio Rodríguez 864

ARMY OF THE EAST

Chief of Staff Army of the East:

Div. Gen. Ramón Espinosa Martín 52

First Deputy Chief:

Brig. Gen. R. Sotomayor García⁷ 560

Deputy Chief:

Brig. Gen. José N. Causse Pérez 136

Political Section Chief:

Lt. Col. Dagoberto Delgado Morgado 521

Southern Army Corps

Chief: Brig. Gen. Nestor López Cuba 243

⁵ The Chief of Staff is also a First Vice Minister of the MINFAR.

⁶ Brig. Gen. Elio Avila Trujillo held the position before Gen. Betancourt.

⁷ This position was held before by Brig. Gen. Jorge Suárez Lorenzo.

Holguin Army Corps

Chief: Brig. Gen. Victor Chueg Colas⁸ 296
Chief of Staff: Col. Gregorio Junco DIAZ - 11
Political Section: Col. Evelio Ramírez Kindelan - 75
Rear Services: Col. Pablo Cabrera Piloto 950

Guantanamo Frontier Brigade

Col. Orgelino Pérez Peña 733

ARMY OF THE CENTER

296 - CHUEG COLAS VICTOR

Chief of Staff Army of the Center:
Brig. Gen. Gustavo Fleites Ramírez 465 - BAJA
Deputy Chief: Brig. Gen. Iraldo Mora Orozco - 542
especialista en Tangues
Chief of Staff: Col. Carlos Lezcano Pérez 476
Political Section: Col. Roberto Cruz Enriquez 441
Chief of Troops: Lt. Col. Miguel Camacho Barrio 951
Combat Training: Maj. José Roig Palenzuela 845

Las Villas Corps:

Chief: Brig. Gen. Orlando Lorenzo Castro 57
Chief of Staff: Maj. Leonardo Ramírez AVILES - 866
Chief of Operations: Col. Rigoberto Rivero RODRIGUEZ - 201

41 - Leopoldo Cintas Fria - 9/90

36 - RAMON PARDO GUERRA - BAJA 9/90
41 - LEOPOLDO CONTRAFRIAS - 1/88 - BAJA 4/1/89

Chief of Staff Army of the West: - RODRIGUEZ
Brig. Gen. Samuel Rodríguez Planas⁹ 483 - BAJA
First Deputy Chief:
Brig. Gen. Carlos Lezcano Pérez¹⁰ 476
Deputy Chief for the MTT (Milicia)

⁸ Brigadier General Victor Chueg Colas is a black officer with African experience. He is often seen receiving visiting African delegations in Havana, despite the fact that his command is in Holguin. His name has been spelled in many official documents as "Schueg." See Appendix for more details.

⁹ This position was held before by Div. Gen. Joaquín Quintas Solas.

¹⁰ This position was held before by Brig. Gen. Ramón Pardo Guerra.

Las provincias comprendidas bajo la jurisdicción del Ejército Central son: Matanzas, Villaclara, Cienfuegos, Sancti Spíritus y Ciego de Avila.
9/88

51
36
especialista en Tangues

Col. Lino Carreras Rodriguez 37

Pinar del Rio Army Corps

Chief: Col. Jesús Almeida Hernández 67
Chief of Staff: Lt. Col. Miguel Baullosa Garcla 449
(Two Brig. Gen. are attached to this Army Corps in unidenti-
fied capacity: Brig. Gen. Manuel Lastre Pacheco 472
and Brig. Gen. Iraldo Mora Orozco) 542

Langues

Great Havana Garrison

Chief: Brig. Gen. Roberto T. Viera Estrada - 39
Deputy Chief: Col. Ciro del Rio Guerra - 124
Honor Guard Company
Chief: Lt. Col. Elio Guerrero Ramos 985

Isle of Youth (Isle of Pines) Military Region

Chief: Col. William Mastrada Pérez¹¹ 951
Chief of Staff: Lt. Col. Pablo Barcelo - 450
Political Section: Col. Inaudi Barrios Rios - 451

Overseas Forces

Commander of Cuban Military Missions:

Ethiopia: Brig. Gen. Miguel Llorente León - 1916
Angola: Div. Gen. Leopoldo Cintra Frias - 4
Nicaragua: Brig. Gen. Nestor López Cuba - 343

Training

The Army operates four senior military academies for officers:

- Maj. Camilo Cienfuegos School for Artillery Officers
- Gen. Antonio Maceo Interservice Cadet School for Armor, Mechanized Units, Signals and Other Officers.
- Gen. José Maceo Interservice School
- Gen. Carlos Roloff Communications and Chemical Troop School

In addition, the Army runs a number of schools at the provincial level called Camilo Cienfuegos schools, which provide preparatory and high school education to students that will be candidates to enter the senior military academies. Students at these schools are between 16 and 20 years old and members of the Communist Youth League. The Students are

¹¹ This position was held before by Brig. Gen. Marcelo Verdecia Perdomo. - 329

Col. Lino Carreras Rodriguez 37

Pinar del Rio Army Corps

Chief: Col. Jesús Almeida Hernández 67
Chief of Staff: Lt. Col. Miguel Baullosa García 449
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¹¹ This position was held before by Brig. Gen. Marcelo Verdecia Perdomo. - 329

ARMORED CARS

BRDM-1 Armored Car (USSR)

BTR 40's/60's/152's APC (USSR) (About 1,200 in service)
These armored personnel carriers are produced in several versions.

TANKS

T-34 (Some of these old tanks may still be in Cuba but may not be operational).

T-54/55 (USSR) As many as 900 may be in service.

T-62 tank (USSR) (At least 60 in service)

PT-76 Light Amphibious tank

SU-100 Self-propelled Assault Gun (USSR) 200 units.

JS-2 Heavy Tank (USSR) About 60 may be in service (Practically obsolete).

ANTIAIRCRAFT DEFENSE WEAPONS (DAAFAR)¹³

37 mm M-39 gun (USSR)

57 mm M-50 gun (USSR)
Self-propelled automatic antiaircraft gun with twin 57 mm automatic anti-aircraft guns. Produced in the Soviet Union since the 1950's. Consists of a modified T-54 tank chassis with lighter armor.

S-60 57 mm Automatic Antiaircraft Gun (USSR)

M53/59 Self-propelled Antiaircraft Machinegun (30mm)

85 mm M-44 gun (USSR)

100 mm M-49 gun (USSR)

¹³ The antiaircraft defenses are operated by the Air Force (DAAFAR). However, antiaircraft weapons are deployed with Army regiments. In most Armies, these weapons and the men who operate them are part of the Army, and for this reason they are listed here and not in the section on the DAAFAR.

ZPU-2 Twin 14.5 mm Antiaircraft Heavy Machinegun (USSR)

ZPU-4 Quad 14.5 mm Antiaircraft Heavy Machinegun (USSR)

ZSU-23 Multiple cannon (USSR)

ZSU-57-2 (USSR)

SA-2 Missile (USSR)

This missile is about 35 feet long and was designed for the destruction of airborne targets, and has a range of about 20 to 25 miles, and a maximum altitude of about 80,000 feet. It is typical of this missile to be used in batteries of six launchers and with FAN SONG fire-control radar. This missile is transported in a one-axle semitrailer towed by a ZIL-15tv tractor.

SA-3 Missile-(USSR) At least 140 missiles are estimated to be in Cuba.

SA-6 Gainful-(USSR) Surface to Air Missile
At least two missile batteries are known to exist near Havana.

This missile is about 19 feet long and has a range of 30 to 35 km. It is effective from about 400 to 33,000 feet and can be used against low flying aircraft.

SA-7 Grail-(USSR) This antiaircraft missile is carried by infantry troops.

SA-9 Gaskin-(USSR) More advanced antiaircraft missile for use by the infantry.



APPENDIX III

ANTIAIRCRAFT DEFENSE AND REVOLUTIONARY AIR FORCE (DAAFAR)

The Cuban Air Force is the largest and better equipped in Latin America. The Soviet Union has provided the Cuban Government advanced training and sophisticated equipment over the past twenty five years to make the Cuban Air Force and Antiaircraft Defense System the best trained and equipped in the Western Hemisphere after the United States. It has between 18,500 and 20,000 members and over 350 aircrafts. It is organized into at least 12 fighter-bomber/interceptor squadrons and 24 SAM battalions. The Cuban Navy also has a helicopter force which includes at least 18 Mi-4 helicopters. The Army also has a sophisticated inventory of anti-aircraft equipment for support of its ground forces.

Mission

The Air Force is designed to provide air cover for ground forces and attack enemy targets in front lines as well as strategic support areas in the rear. It can also support operations over long distances, including transporting troops and supplying ground forces. Following the Soviet pattern, Cuba's frontal aviation is equipped for supporting combat operations of ground forces and is designed for attack. The role of defending ground troops is primarily a function of a well developed system of antiaircraft weapons including missiles. DAAFAR is not equipped for long-range operations and does not have long range bombers. But the radius of operation of the aircraft in the Cuban arsenal could be effectively used in most of the Caribbean, Central America and possibly in South of the United States. The capacity for transporting airborne troops and supplies has been increased in the past ten years as Cuban involvement in Africa and Central America conflicts has expanded.

History

Before the 1959 revolution, there were two air units in Cuba, one operated by the Army (Fuerza Aerea Ejercito) and the other unit by the Navy (Fuerza Aerea Marina de Guerra). Most of the planes were of WWII vintage and of American and British manufacture. Cuban pilots were trained for the most part by American instructors at Pensacola, Florida and in Texas.

After the triumph of the revolution in 1959 most of the pilots who had served Batista were retired, fired or arrested and tried for their participation in the air war against the rebel troops and bombing of civilian targets.¹ Even some of the pilots who had sided with the anti-Batista forces or who had been in the Rebel Army and joined the Revolutionary Air Force after 1959, including the commander of the force, Major Diaz Lanz, resigned and went into exile when the regime became more radical and moved to the left.

Prior to the Bay of Pigs invasion on April 13, 1961, B-26 bombers of the invasion force raided the Cuban airports and destroyed several planes, most of which had already been out of service for lack of parts and service. Only six planes were left operational, including two B-26's, two Sea Furies and two T-33 jet trainers. One of the B-26's was shot down, but the other planes were able to sink several of the ships in the invasion force and to shoot down several of the sixteen B-26's of the invaders.

Training

The Soviet Union and other Eastern European Communist countries began to train Cuban pilots in substantial numbers particularly after 1961. Soviet planes began to arrive in Cuba together with Soviet instructors soon after, and in a matter of a few years the Revolutionary Air Force had been expanded and reorganized based on the Soviet model.

Until the 1980's, all Cuban pilots were trained in the Soviet Union and possibly East Germany. Of all the branches of the Armed Forces, the DAAFAR probably gets the better educated students for officer training. Two of the Camilo Cienfuegos high schools are operated by the Air Force for training future officers. Pilot training is now conducted at the new school Escuela Militar para Pilotos Aereos (EMPA), located on the grounds of the old San Julian Airfield in Pinar del Rio. The first pilot-officer class graduated in July of 1984.

Since 1981, DAAFAR has received a substantial number of jet aircrafts for training pilots. Basic flight instruction is provided with L-39/ALBATROSS and ZLIN-36 Czech made airplanes. Other training aircrafts include UMig-15's, UMig-21's and UMig-23's. Foreign pilots are also receiving training in Cuba with these airplanes.

On the grounds of the old Jesuit school "Colegio de Belén," a Military Technical Institute (ITM) was set up in 1967 to train technical officers for the DAAFAR. At this school, of-

¹ See Chapter XVIII for additional information.

train technical officers for the DAAFAR. At this school, officers are trained in either a two, four or five year program to operate the antiaircraft defense weapons, radiocommunications, electronics, mathematics, and some other engineering specialties. Some Army and Navy officers also attend this school. Entrance to this facility is tightly controlled by MINFAR. Other DAAFAR officers employed in the antiaircraft defense branch, are graduates of the Maj. Camilo Cienfuegos Artillery school located at La Cabaña.

Enlisted personnel receive considerable training in the operation of antiaircraft weapons and in servicing aircraft and antiaircraft batteries. Specialists in radar and weapons systems are given extensive training and practice in Cuba. Some enlisted men and women are also sent for further training in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Organization

The DAAFAR is organized into four separate branches: the Fuerza Aerea Revolucionaria (FAR), which operates the airplanes; the Tropas Coheteriles de Defensa Antiaerea (TCAA), which operates the Surface-to-Air Missile batteries; the Tropas de Reconocimiento Territorial (TRT) or Air Surveillance Troops; and the Tropas de Defensa Antiaerea or Air Defense Artillery troops.

The island has been divided into three air zones, along the lines of the Revolutionary Army: Eastern, Central and Western. The headquarters is located on the grounds of the old Camp Columbia Airfield, which was renamed after the revolution "Ciudad Libertad." The old San Antonio de los Baños Airfield, which was built by the United States during WWII and used by the Cuban Air Force as a principal airfield has been taken over by the Soviet Union.

In Soviet military aviation, an aviation division is divided into three or four air regiments, composed of a mixture of aircraft. Each regiment has 32 bombers or 40 fighters or ground attack aircraft, and is subdivided into three squadrons, which can operate alone or with other aircraft possibly of a different type. Each squadron is in turn subdivided in aviation flights of four aircraft which can be fighters and fighter-bombers. These aircraft, particularly the fighter-bombers usually operate in pairs.

An aviation regiment is commanded by a colonel, an aviation squadron by a major and aviation flights by a senior lieutenant. The DAAFAR probably uses a command structure similar to the Soviet.

1er sustituto - 4/87 - Jefe - BASA 1987

Command Structure

Ruben Martinez Puente - 251
Div. Gen. Julio Casas Regueiro - *6 BASA 987*
Deputy Chiefs: " " *RUBEN MARTINEZ PUENTE - 251*
Brig. Gen. Ladislao Baranda Columbie - *309*
Col. Rubén Interian Rodríguez - *105*
Col. Gustavo Milián Rivero - *806*
Col. Ricardo Díaz González - *351*
(Chief of troops)

Chief:

Deputy Chiefs:

Western Air Brigade

(Bay of Pigs Guard Aerial Brigade)

Chief:

Col. Juan O. Hernández Méndez - *333*
Air Combat Instructor: Brig. Gen. Rafael del Pino Díaz - *280 BASA*

Missile Troops

Central Antiaircraft Missile Brigade
(Santa Clara Battle Guard Brigade)

Chief: Col. Heriberto E. Martín Hernández *952*

Antiaircraft Missile Group for the Defense of the Capital

Antiaircraft Defense of the Ground Troops

Training and Production Centers

Training Center for Junior Specialists (CEPEM)
School of Aviation Cadets

Great October Socialist Revolution Military Industrial
Enterprise
Yuri Gagarin Military Industrial Enterprise

Manpower: 18,500 to 20,000

Military Airports: There are at least 194 airfields
throughout Cuba. At least eight of these airfields can be
used for full military operations.

Military Airports

San Antonio de los Baños: runways over 2,500 meters
San Julian: runways over 2,500 meters
Camagüey: runways over 2,500 meters
Santiago de Cuba: runways over 2,500 meters

Airfields With Military Capabilities

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Guantánamo: | runways over 2,500 meters |
| Santa Clara: | runways over 2,500 meters |
| Havana (José Martí): | runways over 2,500 meters |
| Manzanillo: | runways over 2,500 meters |
| Ciego de Avila: | runways 2,200 meters + |
| Varadero: | runways 2,200 meters + |

AIR FLEET

4 SQUADRONS OF MIG 23 FLOGGER AND MIG 27s²

It is estimated that Cuba has about 48 MIG 27's and MIG 23's organized into four squadrons. Soviet pilots may be flying some of these planes. Both planes have common frame features but the Mig 27 has more armor plating to protect the pilot. The Flogger D had the forward section of the fuselage re-designed to install a laser range finder in place of the nose radar used in the Flogger B model. The design of the Flogger D has also been improved to provide the pilot more downward visibility to assist in its principal mission of ground attack. It can also use prepared grass runways and can be assisted with booster rockets for takeoff.

MIG 23- Flogger (B)

Combat radius: 1,300 klm
Armament: one twin barrel 23 mm GSh-23 gun
two AA-7 APEX
two AA-8 APHID Air-to-Air missile

MIG 27 - Flogger (D)

Combat radius: 1,200 klm
Armament: one-six barrel 30 mm gatling gun
four 1,100 lb bombs
four UB-16-57 rocket pods
(Can carry tactical nuclear weapons)
Speed: 980 knots



² The first 12 Mig-27's arrived in 1978 and the second group of 12 in 1982. Four have been lost in accidents and have been replaced. The other planes have arrived since 1982. Details are not available in the public domain.

30 SU-7 single-seat ground attack fighters

(These planes may be organized into two fighter squadrons)

Combat radius: 260 nautical miles

Armament: Two 30 mm NR-30 cannons with 70 rounds each
Two 1,650 lb bombs
two 1,100 lb bombs
or in place of bombs: four UB-16-57
rocket pods or ten 160 mm rockets, or
or four 240 mm rockets, or two AS-7
guided missiles.

Maximum speed: 1,055 mph

Length: 18.5 meters

Wingspan: 8.9 meters

5 MIG 21 INTERCEPTOR SQUADRONS³

It is estimated that Cuba has between 50 and 70 early version MIG 21's (bis) and 30 later version MIG 21's (F's) and 17 Mig-21's (L's) organized into five interceptor squadrons. Although the MIG-21 is a single seat airplane, two seat versions exist and the Cuban Air Force may have them. The MIG-21 was first place in service by the USSR in 1956. New versions with improved payload, avionics, electronic countermeasures and range for more effective offensive role were built in the 1960's.

MIG 21 Delta Wing Fighter

Combat radius: 478 miles

Armament: - one twin-barrell GSH-23 gun with 200 rds
- four UB-16-57 rocket pods with 16 57 mm
rockets each
- two 1,100 lb bombs
- two 500 lb bombs
- four S-24 240 mm air-to-ground missiles
(this planes are equipped with Atoll
AAM's)

Speed: - Mach 2

Length: 55 feet

Wingspan: 25 feet

³ About 17 Mig-21's now in Cuba may have been transferred to the Sandinistas for training Nicaraguan pilots. These planes are possibly at the San Julian Airfield and could be used in support of the Sandinista Government from Cuban bases if necessary. They could fly into combat in Nicaragua from Cuba and be able to land at new airfields built with Cuban support in Nicaragua for refueling after the first mission is flown from Cuba.

2 MIG 19 (PF Farmer) INTERCEPTOR SQUADRONS

These two interceptor squadrons are composed of 40 Mig 19's high performance day fighter/interceptor (single sit). These planes may now be part of the reserve forces of DAAFAR.⁴

Combat radius: 1367 miles
Armament: - three 30 mm NR-30 guns
- ATOLL missiles
- two 550 lb bombs
Speed: 920 m p/h
Service ceiling: 13.08 meters
Wingspan: 9 meters

4 MIG 17 FIGHTER-BOMBER SQUADRONS

These four fighter-bomber squadrons have 75 MIG 17's, all weather fighter/interceptors (single sit). Two squadrons of about 20 airplanes are operational and the other two may be part of the reserve forces of DAAFAR.

Combat radius: 913 miles
Armament: - one 37 mm cannon
- one 23 mm cannon
- three 23 mm Nudelmann-Rikter NR-23 cannon
- four eight-rocket pods or two 550 lb bombs
Speed: 711 mph
Service ceiling: 54,460 ft
Length: 11 meters
Wingspan: 9.5 meters

1 SECOND LINE MIG 15 FIGHTER-BOMBER UNIT

This unit has about 15 old MIG 15's.

MILITARY TRANSPORTS

The Cuban Air Force and the civilian airline company Cubana de Aviación have about 148 transport planes and a large helicopter fleet.

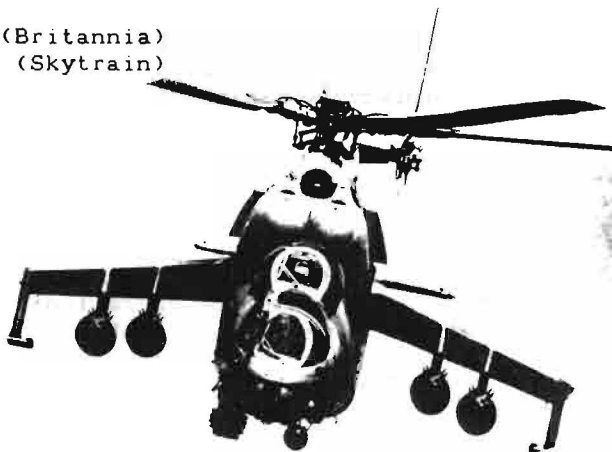
35- An-2 (Colt)
20- An-24 (Coke)

⁴ These planes may be replaced soon with newer aircrafts.

- 12- An-24 (Coke) - operated by Cubana de Aviación, civilian airline.
- 30- An-26 (Curl)
- 16- Il-14 (Crate)
- 10- Il-62M (Classic)
- 7- Tu-154 (Careless)- Operated by Cubana de Aviación.
- 11- Yak-40 (Codling)
- 2- Il-76 (Candid)
- 1- Il-18 (Coot)
- 3- Bristol 175-318 (Britannia)
- 1- Douglas C-47/DC3 (Skytrain)

TRAINING AIRCRAFT

- 6 MIG- 23U's
- 30 Zlin 326's
- 10 Mig-21U's
- 15 Mig-15U's
- 27 L-39C's (?)



HELICOPTERS

The number of helicopters in the Air Force is estimated at between 70 and 100. They include Mi-1 Hare's, Mi-4 Hound's, Mi-8's and Mi-24 HIND-D's assault helicopters.

The principal mission of the helicopters is to provide air mobility for ground forces, as anti-tank weapons and to provide air support to ground forces. They perform an important role in fire support, transport, supply and evacuation, as well as in reconnaissance and airborne landing operations. They can also be important weapons to insure air support to ground forces in all types of weather particularly when fixed-wing aircraft are unable to operate.

Cubans have piloted helicopters for the Nicaraguan armed forces and at least one helicopter has been shot down by anti-Communist guerrillas and two Cuban pilots may have been killed in December 1985.

- 15- Mi-1 Hare
- 2- Mi-2 Hoplite
- 24- Mi-4 Hound
- 20- Mi-8T Hip
- 12- Mi-8F Hip
- 16- Mi-17 Hip-H
- 12- Mi-24 Hind D



The Mi-8 helicopters can carry 26 troops with armament and equipment, and have a combat radius of over 200 km and a speed of 250 km per hour.

The Mi-24 helicopters can be used as assault troop carrier or armed gunship in support of military units. It can carry 6 to 8, and possibly as many as 13 troops. Both the Cuban Navy and Air Force operate these helicopters. This helicopter has a combat radius of 220 miles and can fly at up to 175 mph. It can carry in excess of 2,800 lbs of 57 mm rockets, bombs and precision guided antitank missiles. In the front it has a turret-mounted rotary 12.7 mm gun. It is said to have an excellent fire control system.

In addition to these helicopters operated by the DAAFAR, the Cuban Navy has at least 30 Mi-1's, 25 Mi-4's, and 4 Mi-14's. All of them are shore-based.

24 SAM BATTALIONS⁵

This battalions are equipped with SA-2 Guidelines - 144 launchers with 6 launchers per battalion.

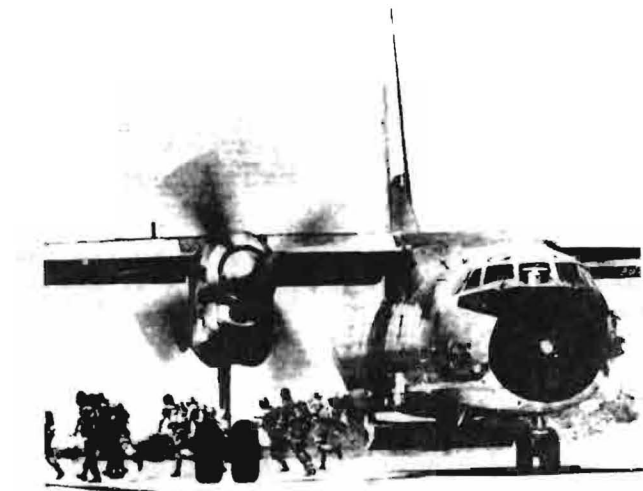
600 VK 750 SAM's

(?) SA-6

This missiles are designed to be used against enemy high-performance aircraft approaching friendly ground troops. It is used as an antiaircraft weapon to hit targets at ranges over five miles. At closer ranges other portable missiles and automatic anti-aircraft cannon are used.



⁵ For additional information on Cuban antiaircraft weapons, see Appendix II. We elected to list them with the Army ground forces, although they are technically operated by the DAAFAR.



Cuban commandos deploying from a Soviet-built Cuban air force AN-26 transport plane during training exercises.

Source: U.S. Department of Defense



APPENDIX IV

REVOLUTIONARY NAVY (MGR)

The Cuban Navy, known as Marina de Guerra Revolucionaria, was the last of the military branches to receive a major increase in tactical and material equipment and training as part of the build up of military forces in Cuba by the Soviet Union. However, the Cuban Navy in 1986 compares very favorably with the naval forces of much larger countries in Latin America, like for example Argentina, Brazil and Mexico. Although it does not have aircraft carriers like Brazil and Argentina, Cuban naval vessels are modern and have sophisticated weapons systems. The strength of the Navy is estimated at about 13,500 men. In addition, the Navy has a new naval infantry unit undergoing training for landing assaults. It is composed of about 800 men (battalion strength).

HISTORY

The Cuban Navy was born under the administration of President José Miguel Gómez (1909-1913), when the Cuban Government increased the Coast Guard and purchased several new ships. They included the cruisers CUBA and PATRIA. They were used as training vessels and contributed to protecting shipping in the Caribbean during WWI. During WWII the Cuban Navy also provided valuable assistance in protecting allied shipping in the Caribbean. In fact, the Cuban Navy managed to sink German U-boat 176 using an 83-foot surface vessel, a record that holds to this day.

Until at least 1979, the Cuban Navy consisted of three U.S. built frigates ("Antonio Maceo," "José Martí" and "Máximo Gómez"), completed in 1944 and acquired from the U.S. Navy in 1947, and an old cruiser launched in 1911 and built for the Cuban Navy in Philadelphia (CUBA). In addition, the Cuban Navy had two escort patrol vessels also acquired from the U.S. Navy (PCE type) named Caribe and Siboney, built in the 1940's, and 18 Komar type missile boats transferred from the Soviet Navy in the period from 1962 to 1966; 12 SOI type patrol vessels transferred from the Soviet Navy in the period from 1964 to 1967; 6 KRONSTADT type submarine chasers transferred from the Soviet Navy in 1962; and 24 torpedo boats (P6 and P4 types) received from the Soviet Union between 1962 and 1964. The Cuban Navy also had in its fleet about 13 old coast guard cutters and about 21 motor launches and auxiliary crafts for the most part built in the United States and inherited by the Revolutionary Government in 1959.

Starting in 1980, the Cuban Navy has received more sophisticated and larger equipment from the Soviet Union and began to retire old ships, including some that had been in the fleet for as long as 60 years. New equipment includes submarines, hydrofoils, frigates larger than the old U.S. built ships, and landing crafts which have given the Cuban Navy attack capabilities that had previously not been present.

The strength of the fleet now consists of at least 157 vessels on active duty and five additional ships in reserve. Together with the merchant marine, the Naval Air Force with attack helicopters, and the increased operational capabilities of the Cuban Air Force, the Navy is well prepared and capable of staging offensive operations within the region.

TRAINING

The Cuban Naval Academy has a 70-year history and a long tradition of training good officers. The old building that housed the Naval Academy at Mariel, has been replaced with a new campus at Punta Santa Ana. Construction was completed in 1983. This school is used to train officers for both, the Navy and the Merchant Marine. Naval officers are often rotated between both services as well as the Cuban large fishing fleet. Most cadets have completed their high school education at one of the two schools run by the Navy, located in Cienfuegos and Playa Baracoa. At least six months are spent at sea during training in one of the Navy's training ships: José Martí, XX Aniversario and Vietnam Heróico.

Some Naval officers also attend one or more of the service academies operated by the Army and Air Force, which provide specialized training in several engineering fields and weapons specialties. Some officers have also been sent to the Soviet Union and other Eastern European countries to study.

COMMAND STRUCTURE

The Headquarters of the Navy continues to be housed in the building as in pre-revolutionary days, on the Havana Harbor waterfront, near the ancient La Fuerza Castle. The Navy had been organized into three regional commands that follow the basic organization of the ARMY and DAAFAR:

Eastern Naval District: Headquartered at Nicaro, in the North Coast of the old Oriente Province. It covers the provinces

of Ciego de Avila, Camagüey, Las Tunas, Holguín, Granma, Santiago de Cuba and Guantánamo.

Central Naval District: Headquartered at Cienfuegos, in the South Coast, and covering the South Coast of Matanzas, Villa Clara, Cienfuegos and Sancti Spiritus Provinces.

Western Naval District: Headquartered at Cabañas, on the North Coast of Pinar del Rio, and covering the Provinces of Pinar del Rio, La Havana, the shoreline of the capital of Havana, and the Isle of Youth (Isle of Pines).

In addition to the regional command, the Navy has commands by service or role of fleet ships: the Coastal Command and the Anti-Submarine Command and the new submarine command, which was established at Cienfuegos. The Navy has been reorganized into four flotillas based in Mariel, Havana and Cienfuegos, and each flotilla has been subdivided into squadrons by ship type.

Shore commands include the Naval Academy at Punta Santa Ana, the Training Center at Playa del Salado, the Naval Shipyard and Repair Station at Casablanca in Havana Harbor, the Mariel Naval Base and the Hydrography Institute (Instituto Cubano de Hidrografia).

Chief of Staff: Commodore Pedro M. Pérez Betancourt¹ 38

Deputy Chiefs: R. Adm. Emigdio Baez Vigo 1
Ship. Capt. Pedro Perera Ruiz 447

Staff Sections

Chief of Staff: Ship Capt. Pedro Perera Ruiz 447
Capt. Mario-René Izales Machado - 1035 Jefe em
Deputy Chief: Frig. Capt. Julio Hernández Fernández 334

Political Section

Chief: Ship Capt. Gonzalo González de la Rosa 687
Deputy Chief: Ship Capt. Miguel Valle Miranda 402

Manpower: 9,000 to 13,500

¹ Vice Admiral Aldo Santamaria Cuadrado served as Chief of Staff of the Navy from 1965 until 1984. He was replaced possibly due to personal problems including alcoholism. However, he seems to continue on active duty and has represented the Cuban Government in visits to other countries since 1984. The current Chief of Staff was not promoted in rank when assigned to this job.

Naval Academy: Punta Santa Ana

Director: R. Adm. José L. Cuza Tellez-Girón ⁵⁰¹
Deputy Director: Corv. Capt. Carlos Hernández ³²⁶

Training Center for Junior Specialists

Director: Brig. Gen. Juan Daniel Rodríguez Acosta ⁶⁴¹

Training Center for Naval Specialists

Granma Military Industrial Enterprise

Chief: Corv. Capt. Armando Ojeda Bartumeu ⁻¹⁷⁴

Naval Bases: Mariel, Habana, Varadero, Cienfuegos, Cabañas,
(Punta Ballenatos and Canasi)

Cienfuegos Base

Chief: Ship Capt. Generoso Escudero Gonzalez ⁴¹

Eastern Flotilla: Cienfuegos

Submarine Flotilla: Cienfuegos

Western Naval District (Mariel)

Chief: R. Adm. Pedro Pérez Betancourt ⁸⁸

Western Flotilla - Mariel

Chief: Ship Capt. Leonardo Díaz Rodríguez ¹⁸⁸

Central Naval District - Havana

Chief: Frig. Capt. Sabino Fernández Goyenechea ³⁸⁶

Central Flotilla - Havana

Operational Capabilities: At least 400 nautical miles

FLEET²

SUBMARINES

3 FOXTROT CLASS (USSR)

Dimensions: 300.1 x 26.2 x 20 feet (91 meters)

Armament: six 21 in. (533 mm) torpedo tubes bow
four 16 in. (400 mm) torpedo tubes stern
Carries 22 torpedoes and/or 44 mines

² The Cuban Navy has at least 110 warships.

Speed: 18 knots p/h surfaced
16 knots p/h dived
Range: 9,000 miles (70 days)
Complement: 70 to 75

1 WHISKEY CLASS (USSR) (Not Operational)

Dimensions: 249.6 x 21.3 x 15.1 feet
Armament: four 21 in torpedo tubes in bow
two 16 in torpedo tubes in stern
Speed: 18 knots surfaced
14 knots dived
Range: 13,000 miles
Complement: 75

FRIGATES

2 KONI CLASS (USSR)

Dimensions: 311.6 x 42 x 13.7 feet (95 meters)
Armament: SAM
one twin SA-N-4
four 12 barreled BMU's
Range: 2,000 nautical miles (3,700 km at 27 knots)
Complement: 110

One KONI class frigate was added in 1981 and the second in 1984.

PATROL CRAFTS

9 SO 1 CLASS (USSR) (Corvettes / Submarine Chasers)

Dimensions: 137.8 x 19.7 x 5.9 (42.3 meters)
Armament: 4- 25 mm guns in twin mountings
4- RBU 1200
2-16 in torpedo tubes
12 mines
Complement: 25 to 30
Range: 1,100 miles (1,240 km at 25 knots)

4 KRONSHADT CLASS (USSR) (Corvettes)

FAST ATTACK CRAFT

**5 OSA 1 CLASS MISSILE BOATS (With SSN-Styx missiles)
(9 of these boats may be in existence in Cuba)**

Dimensions: 39.3 meters
Armament: Four SS-N-2 STYX Missiles
Four 30 mm guns
Complement: 25 to 30
Range: 1,240 km at 25 knots

14 KOMAR CLASS MISSILE BOATS (With SSN-Styx missiles)
(18 of these boats may be in existence in Cuba)

Dimensions: 25.5 meters
Armament: Two SS-N-2 STYX Missiles
Two 25mm guns
Complement: 20
Range: 640 km at 30 knots

9 TURYA CLASS HYDROFOIL

Dimensions: 39.3 meters
Armament: Four 533 mm torpedo tubes
Two 25mm guns (twin mounts)
Two 57mm guns (twin mounts)
Complement: 30

6 P6 CLASS TORPEDO BOATS

Dimensions: 25.5 meters
Armament: Two 533 mm torpedo tubes
Four 25 mm guns (twin mounts)
Complement: 25
Range: 1,100 km at 30 knots

12 P4 CLASS TORPEDO BOATS

Dimensions: 19.1 meters
Armament: Two 457 mm torpedo tubes
Two 25 mm guns (twin mounts)
Complement: 12
Range: 759 km at 30 knots

21 ZHUK CLASS PATROL BOATS

2 SONYA CLASS MINESWEEPER / HUNTER

Dimensions: 155.8 x 26.2 x 6.6
Armament: 2- 30 mm twin guns and 2-25 mm twin guns
Complement: 43
Received in 1980 and 1981

10 YEVGENYA CLASS (msi) (USSR)
(There may only be 9 of these boats in Cuba)

Dimensions: 79 x 16.4 x 3.9 (26.2 meters)
Armament: Four- 25 mm twin guns

Complement: 10
Range: 1,000 miles

1 K-8 CLASS MINESWEEPER (Polish)

AMPHIBIOUS FORCES

2 POLNOCNY CLASS LSM (Polish)
(Built in Poland between 1963 and 1972)

Dimensions: 239.5 x 27.9 x 5.8 feet (76 meters)
Armament: 2- 140 mm rocket launchers
Possibly 2- 14.5 mm or 2- 300 mm guns
Complement: 40
Range: 900 km at 18 knots
Can carry about 350 tons, including up to six tanks. Speed is estimated at 18 knots p/h.

7 T4 CLASS LCM (Medium Landing Crafts)

Dimensions: 19 meters
Complement: 5
Range: ?

SURVEY VESSELS

1 BIYA CLASS AGS (Polish) Name: Guama H 103

MISCELLANEOUS CRAFTS

6 NYRYAT 1 CLASS MOTOR LAUNCHES Pennants: H91 H92 H93 H94
H95 H96

TRAINING SHIPS XX ANIVERSARIO
VIETNAM HEROICO
JOSE MARTI

1 YELVA CLASS DIVING TENDER

1 PELYM CLASS DEGAUSSING SHIP

2 Lighthouse tenders (British) Name: Enrique Collazo
Bertha SF 10

1 OKTENSKY CLASS OCEAN TUG (USSR) Name: Caribe

3 Auxiliary boats for harbor use (USA) Pennants: A1 A2 A3
(1949 vintage)

COAST GUARD

3 Seventy foot crafts Pennants: GF 101 GF 102 GF 103

4 Forty foot crafts Pennants: GF528 GF720 GF725 GF825

6 Small boats (Spain) Names: Camilo Cienfuegos, Escambray, Maceo, Cuartel Moncada, Finlay and Marti (Vintage 1972)

NAVAL AVIATION

18 to 25- Mi-4 (Hound) Helicopters

Can be used as an assault troop carrier or as armed gunships in support of military units. Both the Cuban Navy and Air Force have these helicopters. See Appendix III for more details.

4- Mi-14 (Haze) Helicopters

At least four Mi-14 helicopters equipped for anti-submarine warfare have been added to the Navy in the past three years.

30- Mi-1 (Hare)

COASTAL DEFENSE

50 SAMLET SSM's for coastal defense

MERCHANT AND FISHING FLEETS

The Cuban merchant fleet has about 100 ships of 1,000 gross registered tons and a fishing fleet of about 235 ships, of which about 50 were of 1,000 gross registered tons or more. In addition, Cuba owns about 12 tanker ships that can be used to refuel Navy ships. In the past ten years these ships have been used to support the wars in Africa and to provide logistical assistance to guerrilla groups in many parts of the world. For example, Cuban vessels have been suspected of offloading weapons and ammunition as well as other supplies to Chilean Communist guerrillas during 1986. But even as far back as 1963, during the war between Algeria and Morocco,

Cuban merchant vessels were used to ferry combat troops to Algeria.



Cuban troops carry out amphibious landings in training exercise.

Source: U.S. Department of Defense



The Soviet Union has continued to add to Cuba's military strength with such weapons systems as the FOXTROT-Class submarine, KONI-Class frigate, SS-N-2 STYX naval cruise missile and the SA-3/GOA surface-to-air missile.

Source: U.S. Department of Defense

APPENDIX V

TERRITORIAL MILITIA TROOPS (MTT)

In March of 1959, Raul Castro and Ernesto "Che" Guevara began to organize a militia force only a few days prior to a visit to the United States by Fidel Castro. Within two years a large militia force with an estimated 200,000 members had been organized and trained, receiving its baptism of fire during the Bay of Pigs landing in April of 1961. Since 1961 the militia has been reorganized at least three times. A year after compulsory military service was established, in 1964, all weapons were taken away from the militia. Weapons would only be distributed in case of national emergency. In April of 1973, the militia was put on military "reserve" and all members were granted the honorary title of "sublieutenants" and sent home. Again in May of 1980, Fidel Castro called back the militia, this time under the name of "Territorial Militia Troops (MTT)."

HISTORY

The use of militia units in Cuba was not a new experience when it was formed in 1959. During colonial times, the Spanish formed regular militia units to perform police functions as well as to assist the regular troops in the defense of the island. The British attack that led to the fall of Havana after a three month battle in 1762 convinced Spain of the need to organize a strong local militia. After Spain regained control of Havana two years later, a militia unit was formed with creoles and Spaniards and a parallel organization with blacks that volunteered to become members. These militia units are credited with keeping Cuba loyal to Spain for several generations while the rest of the colonies obtained their independence.

Slowly the militia units were replaced with regular police units and regular Army troops. But with the start of the Ten Years War in 1868-1878 and again during the War of Independence in 1895-1898, Spain formed two militia-style units to fight against the Cuban revolutionaries. They were the Guerrilleros and the Voluntarios. The Guerrilleros were Cubans who fought on the side of Spain against the Cuban revolutionaries who wanted independence. The Voluntarios were

Spaniards who had immigrated to Cuba and volunteered their services in support of the Spanish administration.¹

After 1902, when Cuba became independent, the use of militia units was always authorized by the military service laws in effect. For example, in 1906, President Estrada Palma called for the formation of a militia to fight against the rebellion of members of the Liberal Party. Again in 1912, President José Miguel Gómez formed a militia to assist the military to put down a black uprising. However, regular troops did most of the fighting on both of these occasions.

In 1930, President Gerardo Machado ordered the formation of a 1st Company of militia, to be composed of 100 men to assist the police. In fact, he was trying to increase his forces to fight against growing dissent against his dictatorial administration.² Again during World War II, during the presidency of Fulgencio Batista (1940-1944), several volunteer units were formed to assist in the war effort. This included the Emergency Volunteer Military Service Corps and a Women Civil Defense Corps in 1942.³

The new Territorial Militia Troops have been organized as a vital part of the new Cuban military concept of "war of all the people" or "guerra de todo el pueblo." The primary role of the over 1,200,000 men and women members of the MTT is to harass enemy forces in the rear and delay their movements. Their primary function is defensive.

TRAINING

There are about 24 militia training centers throughout the country for privates and sergeants. At least three days (22 hours) of basic training is given to all volunteers before they become members of a militia unit. Additional combat training is provided at a rate of at least 40 hours per year, given in four-hour sessions on Sundays once a month. Although this training may seem limited, many of the members of the militia have been on active duty in the past and are not serving their reserve status as part of the militia. In ad-

1 For more information on Guerrilleros and Voluntarios, see chapters V and VI.

2 "President Machado orders formation of 1st company of Cuban militia, to be composed of 100 men, to aid Havana police when not on other duty." New York Times (January 11, 1930), p.12, col. 5.

3 For more information see Chapter XIII.

dition, substantial training was given to many members of the old militia in the 1960's. According to the Cuban Government, up to 40 percent of the MTT members had some prior military service before joining the militia.

There is at least one major school for training officers for the MTT: **Escuela de Oficiales de las Milicias de Tropas Territoriales "Andre Voisin."** This school is located in Havana. Another MTT training school is known to be located in near Villa Clara.

COMMAND STRUCTURE

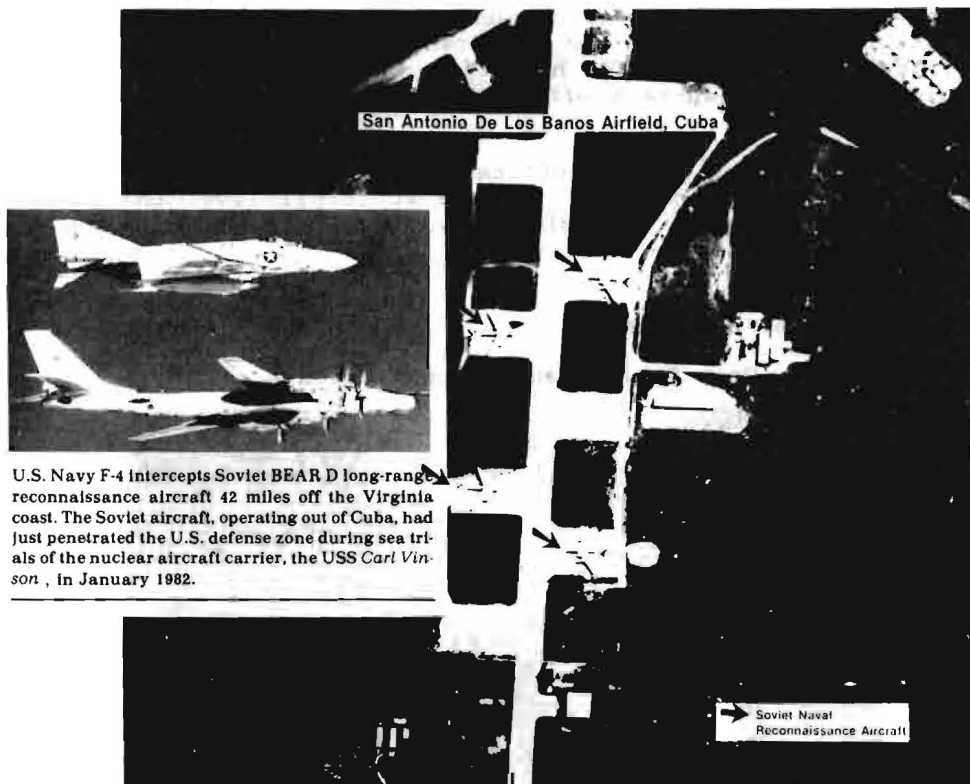
The Territorial Militia Troops are managed by the Directorate for MTT of the Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (MINFAR) as well as by municipal and provincial governments. All training and leadership is provided by regular officers of the FAR. The highest rank for the MTT is that of colonel. All flag-rank officers in command of militia units are regulars.

Each municipality has MTT officers in charge of registration, mobilization and training. At the municipal level the Chief of Staff of the MTT may hold the rank of major or lieutenant colonel.

National Chief of the MTT:

Div. Gen. Raul Menéndez Tomassevich





Soviet naval long-range reconnaissance aircraft deployed to Cuba. These aircraft collect intelligence on U.S. military installations on the East Coast and U.S. naval activities in the Atlantic and Caribbean.

Source: U.S. Department of Defense

APPENDIX VI

SOVIET MILITARY FORCES IN CUBA

The leadership of the Soviet Union learned an important lesson in political and military geography. When an opportunity presented itself for turning Cuba into a Soviet satellite after the overthrow of Fulgencio Batista in 1959, they immediately moved to turn the island into a strategic Soviet military base in the middle of important sea lanes next to the United States. The acquisition of Cuba for a military base fit perfectly into the Soviet global objectives to become a superpower and spread Communism to the Western Hemisphere. In the same way that Spain had used Cuba almost 500 years before as a staging area for the conquest of the hemisphere, the Soviets prepared to follow in their footsteps.¹

The Soviet Union has provided the Cuban Government substantial military training assistance and large supplies of military equipment since 1961. It is estimated that Soviet economic aid to Cuba totals between \$4.5 and \$5 billion per year, or about 1/4 of the Cuban Gross National Product. In addition to the Soviet economic and military aid, which has made Cuba a strong military ally for the Soviet Union next to the United States, the island has also become an important base for direct Soviet military and intelligence operations.

The Soviet Union maintains a combat brigade of about 2,800 men in Cuba, as well as up to 8,000 advisors and technicians. Many of these technicians are involved in collecting intelligence against the United States. Their presence in Cuba also reinforces the power of the Cuban Government and serves as a deterrent to domestic rebellion or outside attack to overthrow the Communist government of the island.

Soviet forces in Cuba include naval reconnaissance aircraft, based at the San Antonio de los Baños Airfield. This airport, which was built by the United States during WWII for antisubmarine warfare, is located a few miles South of Havana and near the civilian José Martí airport. Soviet BEAR long-range reconnaissance aircraft are based at this airfield. According to the U.S. Department of Defense, in 1985 alone, there were seven deployments of Tu-95/BEAR D naval re-

¹ This Soviet application of old lessons in political geography contrast with the sad state of affairs in the United States. A recent poll taken in the United States indicated that many people thought that Central America was somewhere around Chicago.

connaissance aircraft and six² deployments of TU-142/BEAR F antisubmarine warfare aircraft.

A contradiction in the use of this airport by the Soviets is that in 1946 the Soviet press and local Cuban Communists attacked the United States for even considering keeping these bases in Cuba, despite the fact that WWII was over. Some Cuban residents of the immediate area had approached both the Cuban and U.S. governments requesting that the bases remain open because they provided employment and helped the economy of the region.

Since 1969, over 25 Soviet naval task forces have visited Cuba. For example, in October 1985, the anti-submarine ship SLAVNYY, the escort ship SDILNYY, a diesel-powered submarine and a tanker visited Cuba. Rear Admiral Mikhail Putinstsev commanded the task force. This Soviet presence in the Caribbean has now become a common event that did not exist before 1959. Cuba has become an important center for intelligence gathering operations in the Western Hemisphere.

The Soviet Union also maintains an important intelligence gathering station at Lourdes in the western suburbs of the Cuban capital. From this listening post, using sophisticated technology they are able to monitor communications in the United States. For example, using satellite antennas they are able to pick up telephone conversations in the United States and screen them for key words that may reveal important economic, scientific or military secrets. They can also monitor military traffic in and out of the United States, as well as the movement of maritime shipping in the region. In the event of war, these same facilities could be used to interfere with or destroy communications links in the United States or disrupt the operations of ballistic missiles.



Soviet intelligence collection facility at Lourdes near Havana, Cuba. This listening post enables the Soviets to monitor sensitive U.S. maritime, military, and space communications, as well as telephone conversations in the United States.

² U.S. Department of Defense, Soviet Military Power: 1986, p.128.

³ See Chapter XIV for more details.

APPENDIX VII

CURRENT MILITARY LEADERSHIP

It has been very difficult to obtain biographical information on flag-rank officers of the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces. The methodology used for obtaining the information presented here includes an extensive review of books on Cuba published in the past twenty-seven years, as well as a review of periodical literature. The information gathered was cross-checked with a substantial number of documents and by personal interviews with Cuban exiles in Miami, Florida. An interesting finding was that even recent arrivals did not seem to know much about Cuban military leaders. The Cuban Government has been very careful to safeguard personal information about its top military commanders. The general population in Cuba does not seem to know who the top commanders of the Armed Forces are. The author also showed the list of flag-rank officers to some of the top scholars on Cuba, who had gathered at the University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in August of 1986, for the annual meeting of the Institute for Cuban Studies. Even these top scholars did not recognize the names of the vast majority of the top Cuban commanders today. Even when a name was recognized, these scholars did not know many details about the background of these men. Limitation of available information is even greater for some of the younger generals of the Armed Forces.

The information presented here is from very sketchy to non-existent for most of the top Cuban commanders today. Nevertheless, this is more than has previously been available in the past for researchers on Cuba. It is hoped that this information will stimulate further research on this subject. Without a doubt, these men will play a major role in the government of the island in the future.

Commander-in-Chief:
Fidel Castro Ruz



General of the Army:
Raúl Castro Ruz



Minister of the Revolution-
ary Armed Forces (MINFAR)

DIVISION GENERALS

Abrahantes Fernández, José
(Possibly born in
Mexico in 1932)



Minister of the Interior
(MININT)¹ Member of the
Central Committee, CCP.

General Abrahantes is a mem-
ber of the Central Committee
of the Cuban Communist Party
and a veteran of the revolu-

¹ Before being named Minis-
ter of the Interior in 1986,
Gen. Abrahantes held the
position of Vice-Minister
under Ramiro Valdés, and was
in charge of Security.

tion against Fulgencio
Batista. During the revolu-
tion 1956-1958, General
Abrahantes was a member of
the Directorio Revolu-
cionario Estudiantil (DR-13-
M). He was possibly a mem-
ber of the youth group of
the Cuban Communist Party
(Partido Socialista Popular)
and a member of Castro's M-
26-7. He might also have
joined Castro's organization
while he was living in the
United States as a political
exile. He supposedly lived
in Chicago in the 1950's for
an unknown period of time.

Abrahantes went back to Cuba
as a member of a military
expedition on February 8,
1958, landing at Nuevitas,
in Camagüey province. Other
members of the expeditionary
group were Faure Chomón,
Rolando Cubelas, Armando
Fleites, José Moleón, Ramón
Guin, Juan Martínez, Raúl
Argüello, Julio Castillo and
Juan Miranda.

General Abrahantes was
trained by the Soviet KGB,
possibly during 1961 and
1962, and is widely regarded
as the organizer of the
internal security and
intelligence gathering
organization in Cuba.
Despite his leading role in
the organization of the
intelligence community,
which has resulted in his
being called the "Beria" of
Cuba, he is not disliked by
the public as much as Ramiro
Valdés, whom he replaced as
Minister of the Interior.
However, he does have many
enemies among high-ranking
officers of the Armed
Forces, possibly including
Raúl Castro. His association

with Ramiro Valdés goes back to the early years of the revolution, when Valdés ran the Investigation Department of the Rebel Army. Abrahantes is believed to be very loyal to both Fidel Castro and Ramiro Valdés.

General Abrahantes held the position of chief of body guards for Fidel Castro for several years and is believed to be very close to him. He is often seen in pictures next to Fidel Castro during his overseas trips, acting as his principal body guard. He also served as chief of the Department of State Security starting around 1962. He then held the rank of captain.

Although General Abrahantes is a member of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party, he was not elected to the powerful Politburo at the Third Congress of the CCP in February of 1986. His predecessor as Minister of the Interior, Ramiro Valdés, had been a member of the Politburo during his tenure as Minister. Abrahantes is believed to have been married at least three times and to like the company of women. He is a sportsman and likes to party. However, he does not show up in public meetings very often and seems to prefer to work in anonymity. These are typical characteristics of intelligence officers anywhere. He is about 5' 9" and weights about 190 lbs. He dresses well and has a strong streak of vanity.

✓ Acevedo Gonzalez, Rogelio ✓
(Born in Remedios: 1942-43)



General Acevedo is a member of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party and holds the position of Vice-Minister of the MINFAR for Rear Services (Retaguardia).

General Acevedo was born in the town of Remedios, in the province of Las Villas. His father was a Spanish immigrant who owned and operated a drug store and a gas station in his home town. As a young teenager Rogelio Acevedo and his brother Enrique joined in the struggle against Batista. They participated in student demonstrations and fought against the police in the streets. Without their parents consent, both brothers went to the the Sierra Maestra Mountains and joined the guerrilla forces of the 26th of July Movement. Gen. Acevedo joined the guerrillas when he was only 15 years old. His brother Enrique, who is now a brigadier general was only about two years older. Since he had practically no beard due to his young age, he let his hair grow long. During the war he was often referred to as the "blond kid," because of his long

blond hair, which made him look like a girl.

During the revolution against Fulgencio Batista, he was a member of the M-26-Z and participated in the invasion force led by Camilo Cienfuegos and Ernesto "Che" Guevara, that started from the Sierra Maestra Mountains and moved west toward Central Cuba and eventually to Havana. He fought in the Escambray Mountains in Central Cuba and was wounded in the chest by a grenade during the invasion. His commanders included both Raul Castro and Ernesto "Che" Guevara. By the end of the war in January of 1959, he had reached the rank of captain.

General Acevedo participated in the capture of his hometown of Remedios, as well as in the battle of Santa Clara, the last major battle of the war. After the government forces in Remedios surrendered to Major Ernesto "Che" Guevara, Rogelio Acevedo and his brother entered the town as conquering heroes, disobeying the orders of their commander who had told them to remain on guard duty in the outskirts of the town. At the Army installation in downtown Remedios, Rogelio Acevedo and Guevara are said to have had a confrontation because the young rebel wanted to carry out "revolutionary justice" and execute several officers of the government forces for participating in acts of repression. Guevara chastised him for having disobeyed orders and for his immaturity. Rumor has it

that Guevara explained to him that if the troops who had surrendered were not granted permission to be evacuated to Havana without reprisals, other government garrisons nearby would never surrender and it would be more difficult to win the war. Acevedo reluctantly acceded to Guevara's decision.

During the battle of Santa Clara, Acevedo's forces captured the provincial jail and the Palace of Justice. After the surrender of the government forces and the collapse of the dictatorship, Acevedo and several followers took a new luxury car, a 1958 Chrysler, and went for a joyride through the town. Despite his experience as a soldier and troop commander, which had earned him the rank of captain, he often behaved like what he was, a young and rebellious teenager.

In 1959, he was one of the principal organizers of a large militia force, together with Raúl Castro and Sergio del Valle. In the 1960's he headed the militia and has been a member of the Central Committee of the CPC since 1965. He has held important military positions in Cuba and has participated in so-called "internationalist" duties abroad. He is thought to be close to Raúl Castro and to be one of the officers who does not get along well with General Abrahantes.

General Acevedo has distinguished himself over the years as a trusted officer

who can well carry out missions assigned to him. He has always been a fanatical leftist from his early teens. He is possibly married, but very little is known about his personal life.

Batista Santana, Sixto 117

Central Committee Communist Party (Politburo)
Vice Minister of the MINFAR
Chief, Central Political Directorate

General Batista was awarded the Bulgarian George Dimitrov 100th Birthday Commemorative Medal in September of 1980 together with Generals Ulises Rosales del Toro and Abelardo Colomé Ibarra. However, he may be now in disfavor for unknown reasons.

Cabrera González, Francisco 1

Casas Regueiro, Senén 6



First Deputy Minister,
MINFAR
Central Committee Communist Party (Politburo)
Chief of the Antiaircraft Defense and Air Force

He was a member of the M-26-7 and fought in the Sierra Cristal Mountains of Eastern Oriente in the so-called

"second front," under Raul Castro. He was the first commander of the Eastern Army in 1961, and then held the rank of captain. His brother is also a Division General.

Casas Regueiro, Julio 6

Commander of the Air Force
Central Committee of the Communist Party (Politburo)

He was a member of the M-26-7 and fought in the Sierra Cristal Mountains of Eastern Oriente under Raul Castro. He joined the guerrilla forces of the 26th of July Movement at a very young age. He was born in Oriente and belongs to the inner-circle formed by several revolutionary leaders from that province. He also fought in Angola, where he gained fame and experience. Julio and his brother Senen are both considered to be strong "Raulistas."

Cintras Frias, Leopoldo² 41

Commander of Cuban Troops in Angola

² General Cintras Frias may have been promoted to Division General recently, but information available is not very credible. He is listed also as a Brigadier. Please see next section for additional information.

3 Colomé Ibarra, Abelardo



First Deputy Minister,
MINFAR
Member of the Central
Committee and Politburo of
the Cuban Communist Party

Furry" Colomé Ibarra is a member of the so-called "vieja guardia" who fought against Batista under Fidel and Raúl Castro. Colomé Ibarra was sent by Frank País, leader of the urban underground of the M-26-7 in Santiago de Cuba, to join the guerrilla forces fighting under Fidel Castro in the Sierra Maestra Mountains in March of 1957. A year later, he was one of the guerrilla leaders who followed Raul Castro to the Sierra Cristal Mountains in the Eastern part of Oriente to form a new guerrilla front. General Colomé commanded one of the columns in the second front under Raúl Castro, with the rank of captain.

General Colomé led Cuban troops in Angola and fought against the South African forces, which had invaded the Southern part of that country in 1975. On January 1, 1984, on the anniversary of the revolution, the Council of State passed resolution No. 250 granting

General Colomé the title of Hero of the Republic of Cuba and the Order of Máximo Gómez. The medals were granted due to his "extraordinary merits in the struggle against tyranny and imperialistic neocolonial domination and the defense of the Socialist State and accomplishment of heroic internationalist missions."³

General Colomé has received many honors, including the Bulgarian George Dimitrov 100th Birthday Commemorative Medal, which he received together with Generals Sixto Batista Santana and Ulises Rosales del Toro. He is considered by most scholars on Cuba as the top general in terms of prestige at this time. In February of 1986, he was elected to the Central Committee and the powerful Politburo of the CCP, bypassing other generals who had enjoyed greater prestige in the past. He is without a doubt one of the rising stars in the Cuban Government. Indicative of his rapid movement upwards in the organization, is the fact that he now holds a higher "political" rank than other generals who are his superiors in the military.

Espinosa Martín, Ramón *62*

Central Committee of the
Communist Party
Chief, Eastern Army

³ FBIS Report, January 4,
1984.

Fernández Gondín, Carlos ¹⁶⁰

Central Committee of the
Communist Party

García Pelaez, Pedro ¹⁴

Central Committee of the
Communist Party

Vice Minister of the
MINFAR

For Combat Training
(Preparación Combativa y
CEM)

García Fernández, Rigoberto ²¹

Central Committee of the
Communist Party

Vice Minister of the
MINFAR

Chief of the Youth Labor
Army

General García is a member
of the "vieja guardia," and
close to Raúl Castro. He
was a member of the M-26-7,
and fought in the Sierra
Cristal Mountains of Eastern
Oriente, under Raúl Castro,
during the revolution
against Batista.

Martínez Gil, Pascual ⁵⁴⁴

Central Committee of the
Communist Party

Vice Minister, MININT
For Internal Order and
Crime Prevention
(Intelligence)

Méndez Cominches, José ¹⁴
Joaquín

Central Committee of the
Communist Party

Vice Minister, MININT

Director, General Direc-
torate for Intelligence
(DGI)

General Méndez organized the
G-2 in Santiago de Cuba af-
ter the victory of the revo-
lution in 1959 and is said
to be a member of the inner
circle of Raúl Castro. He
may have taken the blame for
the lack of intelligence and
subsequent defeat in
Grenada. If he is a
"Raulista" and General Abra-
hantes and Raúl Castro and
his friends do not get along
well, it is possible that
Abrahamantes may have tried to
place the blame for the
failure on the shoulders of
"Raulistas," such as General
Méndez. However, this infor-
mation is highly speculative
and cannot be supported with
facts.

General Mendez was a member
of the Central Committee of
the CCP until the Third
Party Congress in 1986. He
may have been ousted due to
the failure of intelligence
units under his command to
detect events leading up to
the coup against Prime Min-
ister Bishop in Grenada.

General Méndez's wife is the
"Directora General, Escuela
de la Infancia."

Menéndez Tomassevich, Raul ⁸

Vice Minister, MINFAR
For the Territorial
Militia Troops (MTT)

General Menéndez was a mem-
ber of the M-26-7, and
fought on the Sierra Cristal

front under Raúl Castro during the revolution against Batista. Before Raúl Castro moved from the Sierra Maestra to the Sierra Cristal to form a second front, Menéndez commanded a guerrilla group that often behaved like bandits in the region of Mayari/ Alto Songo, in the early months of 1958. When Raúl Castro arrived in the Sierra Cristal he encountered several groups which were a mixture of guerrillas and bandits and set out to either destroy their organizations or convince them to come under his command. Menéndez and a few other men joined him. Others were exterminated by Castro and his followers.

On March 5, 1958, General Menéndez captured a Rural Guard post at Mayari Arriba with his guerrilla force. This is one of his claims to fame. Other leading guerrilla leaders who fought with him under Raúl Castro were: Ciro Frias, Félix Pena, Reinerio Jiménez Lage and Efigenio Ameijeiras.

Since the victory of the revolution in 1959, General Menéndez has served as Chief of the Army of Oriente and he has been a member of the Central Committee of the CPC for several years. He fought in Angola and obtained prestige for his participation in that conflict. General Menéndez is of humble origin. He is regarded as a very astute individual but not as a man of strong principles.

Ochoa Sánchez, Arnaldo T 4



Present position unknown;
Member of the Central
Committee of the CCP

General Ochoa joined the revolutionary guerrillas of the 26th of July Movement in 1958, while still a teenager. He was a member of the Antonio Maceo Column lead by Major Camilo Cienfuegos and participated in the invasion force from the Sierra Maestra Mountains to the West, which ended in the battle of Santa Clara and the overthrow of Batista. Upon the victory of the revolution on January 1, 1959, he had reached the rank of captain. Since the revolution he has held several important positions, including that of Commander of the Army of Havana.

General Ochoa received special training in the Soviet Union in the mid-1970's, and from there went to Angola in 1976 to take part in the war. He left Angola in April of 1976 and returned to Cuba. In December of 1977, General Ochoa was sent to Ethiopia as Commander of the Cuban combat troops in the Ogaden war. In the early 1980's he was in charge of combat readiness in Cuba. He then went to

Nicaragua in 1983 as commander of the Cuban troops in that country. He departed about two years later.

On January 1, 1984, the Council of State granted him the title of Hero of the Republic of Cuba and the Order of Maximo Gomez. Resolution No. 251 of the Council of State declares that General Ochoa "carried out several internationalist missions with particular spirit of sacrifice, brilliant performance as commander of Cuban troops in Ethiopia, as well as for his honesty, unselfishness, spirit of sacrifice, purity, desire to excel and heroism." ⁴ Along with General Abelardo Colomé Ibrarra, Ochoa is seen by most experts on Cuba as one of the top Cuban commanders today.

Quintas Solas, Joaquin ⁵¹

Chief, Western Army

Rosales del Toro, Ulises ⁵²



First Deputy Minister
MINFAR
Chief of the General
Staff, MINFAR

General Rosales del Toro is one of the most respected

⁴ FBIS Report, January 4, 1984.

commanders of the Cuban Armed Forces has been given several awards. He was awarded the Bulgarian George Dimitrov 100th Birthday Commemorative Medal in September of 1980 together with Generals Abelardo Colomé Ibarra and Sixto Batista Santana.

Vice Admirals

Santamaria Cuadrado, Aldo ³



Former Commander of the
Navy (MGR) ⁵
Present position unknown

Admiral Santamaria was a member of the M-26-7, and participated in the revolutionary war against Batista. His brother Abel was one of the leading commanders of the ill-fated attack on July 26, 1953 on the Moncada Army barracks in Santiago de Cuba in which he was killed in action. His sister, Aidé, was one of the principal leaders of the underground in Oriente during the revolution. Her boyfriend was

⁵ After his dismissal as Navy Commander, the Cuban Government has not promoted any other flag rank officer of the Navy to Vice Admiral.

also killed in the Moncada attack. According to some unverified accounts, Batista's men showed her her boyfriends testicles as well as her brother's eyes as part of their effort to get her to talk and provide information on her co-conspirators. She took her own life in 1980.

Admiral Santamaría has never distinguished himself much during or after the revolution and may have obtained his assignments on the bases of his family's contributions to the revolution. He has been accused in the United States of complicity in the drug trade.

One of Admiral Santamaría's closest friends in the underground during the revolution against Batista was Carlos Franqui, who defected after holding important positions for several years in the Revolutionary Government.

Admiral Santamaría served as Chief of the Navy from 1965 to 1984. One possible reason for his dismissal as Commander of the Navy is an alleged problem with alcohol. He is no longer a member of the Central Committee of the CCP. Since his relief he has visited several countries as a representative of the Cuban Government at special celebrations. His present position is not clear.



PROMINENT GENERALS
AND POLITICAL
FIGURES DURING THE
THIRD CONGRESS OF
THE CUBAN COMMUNIST
PARTY IN 1986.



BRIGADIER GENERALS

Acevedo González, Enrique ¹³⁵
(Born in Remedios: 1940-41
?)



Alternate Member of the
Central Committee CCP

General Acevedo is a veteran of the guerrilla war against Batista. He joined the guerrilla forces with his brother Rogelio at a very young age. Rogelio is now a Division General. Prior to joining the guerrillas Acevedo had been active in student politics and was arrested by the police when he was 14 years old for participating in student demonstrations against the government. He was wounded in both arms on September 8, 1958, in the skirmish that took place at La Federal in Camagüey Province. He fought in the Escambray Mountains of Central Cuba and participated in the battle of Santa Clara. He was a member of the M-26-7 and fought under Ernesto "Che" Guevara and Raúl Castro. Guevara let him command a squad of guerrillas.

General Acevedo's father was a Spanish immigrant who owned drug store and a gas station/repair shop in

Remedios. For additional information see the biography of his brother Division General Rogelio Acevedo.

Avila Ochoa, René ⁴⁸⁰

Eastern Army (Exact title not available)

Baranda Columbie, Ladislao ³⁰⁹

Deputy Chief of the DAAFAR

General Baranda was a member of Column 6 "Juan Manuel Ameijeiras," in Raúl Castro's guerrillas in the Sierra Cristal Mountains of Eastern Oriente during the revolutionary war against Batista. His brother Félix, also fought under Raúl Castro.

Barreiro Caramés, Germán ³⁶⁵
(La Habana: 1941)

Central Committee of the
Communist Party
Chief, General Staff, MININT

General Barreiro was a member of the M-26-7 during the revolution against Batista, but left the country and went to Spain in 1958. He has never been in the Armed Forces. In the past 27 years he has been a member of the Cuban intelligence network and has received several awards, including the "XX Anniversary of Moncada," "10 Year Service Medal MININT," and "20 Year Service in State Security."

Bermúdez Cutiño, Jesús ⁵⁰

Central Committee of the
Communist Party

Carreras Rolas, Enrique ¹⁹

General Carreras is a member of the DAAFAR and a veteran pilot who served under Fulgencio Batista and received training in the United States. He was arrested for participating in the Naval uprising in Cienfuegos in October of 1957 and was sentenced to jail by a court martial. After the victory of the revolution in January of 1959, he was released from jail and became a member of the Cuban Revolutionary Air Force. In 1961, he was one of the three pilots who flew what was left of the Cuban Air Force against the Bay of Pigs invasion force. He is credited with sinking landing crafts and helping to defeat the landing force while piloting a T-33 jet trainer.

General Carreras may have been sent to Chile in 1971 to assist Salvador Allende in the organization and training of a security force and workers' militia.

Caussé Pérez, José ¹³⁶

Deputy Chief, Eastern Army

General Caussé was a member of the M-26-7 and fought with the guerrillas commanded by Raúl Castro in the Sierra Cristal Mountains of Eastern Oriente.

General Causse may be a member of an old Oriente family of French/Haitian background. He may also be related to a young Cuban Communist who grew up in the United States and who was killed in a confrontation in North Carolina with members of the KKK in the early 1980's

General Causse has been regarded by some scholars on Cuba as one of Fidel Castro's favorite commanders.

Chueg Colás, Victor (See ²⁹⁶
Schueg Colás, Victor)

Chui Beltrán, Gustavo ³³⁹

Directorate of Cadres,
MINFAR

Cintras Frias, Leopoldo ⁴¹

Central Committee of the
Communist Party
Commander of Cuban troops in
Angola

General Cintras Frias was a member of the M-26-7 and fought under Raul Castro in the Sierra Cristal Mountains of Eastern Oriente during the revolution against Batista. He is an expert in artillery and distinguished himself in the Angolan war in 1975 and 1976. General Cintras has served several tours of duty in that country.

⁵²⁸
Crespo Fernández, Manuel ⁴⁵²

MININT - State Security
(DSE)

Cruz Bourzac, Francisco ⁶²⁰

Alternate Member of the
Central Committee of the
Communist Party
Vice Minister of the MINFAR
For Armament and Technology

Denis ~~Escalona~~ ^{DIAZ}, Luis Felipe ⁷³

Central Committee of the
Communist Party
MININT
Director, General Direc-
torate of the National
Revolutionary Police

Escalante Font, Fabian ⁹⁸

Alternate Member of the
Central Committee of the
Communist Party
MININT

^{REGUERA}
Escalona Reguera, Juan ²⁸
(Manzanillo-?)

Central Committee of the
Communist Party
Minister of Justice (MINJUS)

General Escalona is the son
of former Vice-Minister of
Public Health, Dr. Mario
Escalona, now deceased. The
Escalona family has a long
history of association with
the Communist movement in
Cuba and several members of
the family were militant
members of the prerevolu-
tionary Partido Socialista
Popular. Despite the long
association with the Commu-
nists, the family belonged
to the "alta" bourgeoisie.
He was born in Manzanillo
and is said to have been
married twice.

Fernández Crespo, Manuel ⁵³⁰

Chief, Directorate of
Security, MININT

Fernández Falcón, Manuel ⁴⁴³

Director of the Senior
Service School, General
Máximo Gómez Revolutionary
Air Force Academy

Fernández Pérez, Julio ¹²⁸

Sub Chief, Rear Services
(Retaguardia)

Ferrer Martínez, Harold ²⁷

Central Committee of the
Communist Party

Fleitas Ramirez, Gustavo ⁴⁶⁵

Central Committee of the
Communist Party
Commander of the Central
Army

Franco Villanueva, Arsenio ¹²⁸

Director, General Direc-
torate for Penal Establish-
ments
MININT

Gálvez Rodríguez, William ¹⁷⁶



Present position unknown.

General Gálvez was a member
of the M-26-7, and fought in
the guerrilla war against
Batista. He was a captain
at the age of 25, when he
served under Camilo Cienfue-
gos in Col. 2 "Antonio

Maceo," together with Pablo Cabrera, Sergio del Valle, René López and Alfonso Zayas. One of the significant aspects of his participation in the guerrilla war was that his column had several members of the old Communist Party (PS). Other guerrilla commanders did not want to have PSP members under them. Gálvez fought in the battle of Yaguajay against Captain Abon-Ly (or Lee), who would not surrender his forces to the revolutionaries.⁶ Gálvez was superficially wounded during this battle. General Gálvez's father was a shopkeeper.

García Frias, Lorenzo ¹⁰⁹

Deputy Chief of the Western Army
Combat Training

Guardia Font, Patricio <sup>if 33
988</sup>
(Pinar del Rio or Havana:
1938?)

Chief, Central Staff, MININT
(Intelligence)

As a teenager, General Guardia Font was been described as an intrepid and fearless young man. He participated in activities against Batista and got into trouble with the police. He was arrested in Pinar del Rio. His family sent him and his twin brother to

⁶ It is traditional in the Cuban Armed Forces that Chinese-Cubans never surrender and fight to the end. See chapters V and XVI for additional information.

study in the United States to get them away from the political turmoil of the late 1950's. They attended a private prep-school in the United States but continued to keep in touch with anti-Batista revolutionaries and sent weapons bought in the United States to the guerrillas. His twin brother, Antonio, is also a general in the Cuban Army but his present assignment is not known. Both brothers have been trained as paratroopers.

General Guardia Font comes from one of Cuba's aristocratic families (Calvo de la Puerta). One of his predecessors was governor of Louisiana during colonial times. His father is a graduate of New York University and worked on the design and construction of the Empire State Building in New York City. A cousin married American millionaire Howard Johnson. A third brother, who is not Communist, remained in the United States, graduated from Georgia Tech and is a businessman. As a young man, the twin Guardia brothers were high-divers, collected old WWII weapons, were very active and liked to shock people. For example, they showed up at the aristocratic Miramar Yacht Club with black friends to upset racist members who did not allow black members. General Guardia also likes to paint.

Guardia Font is about 5' 10" and weights 175 lbs. He has been married at least twice and one of his wives was a Cuban-Chinese. His twin-

brother Antonio married the daughter of Raul Roa.

593
Gutiérrez Bello, Marco Antonio

Central Committee of the Communist Party
Director, Central Political Directorate, MININT
(Intelligence)

529
Hernández Hurtado, Justo de Medina

Director, General Directorate for Immigration and Naturalization, MININT
(Intelligence)

Kindelán Bles, Rolando *2*



Central Committee of the Communist Party

General Kindelán participated in the war against Batista and reached the rank of lieutenant in the rebel army. He commanded a squad in the rear guard platoon in the column led by Camilo Cienfuegos. During the guerrilla war he had a Browning submachinegun with him at all times.

Lara Roselló, Cesar *521*

Military Advisor
Militia (MTT) Havana

General Lara Roselló was a member of the M-26-7 and fought in the Sierra Cristal front under Raul Castro.

Since the revolution he has held several important positions, including that of Chief of the Independent Army Corps in Camagüey province.

177
Lastre Pacheco, Manuel

276
Lezcano Pérez, Carlos

Sub Chief of the Western Army (Dec. 85)

220
Leyva Fuentes, Enio

Chief, MININT headquarters in Pinar del Rio

196
Llorente Leon, Miguel A

Commander of the Cuban troops in Ethiopia

Prior to his appointment as commander of the Cuban troops in Africa, General Rosello was the Chief of Staff of the Militia (MTT) in the Capital (Havana).

262
López Cuba, Nestor

Central Committee of the Communist Party
Commander of Cuban troops in Nicaragua

His previous position was Chief, Southern Army Corps of the Eastern Army

62
Lorenzo Castro, Orlando

Central Committee of the Communist Party
Commander of Las Villas Army Corps

478
Lopez MIERA ALVARO

MARTINEZ PUENTE, RUBEN - 251 - JEFE FARCYDAAFAR

Marrero Ronda, Alejandro ⁹²⁷

Director, Special Forces
Directorate, Special Op-
erations, MININT

Martínez Gil, Pascual ⁵⁴⁴

MININT

Martir Carrión, Angel Mari-
ano ²⁴⁸

Alternate Member of the
Central Committee of the
Communist Party
Vice Minister, MININT
(Intelligence)

Milián Pino, José A ⁸⁶⁶

Chief, Directorate of
Organization and
Mobilization, MTT
(Militia)

Méndez Sierra, Juan Agustín ⁹



Military Committee, City of
Havana

Moracén, Rafael, ⁶²⁶ LIMONTA-

Military Adviser
Militia (MTT) Matanzas

Morfa González, José Arnaldo ⁴⁹⁶

Chief, Directorate of
Artillery MTT (Militia)

Moro Orozco, Iraldo ⁵⁶²

Alternate Member of the
Central Committee of the
Communist Party
Sub Chief, Central Army

Oduardo, Jose R. ¹⁷⁵

Chief, Rear Services, Youth
Labor Army

Olivera Moya, Filiberto ⁴⁰
(Position not available)

Pardo Guerra, Ramón ³⁴



Deputy Chief, Western Army

General Pardo was a member
of the M-26-7 and fought in
the Escambray during the
revolution. He was a member
of "Che" Guevara's column
and participated in the
capture of Santa Clara with
Angel Frias, Rogelio
Acevedo, José R. Silva,
Hemerio Rodríguez and
Roberto Rodríguez

Pérez Lezcano, Sergio ¹⁹²

Chief, Tenth Directorate
MINFAR

Pujol Sanchez, Juan ¹⁸⁹

Directorate of Military
Training Centers and
Noncombatant training MINFAR

Pupo Pérez, Pedro Ramón ⁴⁴⁶

Director, General Direc-
torate MININT
(Intelligence)

Rodes Moros, Carlos ⁵⁶¹

Rodiles Planas, Samuel⁷ 483



Alternate Member of the
Central Committee of the
Communist Party
Chief of Staff, Western Army

General Rodiles was a member
of the M-26-7 and fought in
the Sierra Cristal front
commanded by Raul Castro.
He served in Col. 6 "Manuel
Ameijeiras" and under Major
Efigenio Ameijeiras. Sev-
eral members of his family,
including his brothers, were
also guerrillas.

Rodriguez del Pozo, 5
Guillermo

Vice Minister MINFAR
Chief, Civil Defense

Rodriguez Pérez, Juan Anto-864
nio

Chief, Finance Directorate
MINFAR

Rodriguez Puertas, Orlando 35
(Present position unknown)

Ronda Marrero, Alejandro 835

Chief, Directorate of
Special Operations MININT

Schueg Colas, Victor 296
CHUEG

⁷ His full name is Samuel
González Rodriguez Planas.

Alternate Member of the
Central Committee of the
Communist Party
Sub Chief of the General
Staff of the Armed Forces⁸

General Schueg is a large
black man, who is said to
have a pleasant personality
and to have distinguished
himself in the war in Angola
in 1976. He is one of very
few black generals in the
Cuban Armed Forces and has
become one of the experts on
African affairs in the Cuban
Government. He is often
seen with Jorge Risquet and
other Cuban officials re-
ceiving important delega-
tions that arrive in Cuba
from Africa. For example,
he was one of the officials
who received the head of the
South African ANC, Oliver
Tambo, when he visited Cuba
in March of 1986.

Very little is known about
General Schueg's background.
He is one of the officers
who has come up through the
ranks in the past 27 years
and may not have had much,
if any, experience during
the war against Batista.

Sotomayor Garcia, Romárico 540

Chief of the General Staff,
Eastern Army

Suárez Lorenzo, Jorge 299

Deputy Chief, Eastern Army

⁸ General Schueg held the
position of Chief, Holguin
Army Corps, of the Eastern
Army until recently.

Valdés González, Amado ^{LD1}

Chief, Border Guard Troops
MININT

Velez Hernández, Félix ²⁹⁰

Alternate Member of the
Central Committee of the
Communist Party
First Deputy Director,
Central Political Direc-
torate, MININT
(Intelligence)

Verdecia Perdomo, Marcelo ³²⁹

Chief, Isle of Pines Region

Viera Estrada, Roberto T ³⁹



Commander of the Militia
(MTT) in the Western Sector

His prior position was
Chief, Greater Havana Army
Garrison.

REAR ADMIRALS

Baez Vigo, Emigdio ¹

Deputy Chief of the Navy

Cuza Tellez-Girón, José L ⁵⁰¹



Chief of the Navy from 1984
to 1986.
(Present position unknown).

Admiral Baez was born in
Santiago de Cuba, where he
joined the M-26-7 at a young
age. He worked in the un-
derground and later joined
the guerrillas in the moun-
tains.

Admiral Baez's mother was a
widow with several young
children. She was admired
for her efforts to keep the
family together under diffi-
cult circumstances. She did
not remarry and raised her
family with the help of
friends and relatives. The
family was part of the bour-
geoisie but had no money.

Pérez Betancourt, Pedro ³⁸

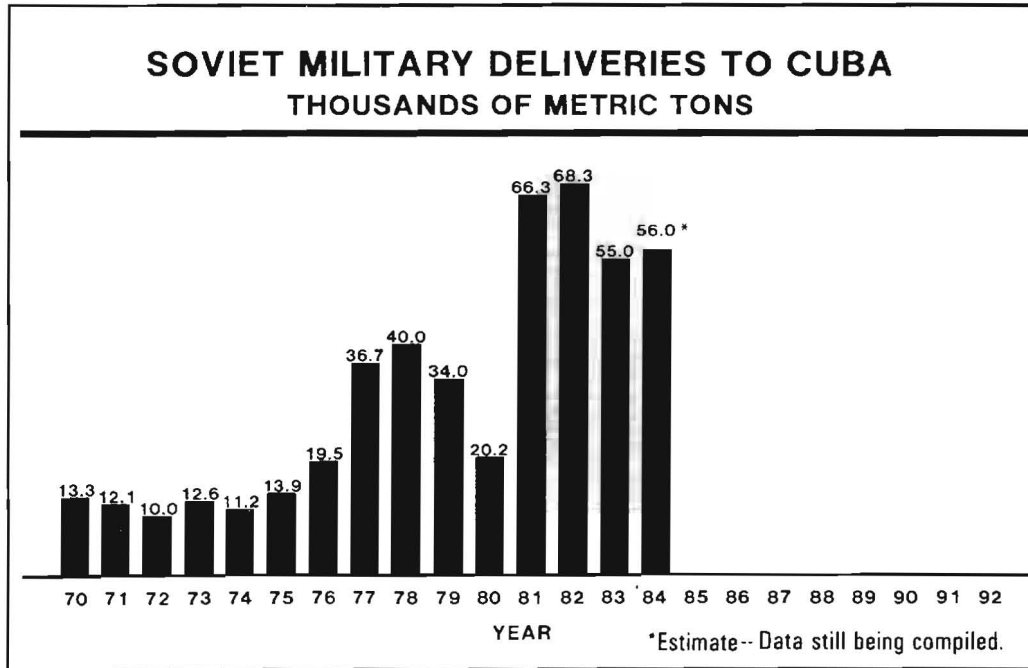
Chief of the Navy- 1986

Admiral Pérez was a member
of the M-26-7 during the
revolution against Batista.

APPENDIX VIII

WEAPONS OF THE CUBAN ARMED FORCES

Most of the pictures and drawings in this appendix have been obtained from U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Department of State and U.S. Information Service unclassified publications for open distribution. Other pictures have been obtained by the author from different private sources.



Source: U.S. Department of Defense

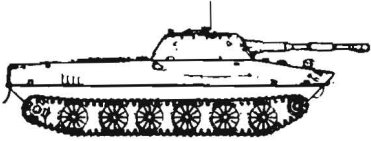


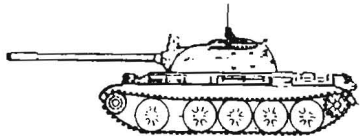
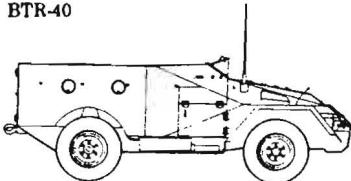
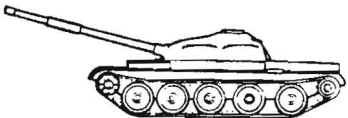
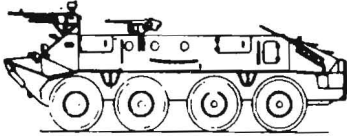


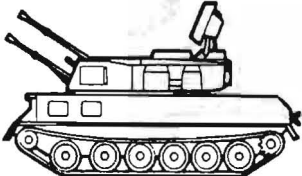

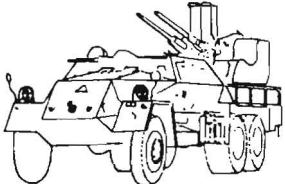
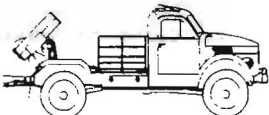
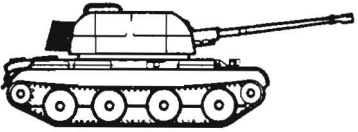
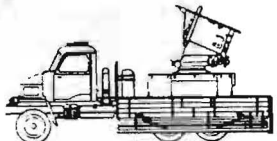
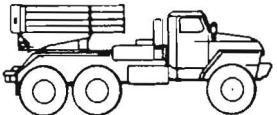
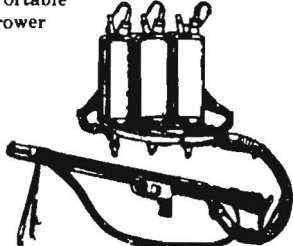
SS-N-2 STYX Naval Cruise Missiles

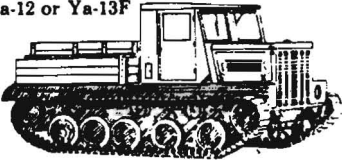

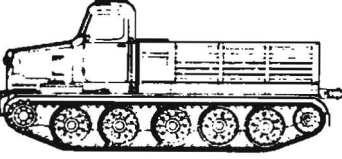

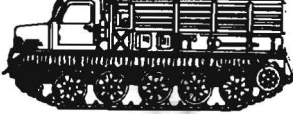

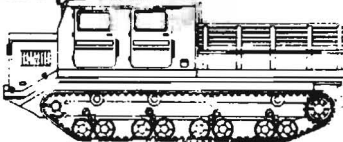








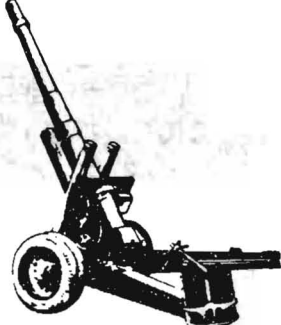






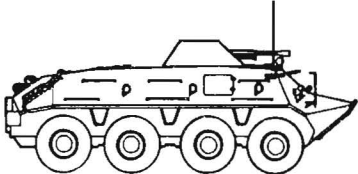



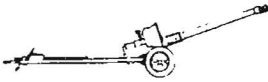
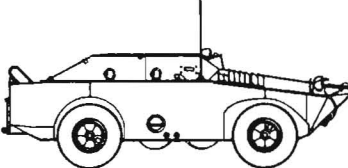
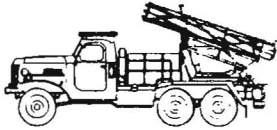
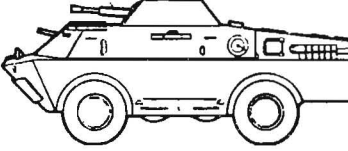
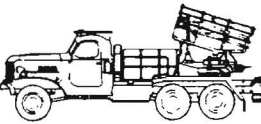


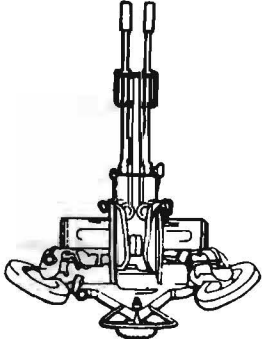
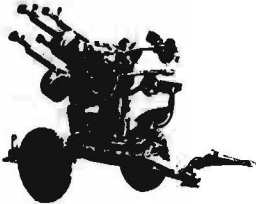

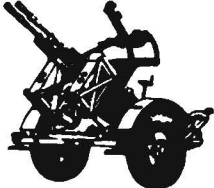

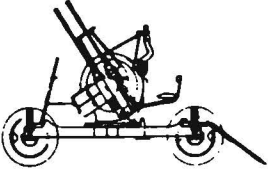


| Equipment | Equipment |
|--|--|
| Tanks | Assault Gun |
| <p>PT-76</p>  | <p>SU-100</p>  |
| <p>T-34(85)</p>  | Armored Personnel Carriers |
| <p>T-54/55</p>  | <p>BTR-40</p>  |
| <p>T-62</p>  | <p>BTR-60P BTR-60PA</p>  |

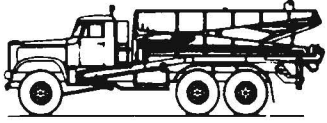

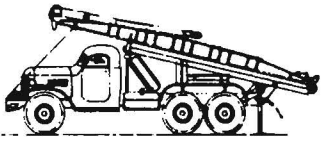

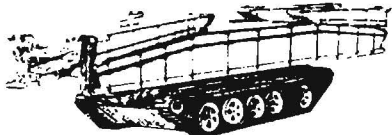

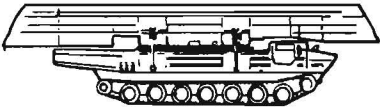

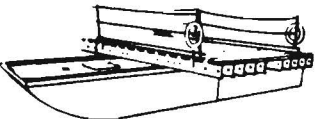
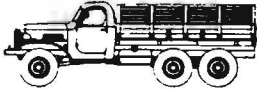
| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Self-propelled Antiaircraft Guns</p> | <p>Multiple Rocket Launchers</p> |
| <p>Twin 14.5mm Self-propelled Anti-aircraft Machinegun on BTR-162A</p> | <p>132mm Rocket Launcher BM-13</p> |
| <p>ZSU-23-4</p>  |  |
| <p>Twin 30mm Self-propelled Anti-aircraft Machinegun M53/59</p>  | <p>140mm Rocket Launcher BM-14-17</p>  |
| <p>ZSU-57-2</p>  | <p>130mm Rocket Launcher M51</p>  |
| | <p>122mm Rocket Launcher BM-21</p>  |
| | <p>Equipment</p> <p>Flamethrower</p> <p>LPO-50 Portable Flamethrower</p>  |

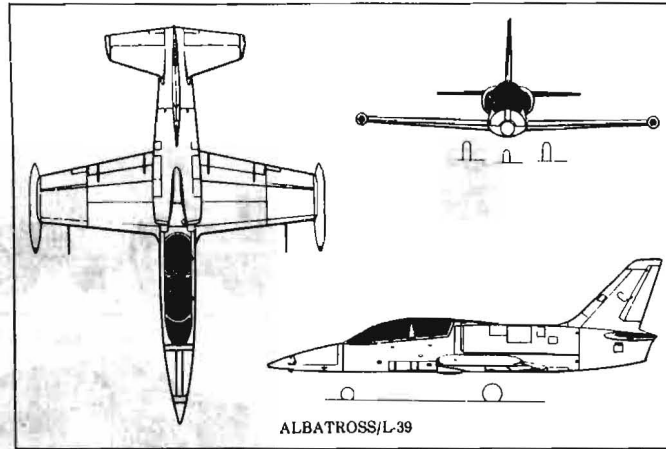
| Vehicle | Trucks |
|--|--|
| <p>Light Tracked Artillery Tractor Ya-12 or Ya-13F</p>  | <p>UAZ-469B Truck, 4x4</p>  |
| <p>Light Tracked Artillery Tractor AT-L and AT-LM</p>  | <p>UAZ (GAZ) 69 Truck, 4x4</p>  |
| <p>Medium Tracked Artillery Tractor ATS-59</p>  | <p>AT-3 SAGGER</p>  |
| <p>Medium Tracked Artillery Tractor AT-S</p>  | <p>Man-Portable Antiaircraft Missile</p> |
| <p>Tracked Amphibian K-61 (GPT)</p>  | <p>SA-7 (GRAIL)</p>  |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;">Mortars</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Field Guns and Howitzers</p> |
| <p>Mortar M1943</p>  | <p>122mm Field Gun (D-74)</p>  |
| | <p>130mm Field Gun M-46</p>  |
| | <p>152mm Howitzer M1943 (D-1)</p>  |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Field Guns and Howitzers</p> | <p>152mm Gun-Howitzer M1937 (ML-20)</p>  |
| <p>100mm Field Gun M1955</p>  | <p>152mm Gun-Howitzer (D-20)</p>  |
| <p>122mm Howitzer M1938 (M-30)</p>  | |
| <p>122mm Corps Gun M1931/37 (A-19)</p>  | |

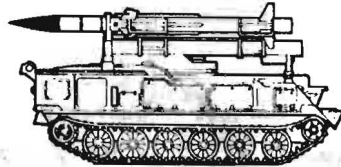
| Equipment | Field Guns and Howitzers |
|---|--|
| Armored Personnel Carriers (cont.) | |
| <p>BTR-60PB</p>  | <p>Antitank Guns</p> <p>57mm Antitank gun M1943 (ZIS-2)</p>  |
| <p>Amphibious Armored Infantry Combat Vehicle</p> | <p>76mm Division Gun M1942 (ZIS-3)</p>  |
| <p>BMP</p>  | <p>85mm Antitank Gun D-44</p>  |
| <p>Armored Reconnaissance Vehicles</p> | <p>Multiple Rocket Launchers</p> |
| <p>BRDM</p>  | <p>200mm Rocket Launcher BMD-20</p>  |
| <p>BRDM-2</p>  | <p>240mm Rocket Launcher BM-24</p>  |

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Towed Antiaircraft Guns</p> | <p>Towed Antiaircraft Guns</p> |
| <p>23mm Automatic Anti-aircraft Gun ZU-23</p>  | <p>Quad 12.7mm Heavy Machinegun M-53</p>  |
| <p>37mm Automatic AA Gun M1939</p>  | <p>Twin 14.5mm Antiaircraft Heavy Machinegun ZPU-2</p>  |
| <p>57mm Automatic AA Gun S-60</p>  | <p>Quad 14.5mm Antiaircraft Heavy Machinegun ZPU-4</p>  |
| <p>85mm AA Gun M1939 (KS-12) and M1944 (KS-12a)</p>  | |
| <p>100mm AA Gun (KS-19)</p>  | |

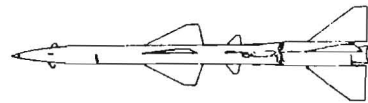
| Equipment | |
|--|---|
| Vehicle Launched Bridges | Trucks |
| <p>TMM</p>  | <p>GAZ 51 2 1/2-ton Cargo Truck, 4x2</p>  |
| <p>KMM</p>  | <p>GAZ-63 and GAZ-63A 2-ton Cargo Truck, 4x4</p>  |
| <p>MTU-20 (T-55)</p>  | <p>GAZ-66A Truck, 4x4</p>  |
| Tracked Self-propelled Ferry | |
| <p>GSP</p>  | <p>ZIL-151.5-ton Cargo Truck, 6x6</p>  |
| Bridging | |
| <p>TMP</p>  | <p>ZIL-157 2 1/2-ton Cargo Truck, 6x6</p>  |



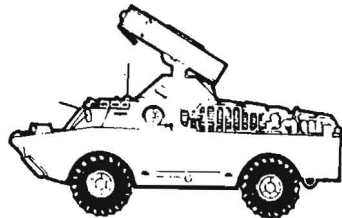
SA-6 GAINFUL



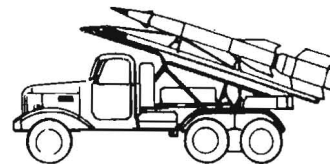
SA-2 GUIDELINE

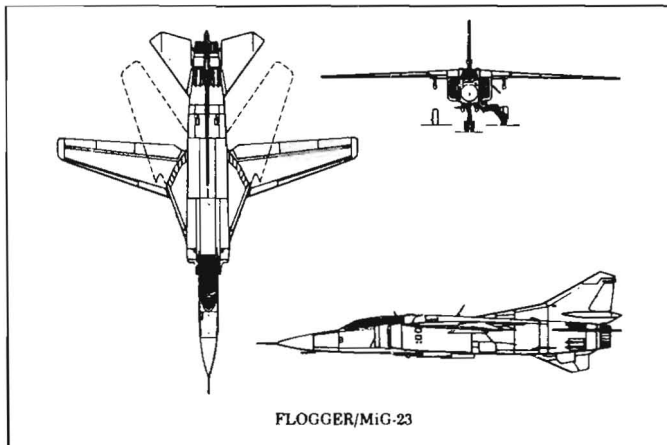
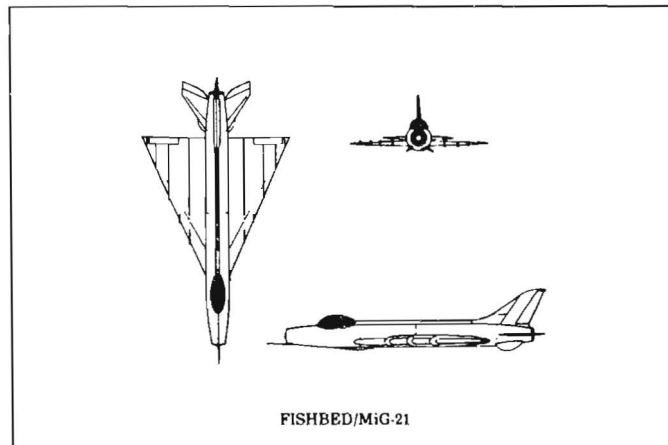
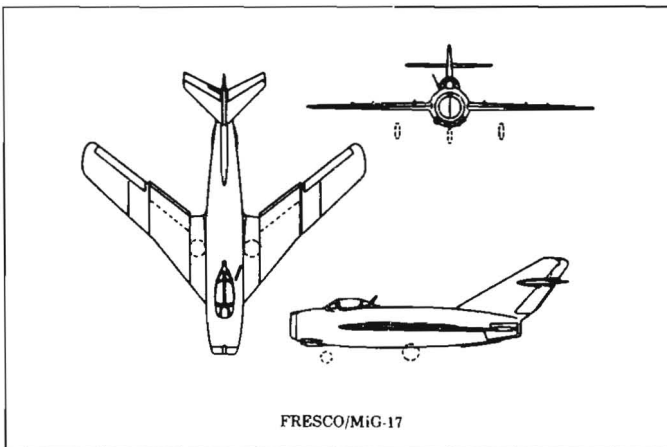
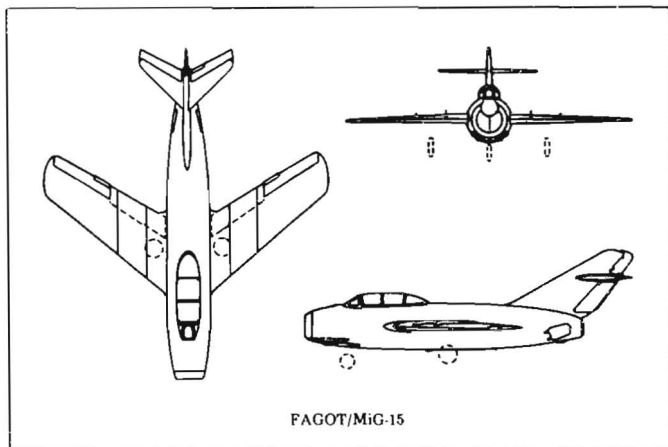


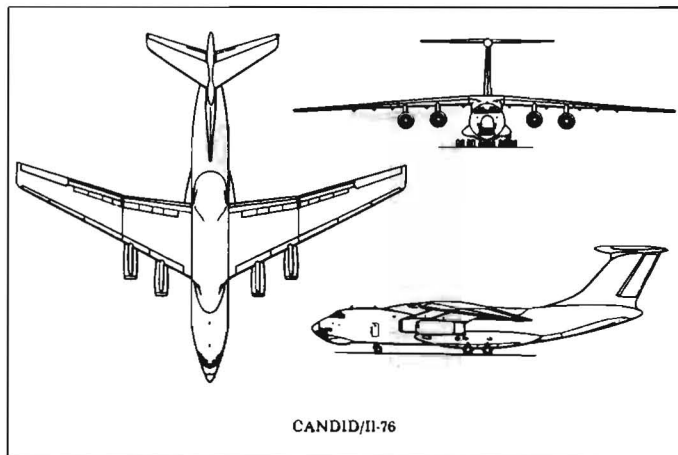
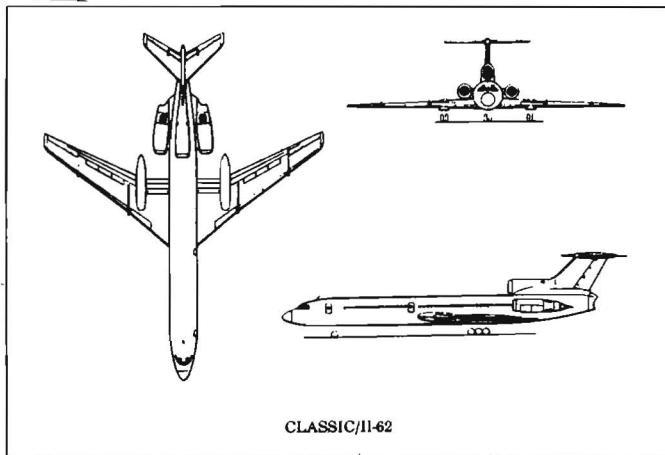
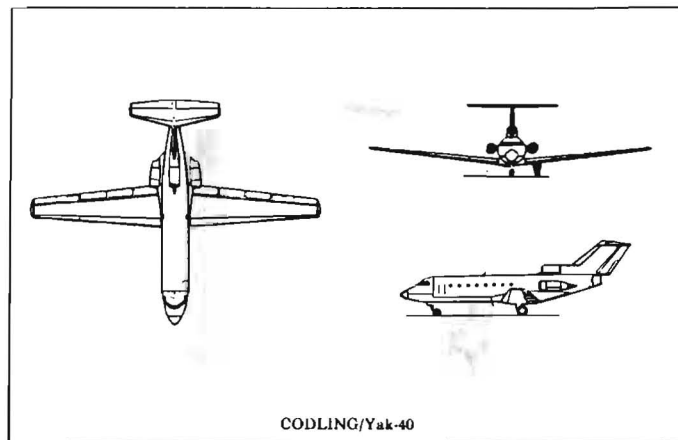
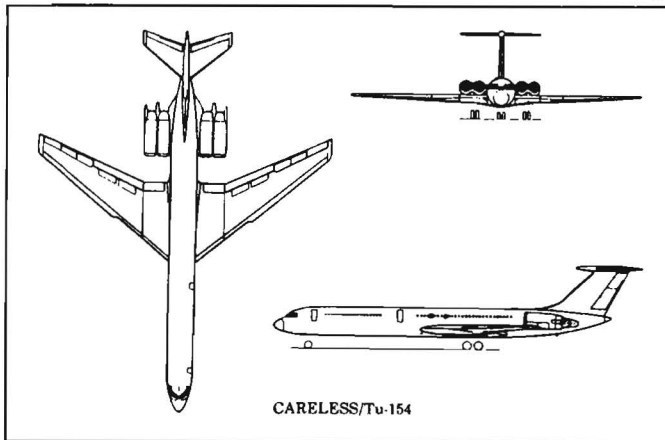
SA-9 GASKIN

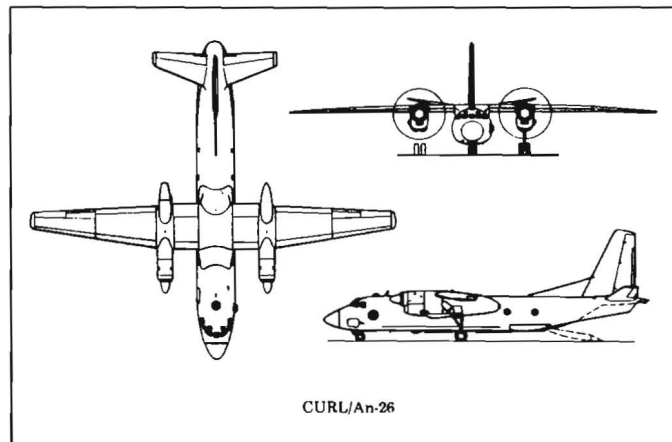
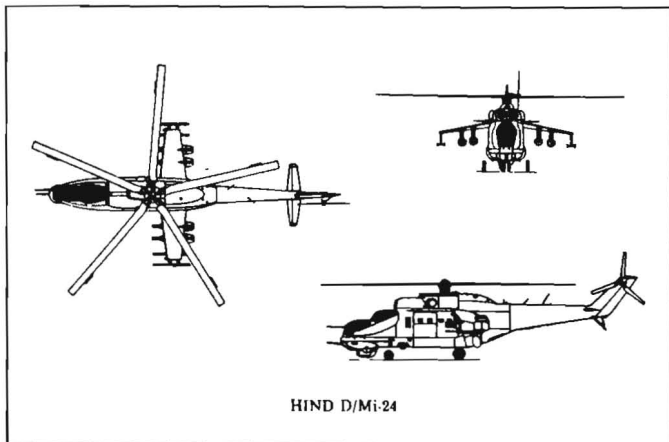
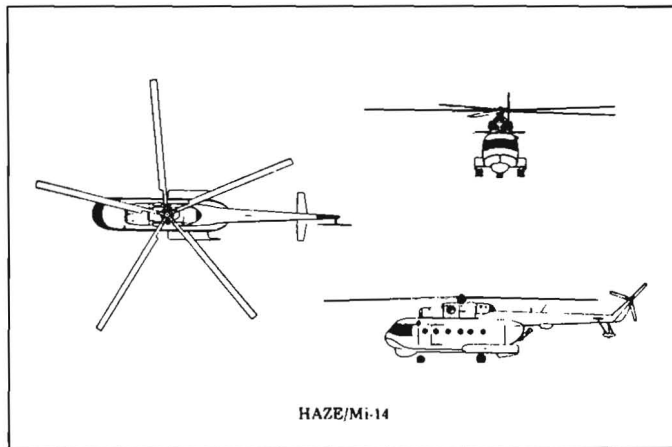
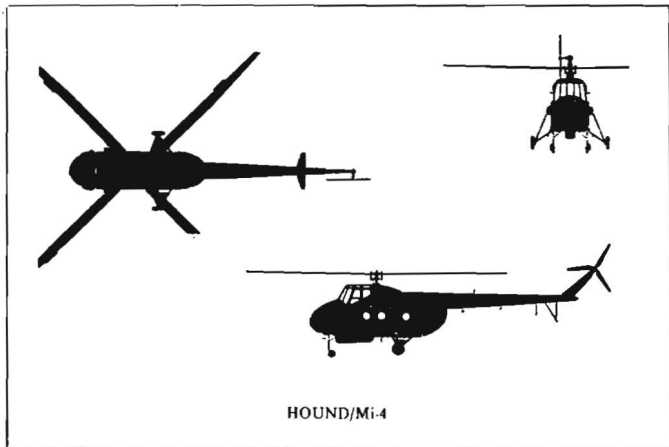


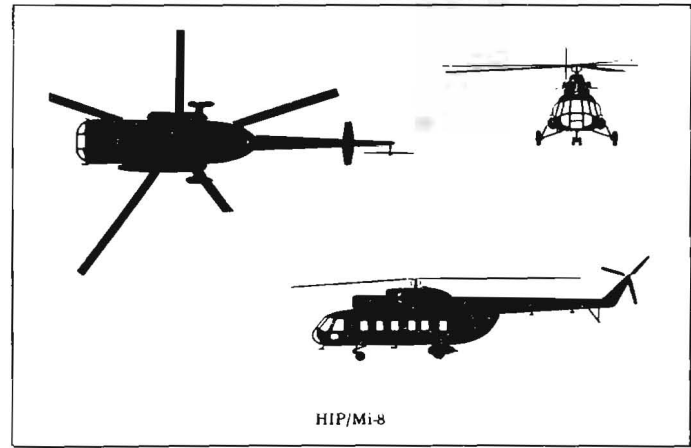
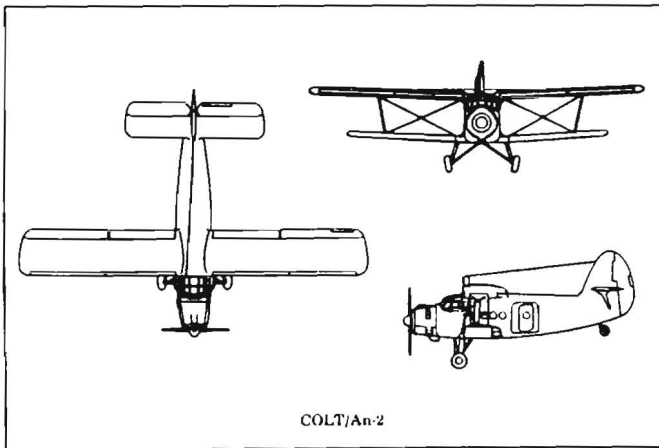
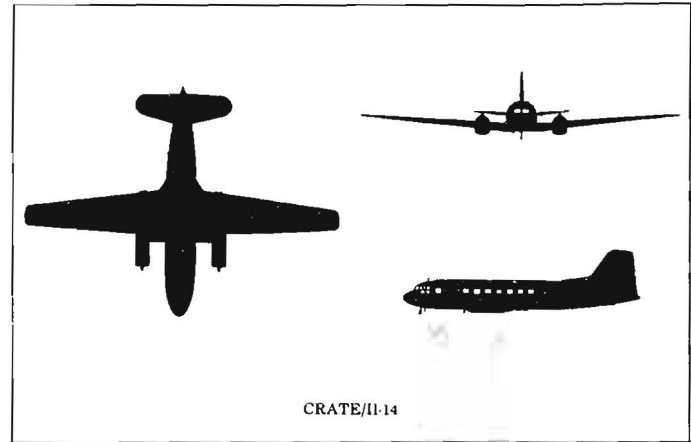
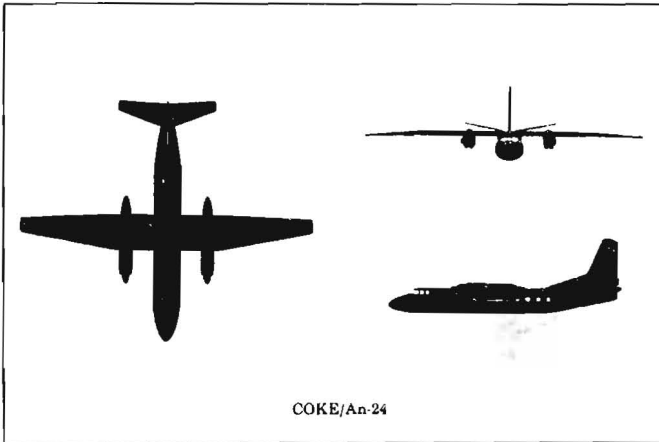
SA-3 GOA

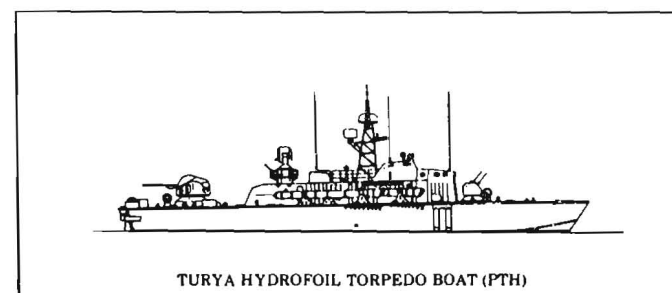
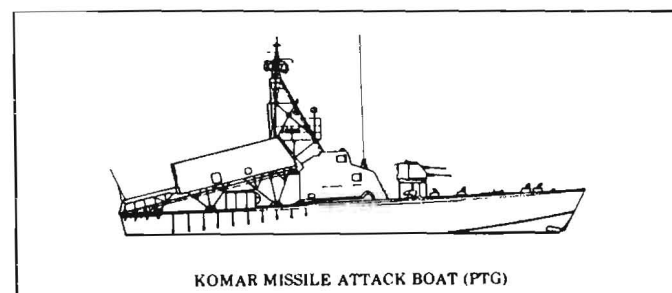
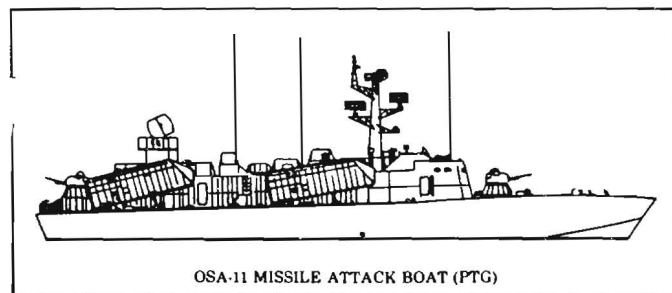
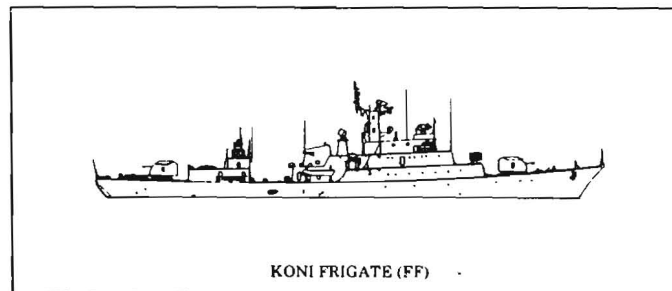
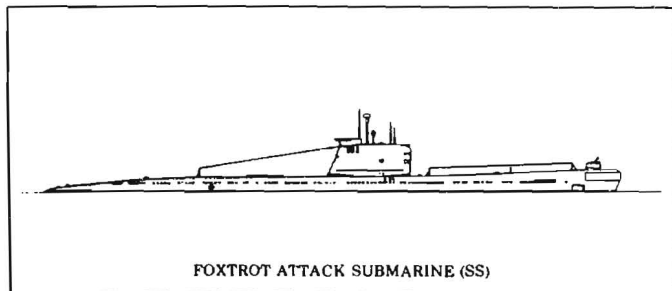


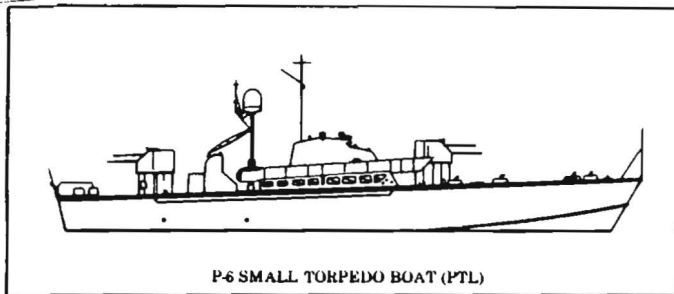




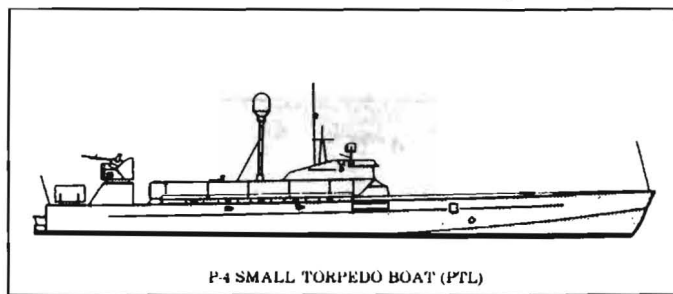




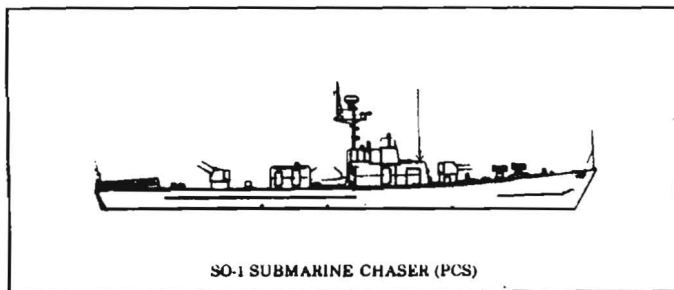




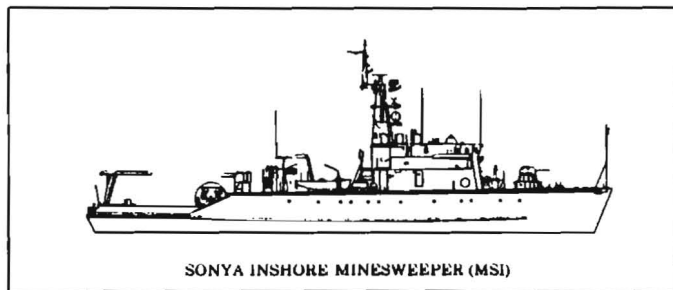
P-6 SMALL TORPEDO BOAT (PTL)



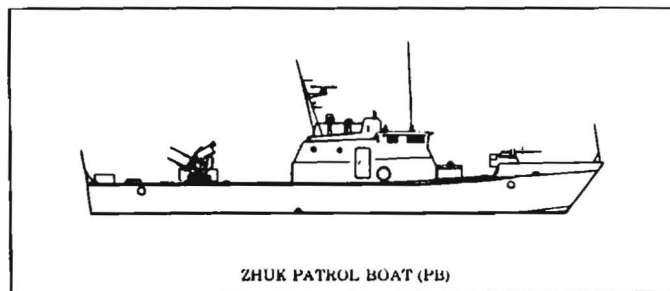
P-4 SMALL TORPEDO BOAT (PTL)



SO-1 SUBMARINE CHASER (PCS)



SONYA INSHORE MINESWEEPER (MSI)



ZHUK PATROL BOAT (PB)

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INDEX

- "10 de Octubre" (Cuban Navy ship), 117, 141
 13th of April Movement (M-19), 353, 354
 18th Battalion, 233
 19th Battalion, 233, 234
 *19th of April Movement (M-19), 353, 445, 446
 *20 de Mayo" (Cuban Navy Ship), 117, 141
 XX Aniversario (Cuban ship), 303
 *24 de Febrero" (Cuban Navy Ship), 117, 141
 26 of July Movement (See Movimiento 26 de Julio)
 260th U.S. Military Police Brigade, 13, 280
 330th Battalion, 278
 2506 Bay of Pigs Brigade, 13, 15, 16, 275, 277, 279, 280, 281, 283
- ANWB, 419
 Abarca, Brig. Gen. Silvestro, 26
 ABC, 15, 147-149, 156, 157, 164
 "Abeja" (Cuban Navy ship), 117
 "Abejorro" (Cuban Navy ship), 117
 Abella, Rosa, 58
 Abd-el-Krim, 133
 Abdelaziz, President Mohammed, 432
 Abisinia (Ethiopia), 407
 Abraham Lincoln Brigade, 162, 440
 Abrahantes Fernández, Gen. José, 274, 461, 502, 504, 507
 Abu Jihad (Palestine), 398
 Acción Cívica Nacional Revolucionaria (ACNR), 394
 Acción Democrática (AD), 352
 Acción Republicana, 157, 164
 Acción Revolucionaria Guiteras, 184
 Accra, 364
 Acevedo González, Gen. Rogelio, 18, 458, 503, 504, 511, 518
 Acevedo González, Gen. Enrique, 503, 511
 Acheampong, Col. Ignatius, 365
 Action for National Liberation, 360
 Action for National Liberation of Brazil, 386
 Acuña Nuñez, Maj. Vilo (Joaquín), 376
 Aden (port), 409
 Advisory Law Commission, 111
 Aemilianus, Scipio, 11
 Aeroflot, 391
 Afghanistan, 17, 315, 431
 Africa, 3, 8, 16, 17, 18, 20, 133, 134, 290, 299, 306, 307, 311, 313, 345, 346, 364, 366, 368, 370, 374, 375, 383, 386, 396, 399, 404, 405, 407, 413, 415, 417, 418, 420, 422, 423, 425, 427, 429, 432, 434, 441
- African National Congress (ANC), 384, 415, 424, 425
 African National Union, 423
 African Party for the Liberation of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), 384
 Ager, General, 91
 Agostini, Jorge, 6, 163, 216
 Agramonte (Cuban Navy ship), 117
 Agramonte, Gen. Ignacio, 12, 66-69,
 Agramonte, Dr. Roberto, 193, 205
 Aguila Gill, Capt. Manuel,
 Aguila Ruiz, Comm. J., 173
 Aguirre, Col. Charles, 131
 Aguirre, Maj. Gen. José M., 85, 89
 Aguirre, Sergio, 53
 Aigrete (French Frigate), 34
 Al-Handi, Lt. Col. Abdullah Mohammed, 410
 Al-Handi, President Ibrahim, 409, 410
 Ala Izquierda Estudiantil, 149
 Alabama, 33, 44
 "Alacrán" (Cuban Navy ship), 117
 Alarcón, Capt. Daniel (Benigno), 376
 Albarrie, Count of, 24
 "Al Deguello," 62
 Al Fatah-Movement, 433
 Alegría de Pio, 219
 Alemán, José Manuel, 202
 Alexandria, Egypt, 38
 Alfonso XIII, King, 161
 Alfonso, Mario, 151
 Algeciras, 161
 Algeria, 16, 18, 345, 358, 362-364, 368, 383, 396, 397, 405, 414, 432
 Algerian Communist Party, 363
 Algerian revolutionaries, 397
 Alianca Liberal (Rio Grande do Sul- Brazil), 359
 Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana (APRA), 356
 Alim, Major Adullah Abdul, 410
 Allende, Pres. Salvador (Chile), 355, 378, 388-390, 410, 444, 512
 Almeida Bosque, Juan, 219, 233, 238, 269, 470.
 Almeidas Hotel, 170
 Almirante Hotel, (Angola) 421
 Alonso, Gen. Federico, 81
 Alonso Avila, Antonio, 142, 143
 Alquizar, 84
 Al Saika, 434
 Alvarado, Pedro, 20
 Alvarez, Senator Aurelio, 134
 Alvarez, Leslie, 163
 Alvarez Izquierdo, Mario, 163
 Alvarez Margolles, Col. Manuel, 207, 208, 257

Alvels, Nito (Angola), 404
 Al Yassifa, 433
 Ameijeiras, Maj. Efigenio, 219, 238, 239, 508, 519
 America Department, Cuban Communist Party (Intelligence organization), 282
 American Civil War (see U.S. Civil War)
 American Constitution, 93
 American Foreign Light (Cuban Power Company), 137
 American Provisional Government (Cuba), 112, 114, 117, 118, 122
 American War of Independence (see U.S. War of Independence)
 Americans, 51, 52, 66, 79, 86,
 Americas (farm), 187
 AN-2, 481
 AN-12/DLB, 423
 AN-24, 481, 482
 AN-26, 302, 482, 416
 Anarchists, 143, 145
 Andes, 356
 Angola, 7, 8, 16-18, 299, 306, 310, 312, 315, 346, 347, 365, 366, 368, 386, 399-405, 408, 409, 414-428, 439, 442
 Angolan Armed Forces, 399
 Angolan Communists, 399
 Angolan Government, 403-405
 Aniceta Iznaga, José, 51
 Anna (ship), 63
 Annexationism, 49, 50
 Antiaircraft Defense of the Ground Forces, 233, 478
 Antiaircraft Missile Group for the Defense of the Capital, 478
 Antioquia (Colombia), 446
 Anti-Sandinista Guerrillas, 55
 Antilla (shipyard), 117
 Antonarichi, Juan, 42
 Antonelli, Juan Bautista, 22
 Antonio Maceo Brigade, 314
 Antonio Maceo (Cuban Navy frigate), 349
 Antonio Maceo Interservice School for Armor, Mechanized Units, Signals and Other Officers, 304, 471
 APC, 408
 Aponte, José Antonio, 42
 Appalachian Mountains, 21
 Arabs, 408, 410, 432-435, 375
 Arab armies, 398
 Arab-Israeli war, 397
 Arab revolutionaries, 397
 Aracelio Iglesias (Cuban Navy ship),
 Arafat, Yasser, 426, 433, 434
 Aranda, General Miguel, 122
 Arango Solar, Col. Raul, 95
 Arango, 40
 "Araña" (Cuban Navy ship), 117
 Araña, Isaac, 189, 191
 Arapiles, 40
 Arakan Indians, 20
 Araya Castro, Gen. Carlos, 389
 Arbenz, President Jacobo (Guatemala), 218, 353, 354
 Arbitre Parra, Jesús, 13, 204
 Arcole, 38
 Arderius, General, 81
 Arévalo, President Juan José (Guatemala), 190
 Argentina, 48, 51, 159, 219, 348, 354, 358, 361, 384-386
 Argentinean Communist Party, 361
 Argüello, Maj. Raul, 306, 389, 400, 402, 502
 Arias, Roberto (Panama), 348
 Arias, Lt. Col. Tomás, 266
 Arias de la Rosa, Rodolfo, 163
 Arias Echeverría, Rear Adm. Antonio, 266
 Arias Londono, Gustavo, 446
 Armée Populaire Nationale, 367
 Armed People's Organization (ORPA), 355
 Armiñán, Gen., 67-68
 Army of Cuban Pacification, 113
 Arnaz, Desi, 168
 Arrazola Rodríguez, Captain Arsenio, 266
 Arroyo del Infierno, 221
 Arroyo, Col. Alejandro, 24
 Artemisa, 87
 Artima, Dr. Manuel, 275, 280
 Arzibí, José, 238
 Asamblea del Poder Popular, 308
 Asbert, Gen. Ernesto, 111, 120
 Asab (port), 408
 Asencio, Ambassador Diego, 446
 Ashantis, 364
 Asia, 18, 164, 203, 432,
 Asmara, 406, 408
 Assad (port-Ethiopia), 406
 Asturias, 179
 AT-6 (airplane), 170
 Atarés Fortress, 15, 26
 Atlanta, 6
 Atlanta Federal Penitentiary, 6
 August Revolution, 116
 Austerlitz, 38
 Aurrecochea, Gen. José María, 60
 Austria, 38
 Auténtico Party, 182, 183, 193, 199, 204, 205, 208, 215, 216
 Avila Avila, Capt. Raúl, 185

Avila Ochoa, Gen. René, 185, 511
 Avila Trujillo, Brig. Gen. Elio, 468, 469
 "Avispa" (Cuban Navy ship), 117
 Avis, 167, 171, 391
 Ayacucho (Peru), 357
 Ayaara, 376
 Aza, Major, 226
 Aziz, Maj. Abdul, 410
 Azores Islands, 403
 Aztecs, 21

B-24, 172
 B-26, 16, 238, 275, 276, 278, 279, 282, 368
 B-29, 172
 B-50, 172
 Bacallao, Valentín, 275
 Bacon, U.S. Sec. State Robert, 108
 Bacuranao, 24
 Baez Vigo, Adm. Emigdio, 229, 487, 520, 518
 Bahamas, 33, 148, 383, 395, 437
 Bahamian Navy, 395
 Bahía de Cochinos (see Bay of Pigs)
 Bahía Honda, 52, 197
 Bailén (Spanish Battalion), 83
 Bailén (battle), 40
 Baire (Cuban Navy ship), 117, 140, 156
 Baktiar, Prime Minister Shapur, 315
 Bala Cynnd, Philadelphia, PA, 155
 Balaguer, Pres. Joaquín (Dom. Rep.), 350, 351
 Balawayo, 431
 Balifo, Carlos, 142
 Bakongo (population group in Angola), 399
 Banderas, Gen. Quintín, 64-65, 82-83,
 Banes, 152
 Bantu (languages), 365
 Baracoa, 21, 86, 95
 Baracoa (Cuban Navy ship), 117
 Baranda Columbie, Félix, 511
 Baranda Columbie, Gen. Ladislao, 18, 478, 511
 Barbados, 383, 394, 401
 Barca, Gen. Hannibal, 11
 Barceló, Lt. Col. Pablo, 470
 Barcelona (Spain), 98, 162
 Barentu, 408
 Barnett Vinajeras, José A., 160
 Barquín, Col. Ramón, 205, 207, 213, 216, 222,
 227-229, 231, 250, 257-259, 263, 264, 266
 Barrancabermeja (Colombia), 353, 445,
 Barreiro Caramés, Gen. Germán, 511
 Barreiro, Alejandro, 142
 Barrientos, Guillermo, 153
 Barrientos y Aguero, Lt. José, 157
 Barrera, Colonel Pedro A., 222
 Barrios Ríos, Col. Inaudi, 470

Barzaga, Ambassador Raul, 432
 Bascones, Gen., 67-68,
 Basols, Ignacio, 226, 228
 Batabandó, 87, 117
 Bateman, Jaime 353
 Bates, Gen. 91
 Batista Santana, Gen. Sixto, 458, 505, 506, 509
 Batista, Belisario, 152
 Batista, Fulgencio 8, 14-16, 18, 48, 60, 98,
 151, 152, 154, 159, 161, 168, 169, 170, 172,
 173, 174, 179, 181, 182, 183, 187, 188, 189,
 193, 198, 204, 205, 207-210, 212-219, 221-228,
 231, 234-237, 240, 249-253, 255-260, 263-272,
 276, 280, 285-287, 289, 291, 294-297, 299, 306,
 345, 346, 348, 349, 350, 354, 358, 362, 369,
 374-376, 393, 399, 439, 442, 476, 496, 499,
 502, 503, 506, 507, 509, 510-513, 514-516, 518,
 520, 521
 Baullosa Garcia, Lt. Col. Miguel, 470
 Bautista Antonelli, Juan, 22
 Bautista Spotorno, Juan, 70
 Bay of Pigs 188, 229, 270, 274-276, 278, 280,
 281-283, 293, 351, 353, 368, 372, 378, 440
 Bayamo, 11, 23, 211
 Bayo, Col. Alberto, 218
 Bayone, 39
 Bear, 427
 Beaupre, Minister, 123
 Beauvilier, 60
 Beauvoqui, P.M. Lansana (Guinea), 397, 427
 Beitia, Sergeant, 226
 Bejar, Hector, 356
 Belaunde Terry, President Fernando (Peru), 390,
 391
 Belén, Colegio de, 211, 304
 Belgian Congo, 367
 Belgium, 16, 43, 367, 409
 Belgrade, 383
 Belic, 219
 Ben Bella, President Ahmed (Algeria), 363, 364
 Benguela (Angola), 401
 Benin, Peoples' Republic of, 383, 414, 415, 429
 Benítez, General Manuel, 152, 156, 165, 171,
 173, 174
 Benítez, Reinaldo, 220
 Berbera (port), 406
 Bermejo Laredo, Col. Miguel, 463
 Bermuda, 44
 Bermuda (ship), 86
 Bermúdez Cutiño, Gen. Jesús, 512
 Bernal Fernández, Capt. Gastón, 229
 Bernal, Alfonso, 142
 Bernal, Gen., 87

Betancourt, Pres. Rómulo (Venezuela), 190, 350, 352
 Betancourt Cruz, Brig. Gen. Urbelino, 469
 Bic Kwanza Sul,
 Bilbao, 50
 Biko Island, 370
 Birney, Gen., 59
 Bishop, P.M. Maurice (Grenada), 315, 440, 441, 508
 Bismark, 423
 Black Panther Party, 373, 379
 Black September, 434
 Blair-Lee House (Wash. D.C.), 180
 Blanco Rico, Col. Antonio, 215, 217, 218
 Blanco Arana, Gen. Ramón, 90
 Blanco, Jesús, 228
 BN-21, 472
 BN-24, 430
 Bobadilla, Rafael, 60
 "bocaditos," 232
 Bofill Lora, Jaime, 163
 Bogotá, 192, 211, 353, 445, 446,
 bohio, 261
 Bolívar, Simón, 49, 79
 Bolivia, 16-18, 219, 268, 291, 345, 353, 354,
 356-358, 360, 361, 373-379, 388
 Bolivian Army, 291, 357, 377, 378
 Bolivian Communist Party, 361, 377
 Bolivian Communists, 291
 Bolivian Communist Youth, 361
 Bolivian Government, 291, 378
 Bolivian guerrillas, 377
 Bolivian Indians, 291
 Bonachea, Gen. Ramón Leocadio, 70
 Bonaparte, Sec. of the Navy Charles, 108
 Bonaparte, Napoleon, 36, 38-43, 48
 Bonsal, Ambassador Philip, 267, 268
 Bourbonet, Lieutenant Colonel Enrique,
 205, 227, 263
 Bordón, Maj. Victor, 233
 Borge, Tomás, 411
 Bosch, José, 148
 Bosch, Pres. Juan (Dominican Republic), 188-
 190, 208, 350, 351
 Bosch, Dr. Luis Orlando, 410
 Botha, P.M. Pieter Willem, 403
 Boukarin (COMINTERN), 145
 Boulogne, 145
 Boumediene, Col. Houari, 363
 Brasilia, 359
 Bravo, Major Flavio, 400
 Brazil, 3, 53, 159, 266, 359, 360, 377, 386
 Brazilian military, 386
 Brazzaville (Congo), 365, 367, 400, 401
 BRDM-1, 473
 BRDM-2, 438
 Bremen, Germany, 170
 Brezhnev, Leonid, 402
 Briceño, Manuel, 25
 Briones Mototo, Antonio, 353
 Bristol Britannia (Airplanes), 7, 401
 British, 3, 11, 14, 21, 23-26, 33-35, 38-40, 4
 2-45,
 53, 55, 82, 117, 162, 171, 189, 364, 394, 433,
 436
 British-American War (War of 1812), 33
 British Government, 235, 374
 British Navy, 26, 43
 British weapons sold to Batista, 279
 Brito, Col. Antonio, 173, 174, 183
 Brooke, Gen. John R., 92-95
 Brooklyn, N.Y., 61
 Brooks, Lt. Col. Enrique, 95
 Brú, Laredo, 161
 BTR-40, 473
 BTR-60 (APC), 430, 441
 BTR-152, 438
 Bucharest, 365
 Buenos Aires, 358
 Buycito, 223
 Bulgaria, 396, 414, 421
 Bullard, Lt. Col. L.R., 78
 Bunker, Tamara (Tania), 361
 Burnside, Gen., 59
 Buró Represivo de Actividades Comunistas
 (BRAC), 226
 Burundi, 383, 414
 Bush, Vice President George, 426
 Butler, U.S. Ambassador, 199
 C-46, 16
 C-47, 238, 482
 C-54, 16
 CND Radio (Havana), 204
 Caamaño Delfó, Col. Francisco (Dom. Rep.), 351,
 352
 Cabaiguán, 239
 Cabaña Fortress (see La Cabaña)
 Cabaña Harbor, 23
 Cabañas, 165
 Cabañas, Lucio, 394
 Cabinda (Angola), 401, 404
 Cabral, Amílcar (Guinea-Bissau), 368, 369, 396
 Cabral, Luis L. (Guinea-Bissau), 396, 405, 425
 Cabrera, 18
 Cabrera, Pablo, 514
 Cabrera, Gen. Ruperto, 186, 200
 Cabrera Flores, José (El Negro) (Peru), 357

Cabrera González, Gen. Francisco, 505
 Cabrera Piloto, Col. Pablo, 470
 Cacarajicara (battle), 87
 Cacares Valle, Julio Roberto ("El Patojo"), 354
 Cadena Triangular y Soles de la Libertad (conspiracy), 49
 Cadiz, 41, 42, 48, 161
 Cafetal de Frias, 52
 Caffery, Amb. Jefferson, 158-159
 Caibarién, 117, 239
 Caifias Milanés, Senator, 193
 Caifias Sierra, Capt. Armando,
 Caifias Sierra, Lt. Jorge, 229
 Cairo, 38, 383
 Calabazar, 187
 Cali (Colombia), 353, 445
 California, 168, 375,
 Calimete, 14, 84
 Callejas, Capt. Gen. Emilio, 81
 Casacho Aguilera, Maj. Julio, 238
 Casacho Barrio, Lt. Col. Miguel, 469
 Casagley, 13, 23, 35, 52, 59, 66, 69, 78,
 80, 82, 85, 88, 90, 128, 137, 188, 200, 208,
 232, 233, 238, 270
 Caseroon (Africa), 365, 383
 Casilo Cienfuegos School for Artillery
 Officers, 305, 471
 Casillo Hernández, Justo,
 Casilo Cienfuegos Military Schools, 303-305
 Casiri, 377
 Camp Columbia (see Columbia, Camp)
 Campos Marquetti, Generoso, 113
 Canada, 43, 311
 Canadians, 43, 162, 293
 Canarias (Spanish Battalion), 83
 Canaris. Admiral (German), 171
 Canary Islands, 161, 142
 Candua, Policarpo, 163
 Caney Hills, 92
 Cánovas del Castillo, Antonio, 90
 Cantillo, Gen. Carlos, 231
 Cantillo, Gen. Eulogio, 231, 233, 234, 240,
 263, 264
 Caparaó Mountains, 377
 Cape Verde Islands, 369, 396, 425
 capitania, 210
 Capitol, 43
 Capote, Gen. José Manuel, 134
 Caracas, 236, 352
 CARMAR (Caribbean Marine Aero Corporation),
 368
 Caramés, Gen. José Manuel, 200
 Carballo, Lt. Hermes, 229
 Carbó Servia, Juan Pedro, 225
 Carbó, Sergio, 148, 153, 156
 Cárdenas, 51, 117
 Cárdenas, General Rafael, 131
 Cárdenas, Ouchifao, 163
 Carib Indians, 20,
 Caribbean Islands, 20, 21, 23, 44, 180, 188,
 190, 271, 394, 416
 Caribbean Legión, 190
 Caribbean, Western, 20
 Caritat, Antoine (Marquis de Condorcet), 41
 Carlist Wars, 48, 50
 Carlos IV, 39, 50
 Carlos Roloff Communications and Chemical
 Troops School, 304, 471
 Carrela (Cuban tune), 139
 "Carmen Elisa" (Ship- Dom. Rep.), 349
 Carraichael, Stokeley, 373
 Carraona, Gen. Cipriano, 81
 Carraona, 400
 Carnero, Com. Manuel, 240
 Caro, Col. Carlos, 24
 Carreras Rodríguez, Col. Lino, 470
 Carreras Rolas, Gen. Enrique, 229, 277, 282,
 389, 512
 Carrillo, Gen. Francisco, 85, 88, 89, 137
 Carrillo Hernández, Justo, 153, 260
 Cartar, President J., 312
 Carthaginians, 11
 Casal, Lourdes, 313, 314
 Casanova Roque, Rear Adm. Juan P., 266
 Casanova, Julio (Peru), 357
 Casanova, Senator, 193
 Casas Regueiro, Gen. Julio, 233, 403, 458, 478,
 505
 Casas Regueiro, Gen. Senén (Zenén), 18, 233,
 239, 403, 458, 505
 Casas Romero, Luis, 139
 Casillas, Maj. Ernesto "El Abuelo," 238
 Casillas, Col. Joaquín, 221, 222
 "casquitos," 232
 Castaños, Gen., 40
 Castellanos, Captain, 215
 Castellanos, Undersecretary, 202
 Castiglione, 38
 Castilla Mas, Belarmino, 238, 239
 Castillo de Atarés, 158
 Castillo del Morro (See Morro Castle)
 Castillo de la Fuerza, 22
 Castillo del Príncipe, 171, 188
 Castillo Duany, Gen. Demetrio, 91, 11
 Castillo, Gen. José Rogelio, 60
 Castillo, Julio, 502
 Castillo Ruiz, Col. Ederero, 462

Castro, Fidel, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 15, 16, 18, 33, 187-189, 191, 192, 205, 210-213, 216, 218, 219, 221-228, 232-234, 236-240, 249, 254, 257, 259, 260, 263-272, 274, 276-279, 281, 282, 284, 289, 291-297, 299, 300, 304, 310, 312-316, 347-351, 354, 358-360, 369, 371-373, 379, 380, 383, 388-390, 392, 396, 397, 401, 404, 405, 408, 409, 413, 417, 418, 423, 425, 427, 433, 435, 436, 441, 444, 457, 463, 495, 502, 503, 506, 512
 Castro, Manolo (FEU), 191, 192
 Castro, Raúl, 204, 218, 219, 222, 223, 227, 232, 233, 234, 238, 239, 254, 263, 269, 272, 296, 300, 437, 446, 457, 495, 502, 504-508, 511-513, 516, 519
 catalanes, 179
 Catherine Whiting (ship), 63
 Catholic Church, 38, 49, 161, 271, 287
 Catofo, 402
 caudillismo, 8
 Causé Pérez, Gen. José Nivaldo, 233, 239, 377, 469, 512
 Cejila, Laurent (Zaire), 367
 Cayo Confite, 187-191, 208, 211, 213, 215, 224, 349
 Cayo Loco Naval Base, 228, 277
 Cazart, Maj. Louis U., 131
 Cazombo, 421
 CDR (See Committees for the Defense of the Revolution)
 Caballo, 145
 Cabraco, Gen. Agustín, 88, 91, 122
 Caiba del Agua, 84, 304
 Caja del Negro (battle), 87
 Central African Republic, 365
 Central America, 2, 16, 54, 55, 411, 413, 416, 502
 Central Antiaircraft Missile Brigade, 478
 Central de Acción Revolucionaria Armada (CARA), 394
 Central Valley, Orange County, N.Y., 98
 Cepillo de Dientes (conspiracy), 183
 Cervera, Adm. Pascual,
 Céspedes, Miguel Angel, 237
 Chamber of Constitutional and Social Guarantees, 197
 Chancellorsville, 59
 Chandler, James B., 59
 Chang, Juan Pablo (El Chino) (Peru), 356, 357
 Chao, Rafael, 220
 Charlot Hatson (ship), 86
 Charleston, 23
 Chaumont Portocarrero, Arturo, 220
 Chelala Aguilera, José, 160
 Chesapeake Bay, 35
 Chicago, 184
 Chihuahua (Mexico), 393
 Chile, 16, 48, 49, 281-283, 355, 378, 383, 388-390, 410, 444
 Chilean Communist Party, 374
 Chilean Government, 281, 389
 Chilean Military, 389
 China, 47, 426
 China, Nationalist, 203
 China, Peoples' Republic of, 369, 371, 203, 271, 292, 388, 392, 400, 426, 429
 Chinese in Cuba, 3, 53, 60, 69, 375
 Chinese Communists, 375
 Chinese Government, 375
 Chipenda, Daniel, 400
 Chivás, Senator Eduardo, 10, 11, 193, 204, 205
 Chivás, Raul, 260
 Chomón, Maj. Faure, 225, 238, 264, 502
 Chorrera, La (See La Chorrera Fortress)
 Christian Democratic Party, 352
 Chueg Colas, Gen. Victor (See Schueg Colas, Victor)
 Chui Beltrán, Gen. Gustavo, 18, 469
 CIA (See U.S. Central Intelligence Agency)
 Cienfuegos, 15, 66, 117, 134, 141, 228, 235, 264, 277, 279
 Cienfuegos, Maj. Camilo, 60, 219, 132, 233, 237, 238, 264, 270, 297, 399, 470, 476, 503, 508, 514, 515
 Cienfuegos, Maj. Osmani, 270, 281
 Cintras Frías, Gen. Leopoldo, 403, 460, 471, 505, 512
 Cisneros Betancourt, Salvador, 68-69,
 Cisneros, Adm., 92
 Cisneros, Francisco Javier, 61
 Ciudad Libertad, 276
 Civil Defense Corps (See Cuban Civil Defense Corps)
 Civil Guard, 81
 Civilian Revolutionary Front, 268
 Cleaver, Eldridge, 373
 Cleveland, Ohio, 426
 CMO (Radio and television),
 CNLF, 409
 Cochrane, Admiral, 44
 Código Penal y Ley de Procedimiento Militar, 160
 Coello, Lt. Carlos, 375, 376
 Cojimar, 24, 25, 276
 Colegio Baldor, 276
 Colegio de Belén (see Belén, Colegio de)
 Coliseo, 14, 83
 Collazo, Gen. Enrique, 91
 Collazo, Lt. 157

Colomb-Bechar, 363
 Colombia, 6, 48, 60, 192, 211, 268, 348, 352, 353, 391, 444-446
 Colombian Army, 353
 Colombian Communist Party, 374, 445
 Colomé Ibarra, Gen. Abelardo, 8, 18, 238, 239, 403, 458, 505, 506, 509
 Colón, 83
 Colón, Cristobal (See Columbus, Christopher)
 Coloradas Beach, 219
 Colorao, El (See León Lemus, Orlando)
 Columbia, Camp, 15, 121, 128, 129, 148, 207, 209, 210, 215, 257, 263, 264, 276, 304
 Columbia Military Hospital, 185
 Columbus, Christopher, 2, 20
 Comando Armado del Pueblo (CAP), 394
 Comballo, Miguel, 144, 145
 COMEDON, 309, 316
 Comesañas, Col. Roberto, 228
 COMINTERN, 144
 Comités de Defensa de la Revolución (See Committees for the Defense of the Revolution)
 Commandore (ship), 63
 Commission for the Liberation of Sao Tome and Principe (CLC), 384
 Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR's), 271-274, 310
 Communist International, 144, 146
 Comodore (ship), 86
 Comofort, Pres. Ignacio, 12
 Conakry (Guinea), 396, 397, 427
 Concepción (Chile), 444
 Confederacao dos Trabalhadores na Industria (Brazil), 360
 Confederación de Trabajadores de Cuba (CTC), 164, 182, 199, 236, 269
 Congo, 365-369, 415
 Congo-Brazzaville (Peoples' Republic of), 364, 365, 367-369, 399, 401, 414
 Congo, Republic of, 365, 367, 368, 399
 Congolese Armed Forces, 367
 Congolese National Liberation Front (CNLF), 408
 Conjunto Nacional Democrático, 164
 Conjunto Nacional revolucionario, 159
 Conjunto Revolucionario Cubano, 149
 Connecticut, 97
 Conservative Party (Cuban), 120, 128
 Conservatives (Spanish), 54, 55
 Consolación del Sur, 87
 Conspiración de la Cadena Triangular y Soles de la Libertad, 49
 Conspiración de la Escalera, 49
 Constanza (Dominican Republic), 348
 Constitution of 1812 (Spanish), 48
 Constitution of 1901 (See Cuban Constitution of 1901)
 Constitution of 1940 (See Cuban Constitution of 1940)
 Constitution of 1976 (See Cuban Constitution of 1976)
 Consuegra Valdés, Col. 200
 Conte, Col. Lasana 427
 Continental Army (See U.S. Continental Army)
 Contreras, Lt. Isidoro, 229
 Convention Popular Party, 364
 Coral Island (Cuban ship), 401
 Corinthia (yatch), 222
 Corneliszoon, Cornelio, 23
 Cornwallis, Gen., 34, 35, 82
 Correa Morales, Lt. Armando, 185
 Corsica, 38
 Corso Aguirre, Major, 233
 Cortés, Hernán, 20, 21, 41
 Cortina, José A., 70
 Corvalán, Luis, 374
 Cossio Soto, Lt. Rolando, 229
 Costa Chávez, Jaime, 220
 Costa Rica, 54, 75, 76, 190, 280, 350
 Costales Ferrer, Lt. Edmundo, 229
 Covadonga Sugar Mill, 278, 281
 Cowley Ballegos, Col. Fernán, 222, 258
 Creek Indians, 44
 Creft, Jacqueline, 441
 Cremata, Congressman, 192
 Creoles (See Criollos)
 Crespo, Maj. Luis, 220, 222, 238
 Crespo Fernández, Gen. Manuel, 512
 Criollos (See Creoles)
 Crittenden, Col. William, 52
 Crowder, Gen. Enoch H., 133, 143-145
 Cruces (town), 121
 Cruz Bouzarc, Gen. Francisco, 459, 513
 Cruz Enriquez, Col. Roberto, 470
 CS-13, 172
 CTC (see Confederación de Trabajadores de Cuba)
 Cuan, Capt. Juan, 60
 Cuando-Cubango (Angola), 421
 Cuba (Cuban Navy ship), 117, 121, 141, 157, 158, 210
 Cuban Air Force (See Appendix III, p. 475), 133, 138, 140, 214, 219, 223, 231, 233, 238, 267, 276-279, 282, 283, 300, 302, 305, 306, 375, 395
 Cubana de Aviación, 363
 Cuban-African relations, 405
 Cuban American National Foundation, 6, 281

Cuban Armed Forces, 13, 16, 104, 113, 148-151, 209, 210, 216, 217, 220-224, 226, 227, 230-235, 238, 239, 240, 249-251, 253-260, 263, 265, 266, 267, 269, 274, 277, 285, 287, 289, 293, 297-302, 307, 390, 396, 407
 Cuban Army (See Appendix II, p. 464), 47, 48, 58, 59, 61, 63, 66, 86, 94, 95, 116, 137, 146, 219-223, 226-228, 232-234, 238-240, 249, 257, 249, 261, 263, 266, 267, 269, 270, 272, 276, 275, 279, 281, 293, 299, 300, 302, 303, 305,
 Directorate of
 Inspection (6-5), 230
 Directorate of
 Intelligence (6-2), 230
 Directorate of
 Logistics (6-4), 230
 Directorate of
 Operations (6-3), 230
 Directorate of
 Personnel (6-1), 230
 Joint Chiefs of Staff
 230, 231
 Cuban Army Air Corps, 152, 157
 Cuban Army (Signal Corps), 138, 209
 Cuban Army Engineering Corps, 138, 209
 Cuban Army of Independence (See chapters V and VI), 47, 100, 119, 131, 349
 Cuban Artillery Corps 96, 105, 107, 116, 152, 249
 Cuban Bank for Agricultural and Industrial Development, 197
 Cuban Bar Association (Colegio de Abogados), 268
 Cuban Chinese (See Chinese), 60
 Cuban Civil Defense Corps, 366
 Cuban Clandestine Services, 378
 Cuban Congress, 104, 105, 109-111, 113, 120, 129, 132, 138, 142, 147, 203, 208, 215
 Cuban Communists, 7, 13, 142, 143, 144, 146, 222, 224, 255
 Cuban Communist Party (PCC), 6, 134, 143-146, 149, 166, 181, 182, 184, 193, 199, 203, 204, 219, 220, 225, 233, 236, 286, 289, 302, 305, 372, 401, 403, 433, 442, 443
 Cuban Communist Party (Central Committee), 220, 281, 282, 305, 377, 400
 Cuban Communist Party,
 First Congress, 305, 307
 Cuban Communist Party,
 Second Congress, 308
 Cuban Communist Party,
 Third Congress, 5, 403
 Cuban Communist Party
 (Politburo), 212, 219, 220, 225, 233, 282
 Cuban Communist Youth League, 306, 377
 Cuban communities, 218
 Cuban Constitution (Guaimaro-1869), 67
 Cuban Constitution (1895), 77
 Cuban Constitution (1901), 97, 98, 141
 Cuban Constitution (1940), 208
 Cuban Constitution (1976), 307
 Cuban Constitutional Assembly, 197
 Cuban Constitutional Convention (1901), 97-99, 116
 Cuban Constitutional Convention (1940) 164, 174
 Cuban flag (design) 51
 Cuban 4th Army Corps, 137
 Cuban Foreign Service, 142
 Cuban Independence, 54, 86, 90, 91, 98, 181
 Cuban Intelligence, 143, 144
 Cuban Government, 144, 146, 213, 214, 234, 236, 254, 255, 263, 264, 266, 268, 270, 272-276, 280, 282-285, 286, 290-292, 295, 297, 300, 309-311, 313, 314, 316,
 Cuban "Guardia Urbana," 94
 Cuban Intelligence Organizations (See MININT), 310, 311-314
 Cuban Military Hospital, 231
 Cuban Military Intelligence (6-2), 227
 Cuban Military (Organization in 1952), 209, 213
 Cuban Military Police, 258
 Cuban Military Schools, 138, 227, 228
 Cuban Militia, 138
 Cuban Ministry of Education 197
 Cuban Ministry of Foreign Relations (MINREX), 310
 Cuban National Bank, 197
 Cuban Municipal Police, 94
 Cuban National Police, 141, 187, 197, 209, 210, 231, 249, 258
 Cuban Naval Academy, 140
 Cuban Naval Aviation, 170
 Cuban Naval Intelligence, 226-228
 Cuban Navy, 6, 15, 47, 63, 86, 117, 133, 156, 172, 188-190, 209, 220, 221, 223, 228, 266, 267, 293, 300, 302, 305
 Cuban Police (See Cuban National Police)
 Cuban Police (Policia del Ministerio de Salubridad), 185
 Cuban Presidential Palace, 116, 148, 181, 187, 207, 208, 224, 225, 233, 264, 390
 Cuban Rural Guard, 95, 96, 105-107, 112, 116, 129, 131, 138, 140, 148, 154, 158, 163, 220, 221, 223, 249
 Cuban Secret Police, 113, 124, 131, 141
 Cuban Secretariat of Government, 141
 Cuban Secretariat of Interior, 143

Cuban-Soviet Commission on Economic Scientific and Technical Collaboration, 295, 309
Cuban Telephone Company, 286
Cuban War of Independence, 5, 10, 52, 58, 60, 75, 76, 78, 79, 82, 95, 98, 106, 113, 116, 117, 119, 120, 123, 128, 131, 133, 134, 137, 139, 142, 147, 149, 153, 156, 179, 221, 232, 249, 258, 273, 287, 300
Cuban Revolutionary Air Force (DAAFAR), See Cuban Air Force
Cuban Rural Guard, 65
Cubanidad Auténtica, 202
Cubela, Maj. Rolando, 238, 302
Cuerpo de Voluntarios del Comercio de La Habana, 63
Cuervo Castillo, Capt. Teobaldo (M.D.), 229
Cuervo Rubio, Gustavo, 153, 193
Cuevas Rivero, Congressman, 193
Cuito-Cuanavale (Angola), 422
Curti, Santiago (Minister of Defense), 200
Curti, Segundo (Minister of the Interior), 208, 215
Curtiss-Kinfisher (airplanes), 170
Curtis-Seaguls (airplanes), 170
Cuza Tellez-Girón, Adm. José L., 18, 488, 518
Czechoslovakia, 292, 312, 396

DAAFAR (See Appendix III, p. 475 and Cuban Air Force), 303, 304
Deftian (Davian, Davtian), Jacques President of the Bureau of the COMINTERN and Counselor of Embassy of the Soviet Union in Paris, 144, 146
Daiquirí, 91
da Silva Quadros, Janio, 360
Dala, 421
Bahomey, Republic of (see also Benin), 428
Daiquirí Beach, 91
Daniz, Lt. Luis, 40
Dar es-Salaam, 370
Dash-E-Kavir Desert, 316
Dauntless (ship), 86, 87
Davis, Angela, 373
Day, Col. George E., 380
de Arango y Parreño, Francisco, 54
de Armas, Rodolfo, 162-163
de Armenteros, Isidoro, 52
de Borchgrave, Arnold, 446
Debray, Régis, 358, 378, 385
de Cárdenas, Gen. Rafael, 105
de Céspedes, Carlos Manuel, 10, 58, 61, 68-69, 83-84, 98, 152
de Céspedes y Quesada, Col. Carlos Manuel, 149
de Condorcet, Marquis (See Caritat, Antoine), 41

de Córdova Hernández, Francisco, 21
de Gaulle, President, 362
de Goicuria, Gen. Domingo, 54
de Grasse, Admiral (Count), 34
de Grijalva, Juan, 20, 21
de Jáuregui, Andrés, 41
de la Concepción Valdés, Gabriel, 54
de la Concepción, Lt. Octavio (El Moro), 376
de la Fuente, Col. José, 208
de la Guardia, Pres. Adolfo (Panama), 348
de la Luz Silveira, Román, 42
de la Peña, 148
de la Puente Uceda, Luis, 355, 356
de la Rocque, Jean Francois, 21
de la Vega, Gen. Javier, 85, 89
de las Casas, Father Bartolomé, 20
Delatando (Angola), 401
de la Torre, Lt. Lutgardo, 123
de la Torre, Oscar, 153
de la Torriente, General Cosme, 122
de la Torriente Brau, Pablo, 163
de la Vega, Gen. Javier, 122
del Blanco, Col. Humberto, 463
del Castillo, General Loynas, 142
de León, Minister of Defense Rubén, 202, 208
Delgado, Col. Erasmo, 148
Delgado Morgado, Lt. Col. Dagoberto, 469
de los Santos, René, 238
del Pino Díaz, Gen. Rafael, 478
del Rio Chaviano, Gen. Alberto, 231, 258
del Rio Guerra, Col. Ciro, 471
del Monte, Domingo, 54
de Luján, Cap. Gen. Gabriel, 22
del Valle, Alejandro, 275, 280
del Valle, Sergio, 504, 514
de Miranda, Francisco, 34
Democratic Alliance for National Reunification, 426
Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), 434
Democratic/Liberal Coalition, 193
Democratic Revolutionary Front, 411
de Narvaez, Pánfilo, 21
Denis Díaz, Brig. Gen. Luis Felipe, 462
Denis Frías, Gen. Luis Felipe, 513
de Orgaz, Diego, 20
de Quesada Sosa, Maj. Gen. Aristides, 230
de Quesada y Loynaz, Manuel, 12, 59, 66
de Rivera, Gen. Primo (Spain), 133
de Rosas, Juan Manuel, 51
de Someruelos, Marqui (Governor), 45
de Sores, Jacques, 21, 22
de Soto, Hernando, 21
Despaigne, General Alfredo, 122

Despaine, Lt., 226
 de Tejada, Juan, 22
 de Uriarte, Don Francisco, 26
 de Varona, Manuel Antonio, 228, 260
 de Velasco, Capt. Luis, 25
 de Velasco, Raúl, 260
 de Zédegui, Guillermo, 160
 DGI (See Cuban Intelligence and Cuban Ministry
 of the Interior, Appendix I), 310
 Díaz, Capt. Juan, 60
 Díaz, Major Oscar, 165
 Díaz Argüelles, Col. Julio, 166, 172, 173
 Díaz Baldoquín, Lt. Col. Antonio, 186, 197, 198
 Díaz del Castillo, Bernal, 20
 Díaz González, Julito, 219
 Díaz González, Col. Ricardo, 478
 Díaz Lanz, Maj. Pedro, 238, 269, 476
 Díaz Larrañaga, Carlos Andrés, 443
 Díaz Molina, Gen. Pedro, 84, 89
 Díaz Ortega, Col. Haydee, 461
 Díaz Rodríguez, Ship Capt. Leonardo, 488
 Díaz Tamayo, Maj. Gen. Martín, 231
 Díaz Torres, Raúl, 220
 Dieguez Lamaya, Jesús, 185
 Díez Argüelles, Commodore Julio, 173
 Díez Rodríguez, Cpl. F., 183
 Directorio General de Investigaciones (DGI),
 (See also MININT), 6
 Directorio Revolucionario Estudiantil, 149,
 153-155, 197, 224, 233
 District of Columbia Government, 280
 Djibouti, 406
 Domingo Hércules, José (See Hércules, José
 Domingo)
 Domínguez, Jorge, 295
 Dominica, 442
 Dominican Air Force, 214
 Dominican Armed Forces, 213, 349
 Dominican Army, 58
 Dominican Government, 213, 214
 Dominican Republic, 16, 18, 58, 59, 75, 76, 79,
 98, 187-190, 208, 211, 213, 214, 217, 219, 235,
 264, 348-352
 Dominican Revolutionaries, 213
 Dongollo, 408
 Donné, Bino, 220
 Dorticós Torrado, Pres. Osvaldo, 11, 269
 Dos Rios, 77
 Dos Santos, José Eduardo, 405
 Drake, Francis, 23
 Dragones (Army barracks), 15, 157
 Driggs, Capt. de Corbeta Guillermo, 229
 Drug Enforcement Administration (See U.S. Drug
 Enforcement Administration)

Duarte, José, 238
 Ducasse, General Juan E., 122
 Dulce, Gen. Domingo, 48
 Dulles, Allen (CIA), 282
 Dumont, René, 297
 Duncan Town, 437
 Duque, Evelio, 272
 Duque, Maj. Felix, 281
 Dutch, 21, 23

 Eastern Airlines, 281
 Eastern Europe, 271, 302, 304, 305, 309
 East Germany, 273, 361, 403, 414
 Echagüe, Gen., 84, 87
 Echeverría, Corp. Angel, 151
 Echeverría, José Antonio, 225, 260
 Echeverría, Pres. Luis (Mexico), 384, 393
 Ecuador, 203, 356
 Edgar Stewart (Ship), 63
 EGP (See Ejército Guerrillero de los Pobres)
 Egypt, 38, 398, 426, 434
 Eisenhower, President D.D., 273
 Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN)
 (Bolivian), 356, 357
 Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN)
 (Colombia)
 Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) (Peru),
 353, 356, 357
 Ejército Guerrillero de los Pobres (EGP), 355
 Ejército Guerrillero del Pueblo
 (EGP) (Argentina), 358
 Ejército Juvenil del Trabajo (See Youth Labor
 Army-EJT)
 Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo (ERP), 354,
 385
 Elba, 42
 El Caney, 14, 92
 El Cano, 84
 El Colorado (El Colorado) (See León Lemus,
 Orlando)
 El Gabriel, 84
 El Galope, 65
 El Guaro, 87
 El Hombrito, 223
 Elisabethville, 368
 El Mambí (Cuban tune), 139
 ELN (See Ejército de Liberación Nacional -
 Bolivia, Colombia and Peru)
 El Patojo (See Julio Roberto Cáceres Valle),
 354
 El Rubio, 87
 El Salvador, 12, 315, 385, 387, 393, 411, 412,
 443, 444
 El Tiempo (newspaper), 184

El Uvero (battle), 219, 222
 El Viso Fort, 14, 92
 El Zanjón (treaty), 70
 Enna, Gen. Manuel, 52
 Enrique Villuendas (ship), 117, 141
 Enriquez, E., 183, 192
 EPLF, 408
 Equatorial Guinea (Formerly Rio Muni), 365,
 370, 374, 383, 415, 426
 Eritrea, 408
 Eritrean Liberation Front, 407
 Eritrean People's Liberation Front, 407
 Eritreans, 407, 408
 Escalante, Antibal, 289
 Escalante Font, Gen. Fabio, 513
 Escalona, Derrainio, 238
 Escalona, Israel, 217
 Escalona, Dr. Mario, 513
 Escalona Roguera, Gen. Juan, 513
 Escambray Mountains, 17, 225, 232, 233, 239,
 271, 272, 274, 285, 350
 Escudero González, Ship. Capt. Generoso, 488
 Escuela Militar de Pilotos de Aviación, 304
 Escuela Militar Superior (Mexico), 250
 Espartero, Gen. Baldomero 48
 Espín, Vilma, 226
 Espino Rodríguez, Capt. Santiago, 133, 134
 Espinosa Martín, Gen. Ramón, 469, 506
 Espiritu Santo, 377
 Esponda, Gen., 67
 Estevez Maymir, Sergeant Juan, 151
 Estenoz, Evaristo, 113, 114, 119, 120, 123
 Estrada Palma, Pres. Thomas, 69, 86, 91, 98-
 100, 104-109, 111, 112, 114, 116-118, 159, 256,
 496
 Estrada Palma, 223
 Ethiopia, 13, 16, 18, 212, 299, 306, 315, 346,
 386, 405-408, 414, 415, 417, 418, 439
 Ethiopian Government, 406-408
 Ethiopian Military, 306
 Ethiopian War, 309, 416
 Europe, 18, 20, 21, 22, 24, 27, 53, 54, 62,
 140, 164, 173, 250, 359, 441

 Facists, 6, 164, 171, 173, 260
 Faget, Major Mariano, 171, 185, 226
 Fajardo, Manuel, 238
 Fajardo Boheras, Pedro, 163
 FALA (Armed Forces for the Liberation of
 Angola, see UNITA), 420
 Falcón Mountains (Venezuela), 353
 Farabundo Martí Popular Liberation Front (FPL),
 412, 443
 Faranah (Guinea), 397

 FARC (see Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de
 Colombia)
 FARG (See Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de
 Guatemala)
 Fattah, Abdul, 398, 409
 Fayad, Alvaro, 445
 FBI (see U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation)
 FCC (Federal Communications Commission), 275
 Federación Estudiantil Universitaria (FEU),
 191, 192
 Fera, Armentino, 163
 Fernández, Capt. Alberto (Pacho), 376
 Fernández, Celestino, 13
 Fernández, Eufemio, 6, 163, 183, 189, 201, 216
 Fernández, Maj. José (El Gallego), 281
 Fernández, Julio César, 160
 Fernández, Maj. Rigoberto, 128, 129
 Fernández Alvarez, José R., 281
 Fernández Casals, Sergeant, 192
 Fernández-Cavada, Gen.
 Frederic, 13, 59, 66
 Fernández-Cavada, Gen. Adolfo, 13, 59
 Fernández Cosa, Col., 215
 Fernández de Castro, José A., 134
 Fernández Crespo, Gen. Manuel, 513
 Fernández Falcón, Gen. Manuel, 513
 Fernández García, Lt. Orlando, 229
 Fernández Gondín, Gen. Carlos, 507
 Fernández Goyeneche, Frig. Capt. Sabino, 488
 Fernández Miranda, Martha, 208
 Fernández Pérez, Gen. Julio, 513
 Fernández Rey, Col. José, 229, 230
 Fernández Rodríguez, Lt. Angel (Vitico), 215
 Fernández Velasco, 228
 Fernando VII (Spain), 40-42, 50
 Ferer Castillo, Capt. Eduardo, 229
 Fera, Gen. Luis, 82
 Ferrero, Capt. Manuel, 221, 222
 Ferrara, Oreste, 106, 149
 Ferrer, Dr. Horacio, 155
 Ferrer, Ramón, 275
 Ferrer, Raymundo, 156
 Ferrer Martínez, Gen. Harold, 513
 Fifth Military District (Havana), 231
 Figueredo Rosales, Col. Carlos, 463
 Figueres, José, 190
 Finlay, Dr. Carlos 97
 First Military District (Oriente), 231
 Flamingo (Bahamian vessel), 437
 FLEC (See Front for the Liberation of the
 Cabinda Enclave)
 Fleitas Ramirez, Gen. Gustavo, 470, 513
 Fleites, Armando, 502

FLFM (See Farabundo Martí Popular Liberation Front)
FLN, 391
Flores Nagón, Jesús, 142, 143
Flores Nagón, Enrique, 142, 143
Florida, 3, 21, 23, 25, 33, 44, 45, 86, 162, 202, 254, 274, 437
FMPL (See Farabundo Martí Popular Liberation Front)
FNLA (See National Front for the Liberation of Angola)
Foltz, Capt., 131
Fomento, 239
Fonseca Azaor, Carlos, 353, 411
Ford, President G., 312
Fordham, British Ambassador A.S., 235
Fort Belvoir, 254
Fort Benning, 254
Fort Bliss Texas, 168
Fouché, 38
Fourth Military District (Matanzas), 231
Foyet, Captain, 171
Foxtrot Class submarines, 416
France, 12, 25, 33, 35, 36, 38-43, 49, 51, 224, 259, 362, 363, 367, 409
Franca, Porfirio, 153
Franco, Gen. Francisco, 133, 134, 161-162, 374, 432
Franco Villanueva, Gen. Arsenio, 463, 514
Franqui, Carlos, 227, 510
FRAP (See Fuerza Revolucionaria Armada del Pueblo)
Frau Marsal, Lorenzo, 160
Fredericksburg, 59
Fremansorry, 35
FRELIMO (See Mozambique Liberation Front)
French, 6, 12, 21, 23, 33-36, 39-45, 46, 59, 60, 68, 92, 362, 383, 420, 426, 427, 428
French Allied Forces, 34
French Army, 38, 39, 41, 51
French colonial troops, 397
French Cross of Honor, 12, 41
French Equatorial Guinea (Africa), 365
French Foreign Legion, 409
French Government, 224
French Intelligence, 284
French Military Academy, 38
French Revolution (Chapter II), 33, 35, 36, 38, 39, 41
French Union, 365
Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN), 353
Frente Urbano Zapatista (FUZ), 394
Frey, President Eduardo (Chile), 388

Freyre de Andrade, Congressman, 120, 124, 147
Frias, Angel, 518
Frias, Ciro, 239, 508
FR06-4, 472
Frondizi, President Arturo (Argentina), 358
Front de Libération Nationale (FUN), 362
Front for the Liberation of the Cabinda Enclave (FLEC), 403, 404
Fuentes, Justo (FEU), 192, 201
Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional (FALN) (Venezuela), 352
Fuerzas Armadas Rebeldes (FAR) (Guatemala), 355
Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias (FAR), 354, 355, 385, 394
Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Guatemala (FARG), 394
Fuerza Revolucionaria Armada del Pueblo (FRAP), 392, 394
FUZ (See Frente Urbano Zapatista)
Gabon (Africa), 365, 383, 428, 429
Gairy, P.M. Eric, 315, 440
Gaitán, Jorge Eliécer (Colombia), 192
Galán Vázquez, Gilberto, 163
Galano Coutín, Col. Adriano, 95
Galcón, 87
Galíndez, Gen. Ignacio, 174
Galvan, Lucio (Eustaquio) (Bolivia), 357
Galvanic (Ship), 63
Galvez, Gov. Bernardo, 33
Galvez Rodríguez, Gen. William, 238, 513
Galvis, Gen. William, 222
gangsters (gansterism) 6, 215
García, Lt. Col. Bernardo 164-166
García, Gen. Calixto, 67, 71, 84, 86, 88, 91-94, 97
García, Calixto (Vice-President of the Cuban-Soviet Friendship Society), 238
García, Gen. Eduardo, 85
García, Enrico, 144, 145
García, Brigadier Pilar, 226, 227,
García, Gen. Vicente, 67
García Baez, Lt. Col. Irenaldo (SIM), 226, 227
García Bárcena, Rafael, 153, 226
García Buchaca, Edith, 225
García Fernández, Gen. Rigoberto, 233, 239, 459, 507
García Frías, Gen. Lorenzo, 514
García Menocal, Gen. Mario, 120, 122, 128-132, 137, 147
García Montes, Jorge, 142, 143
García Peláez, Gen. Pedro M., 459, 507
García Pérez, Pres. Alan (Peru), 391
García Rivero, Col. Raul, 462

García Vélez, Gen., 111, 134
 Garesche, J., 59
 Garibaldi, Giuseppe, 51
 Gastón Bernal, Capt.
 Gaunard, Julio E., 153
 Gavro, 234
 "General Alejandro Rodríguez" Infantry
 Division, 231
 George B. Upton (ship), 63
 Germany, 6, 51, 117, 132, 161, 164, 166, 170-
 173, 180, 359, 423, 426
 German Army, 224
 German Embassy in Cuba, 171
 German forces, 224
 German spies, 171, 185
 German submarines (U-Boats), 3, 132
 Guerrero Ramos, Lt. Col. Elio, 470
 Gettysburg, 59
 Ghana (Africa), 364, 383
 Ghani, Major Abdul, 410
 Ghinda, 408
 Gibara, 148
 Giberga, Eliseo, 70
 Giraldo, Felipe, 12, 23
 Girón, Gilberto, 22
 Godínez Gómez, Elisa, 208
 Godoy, Prime Minister Gastón, 237
 Manuel (Spain), 39
 Goicuria (Army barracks), 216
 Golan Heights (Israel/Siria), 363
 Bolomón, Salvador, 22, 23, 27
 Gómez, Gen. Abelardo, 174, 184
 Gómez Calzadilla, Jesús, 220
 Gómez, César, 220
 Gómez, Lt. Col. Eligio, 463
 Gómez, Gen. José Miguel, 88, 93, 106, 107, 111,
 114, 116, 117, 119, 120, 122-124, 128, 129,
 133, 137, 140, 161, 485, 496
 Gómez, Juan Bualberto, 106, 111, 113
 Gómez, Leonel, 192
 Gómez, Miguel Mariano, 160
 Gómez, Gen. Máximo, 8, 58, 59, 67, 68, 71, 76,
 77, 80-82, 85-91, 94, 97-100, 106,
 349, 439
 Gómez, Lt. Ricardo, 152
 Gómez-Bujones, José Antonio (Pape Antonio), 25,
 27
 Gómez Casas, Lt. Col., 165-166
 Gómez de Avellaneda, Gertrudis, 54
 Gómez Ochoa, Maj. Delio, 238, 349
 Gómez Raveló, Pedro, 228
 Gómez Sucre, Maj. Clemente, 263
 González, Ambrosio José, 59
 González, Adm. Andrés, 263
 González, Lt. Col. Angel A., 164-165
 González, Edward, 295
 González, Ignacio, 187
 González, Laudelino, 153
 González, Lora (Bolivia), 372
 González, Ruiz (Bolivia), 372
 González Armas, Sergeant Felipe, 186
 González Boet, Carlos, 64
 González Egna, Roberto, 446
 González Lanuza, Andrés, 163
 González Lines, Capt. de Corbeta Andrés, 229
 González Luna, Gen. José A., 93
 González Ortega, Gen. Jesús, 59
 González Pérez, Senator Antonio, 119
 Gordon Osorio, Capt. Antonio, 229
 Gorgas, Maj., 97
 Goulart, Joao (Brazil), 360
 Graham, Gen. Charles K., 59
 Grajales, Mariana, 79
 Grammont, Francis, 23
 Gran Legión del Aquila Negra, 49
 Grandales Nolasco, Capt. Sergio Erico, 443
 Granaa (yatch), 219, 220, 236, 264, 334
 Granaa (newspaper), 389
 Grant, Gen. U., 59
 Grau San Martín, Pres. Ramón, 8, 15, 153-164,
 174, 179-188, 190, 193, 198, 204, 205, 216,
 237, 257
 Grau Viñas, Francisco, 179
 Gray, Made, 282
 Great Britain, 24, 33, 35, 39, 43, 44, 49, 134,
 235, 370, 394, 440
 Green Beret Instructors, 356
 Grenada, 8, 11, 17, 347, 386, 411, 413, 414,
 418, 440-443
 Grimberg, Yoska, 142
 Groznyko, Andrei, 173
 GRU (Soviet Military Intelligence), 273
 Gruman hydroplanes, 170
 Grupo de Trinidad, 49
 Grupos de Acción (See also gangsters), 200,
 215, 227
 Gua 84
 Guadalajara, 392
 Guama, (Cuban Indian Chief), 20, 27
 Guaimaro, 67, 68
 Guanabacoa, 25
 Guara, 84
 Guarani, 376
 Guantanamo, 24, 35, 94, 121, 128, 134, 172,
 180, 239
 Guardia Font, Antonio, 515
 Guardia Font, Gen. Patricio, 514
 Guardiola, Pres. Santos (Honduras), 98

Guatemala, 16, 187, 190, 218, 274, 276, 315,
 348, 353, 354, 385, 443, 444
 Guayabal, 84
 Guayaquil, Ecuador, 390
 Guayos, 239
 Guellar, Lydia, 372
 Guelta Lemaur 432
 Guerra, Gen. Angel, 84
 Guerra, Gen. Faustino "Pino," 111, 112, 116
 Guerra González, Lt. Col. Orlando, 462
 Guerra de Exterminio, 64
 Guerrero, Mexico, 393, 394
 Guerrero Ramos, Lt. Col. Elio, 471
 "Guerrilla" (Cubans fighting on the side of
 Spain), 63, 64, 87, 89, 90
 guerrilla army (fighting against Batista), 220-
 225, 232
 "Guerrilleros" (Cubans fighting on the side of
 Spain), 61, 64, 81, 84, 90
 Guerrilla Army of the Poor (ESP) (Guatemala),
 335, 444
 guerrilla war, 94, 155, 189, 424, 429, 430
 Guevara, Alfredo (FEU), 191
 Guevara, Maj. Ernesto "Che," 17, 60, 98, 218,
 219, 221, 223, 232, 233, 238, 264, 269, 272,
 273, 290-292, 295, 297, 299, 345, 353, 354,
 356-358, 360-362, 364, 367, 368, 370, 372, 374,
 376-379, 385, 386, 388, 392, 495, 503, 504,
 511, 518
 Guevara, Moisés (Bolivia), 377
 Guggenheim, Ambassador, 148
 Guia de Consejos de Guerra y de Procedimiento,
 157
 Guillén, Abrahán, 385
 Guillén Celaya, Alfonso, 220
 Guillot, Jaime, 446
 Guin, Ramón, 502
 Guinea, 362, 364, 369, 386, 396, 397, 405, 414,
 415
 Guinea-Bissau, 368, 369, 383, 386, 396, 401,
 405, 414, 425-428
 Guipúzcoa, 50
 Güira de Melena, 84
 Guiteras, Antonio, 154-156, 159
 Guiteras Gener, Calixto (father of Antonio),
 155
 Gulf of Guinea, 370, 427
 Gulf of Mexico, 21, 280
 Burvich, Jacobo, 142
 Gutiérrez, Félix, 238
 Gutiérrez Bello, Gen. Marco Antonio, 462, 515
 Gutiérrez Menoyo, Carlos, 224
 Gutiérrez Menoyo, Maj. Eloy, 187, 233, 238, 260
 Gutiérrez y Velázquez, Lt. Col., 165
 Guyana, 383, 414
 Guzmán, Eduardo, 111
 Guzmán Reynoso, Abimael, 357
 Habana (Havana), 3, 11, 14, 15, 21-26, 34, 35,
 44, 48, 51, 52, 60, 67, 81, 78, 84-87, 90, 94,
 95, 105-108, 117, 120, 122, 124, 128, 129, 131,
 134, 138, 140, 141, 142, 144, 145, 153, 154,
 157, 158, 167, 169, 170, 171, 173, 174, 179,
 181, 184, 187, 190, 191, 198, 222, 225, 226,
 228, 230, 232, 233, 235, 239, 240, 256, 258,
 263-266, 270, 271, 276, 280, 283, 290, 304,
 312, 315, 345, 348, 349, 354, 361, 371, 372,
 385, 393, 394, 397, 408, 411, 424, 431, 433,
 434
 Habana (Cuban Navy ship), 141
 Habash, George (Palestine), 398, 433
 Haile Miriam, Mengistu (See also Mengistu),
 406-408
 Haiti, 3, 34-36, 79, 129, 132, 140, 214
 Haitian Embassy in Havana, 217
 Haitian War of Independence, 33, 35
 Hamburg Gestapo Spy School, 170
 Hancock, General, 59
 Harare, 431
 Harvard University, 295,
 Harvard Medical School, 281
 Hassan, King (Morocco), 363, 432, 433
 Hatuey (Cuban Indian leader), 20, 27, 54
 "Hatuey" (Cuban Navy ship), 117
 Havana (See Habana).
 Havana (ship), 128
 Havana shipyards, 117
 Hawatmeth Nayef 434
 Haya de la Torre, Victor Raul (Peru), 356
 Haynes, Col. William Scott, 52, 54
 Hebraic Cultural Union, 143
 Hein, Pitt, 23
 Helms, Richard (CIA), 378
 Hemingway, Ernest, 189
 Herald of Nassau (ship), 63
 Heraud, Javier, 356
 Hércules, José Domingo, 12, 41,
 Heredia, Lt., 226
 Heredia y Heredia, José María, 54
 Heredia, General (Chief of Staff, Dominican
 Armed Forces), 213
 Hero, Dr. Robert, 281
 Hernández, Col. Candido, 229
 Hernández, Corv. Capt. Carlos, 488
 Hernández, Gen. Eusebio, 120
 Hernández, Col. Hernando (Chief of Police), 226
 Hernández, Capt. Manuel, 376
 Hernández, Sergeant Miguel A., 169

Hernández Fernández, Frig. Capt. Julio, 487
 Hernández Murtado, Gen. Justo de Medina, 463, 516
 Hernández Menéndez, Col. Juan D., 478
 Hernández Nardo, Col. Enrique, 186
 Hernández Suárez, Col. R., 469
 "Hero of the Republic of Cuba" (medal), 8
 Herrera, Gen. Alberto, 148, 149
 Herrera, Benito, 186
 Herrera, Commander Henry F., (U.S.N.), 13
 Hevia, Col. Aurelio, 148
 Hevia, Carlos, 148, 153, 159
 Hidalgo de Cisneros, Rear Admiral, 26
 Hilton, John S. (CIA-Bolivia), 378
 Hitler, 359
 Holguín, 95, 121, 209, 212, 222
 Hollywood, California, 191
 Holmes, Theresa (mother of Antonio Guiteras), 155
 Homeini, Ayatollah, 315
 Honduran Revolutionaries, 411
 Honduras, 55, 98, 170, 385, 387, 411, 443, 444
 Hooker, Gen., 59
 Hoover, J. Edgar (FBI), 145, 171
 Horn of Africa, 408
 Hornet (ship), 63
 Horsa (ship), 86
 Horseshoe Bend, 44
 Hossler, Admiral, 24
 Hotel Nacional (Havana), 155, 156, 257
 Hotel Plaza (See Plaza Hotel, New York)
 Howland, Harold, 110
 Hoyo Colorado, 84
 Huamanga (Peru), 357, 391
 Huambo, 421
 Human Rights International League, 405
 Humberto Rodríguez (ship), 117
 Hungary, 365, 396
 Hussein Al-Ghashmi, Major Ahmed, 410

 II-14, 482
 II-18, 482
 II-62, 401, 403, 482
 IL-76, 482, 416
 Ibonet, Pedro, 113, 123, 147
 ICAP (See Instituto Cubano de Amistad con los Pueblos)
 Ichaso, Francisco, 147
 Iglesias, Carlos, 238
 Imoedimenta, 80
 Inclán, José, 60
 Independent Black Party (PIC), 119, 120
 Indians, American, 43
 Indochina (See also Vietnam), 49
 Indonesia, 362
 Inquisition, Tribunal of the, 41
 Instituto Cubano de Amistad con los Pueblos (ICAP), 220, 313, 393, 411, 424
 Instituto Técnico Militar, 304
 Institute of Cuban Studies, preface, 313
 Inter-American Defense Board, 227, 254
 Inter-American Peace Committee, 189, 190
 Inter-American Press Association, 217
 Interián Rodríguez, Col. Rubén, 478
 International Monetary Fund (IMF), 360
 International Brigades (Spanish Civil War), 134, 185, 189
 International Socialist Movement, 352
 Intrépido (ship), 117
 Iran, 316
 Iraq, 387, 398
 Irgun (Israel), (Zionist organization), 433
 Irisarri, José M., 153
 Irish, 162
 Irish-Americans, 155
 Isle of Pines (See also Isle of Youth), 23, 170, 227, 263, 278
 Isle of Pines prison, 212
 Isle of Youth (See Isle of Pines), 405
 Israel, 16, 346, 363, 397, 433-435
 Israeli Communist Party, 434
 Italians, 12, 38, 90, 359
 Italy, 38, 161, 166, 219
 Ivory Coast, 364
 Izabal, 354
Izvestia, 388

 Jackson, Gen. Andrew, 44
 Jacksonville, Fla., 191
 Jaquéy Grande, 281
 Jamba, 421
 Jamaica, 3, 23, 44, 132, 383, 394
 Japan, 13, 166, 170, 180, 203, 274, 427
 Jefferson, Thomas, 45
 Jefferson Medical School (Philadelphia), 97
 Jenkin's Ear War, 24
 Jenkins Worth, Gen. William, 50
 Jesuits, 259, 272
 Jews 3, 146, 433
 Jews (Communists), 143
 Jihad, Abu, 398
 Jiménez, Col. Antonio, 149
 Jiménez Castellanos, Gen. Adolfo, 92
 Jiménez Lage, Reiner, 239, 508
 Jiménez Moya, Capt. Enrique, 349
 Jinjume (Cuban gangster), 197
 Johnson, Howard, 515

Joint Body of Civic Institutions, 268
 Jon Sosa, Mario (Guatemala), See Yon Sosa, Mario
 Jordan, Gen. Thomas, 60-62, 66
 José Maceo Interservice School, 304, 471
 Jordan, 433, 434
 Jose Marti (Cuban Navy ship), 303, 349
 Joven Cuba (See also Emilio Tró), 185
 Juárez, Pres. Benito (Mexico), 12, 54, 59
 Juarrero, Capt. Alberto, 229
 JUCEPLAN, 309
 July 26 Movement (See Movimiento 26 de Julio)
 Junco, Col. Gregorio, 470
 Jurado, Tony, 168
 Justiniani, Judge Federico, 202

Kampuchea, 414
 Kanje, 421
 Kankan (Guinea), 397
 Kansas, 168
 Karamessines, Thomas, 378
 Kasavubu, Pres. Joseph (Congo-Zaire), 367
 Katanga (Congo-Zaire), 367
 Katlan (Polish immigrant), 143
 Kawata, Luis (Peru), 357
 Kennedy, President John F., 273, 280, 284
 Kent, General, 91
 Kentucky, 52
 Kenya, 406
 Keppel, Adm. George, 24
 Kerekov, Major Ayhaed, 428, 429
 Key West, 63, 75, 86
 KBB, 273, 374
 Khaddafi, Muammar, 412, 435
 Krushchev, Prime Minister Nikita, 184, 271, 283
 Kigona, 367
 Kimbundu tribe (Angola), 399
 Kindelán Bies, Gen. Rolando, 515
 Kinshasa (formerly Leopoldville), 367, 368
 Kisangani (Stanleyville-Zaire), 368
 Kissidugu (Guinea), 397
 Klein Schiller, Lt. Martin, 229
 Komar Class missile boats, 293, 375
 Koni Class frigates, 416
 Konté, Col. 427
 Korea, 203, 204, 431, 438, 440, 441
 Korean Communists, 203
 Korean Peninsula, 203
 Korean War, 13, 197, 203, 204
 Kosygin, Prime Minister, 372, 389
 Kotscherigine, Col. Nadia, 374
 Kraus, Paul (German Gestapo), 170
 Kronstadt Class corvettes, 489
 Krutskikn, Lt. Gen. Dimitri, 302

Kuando Kubango (Angola), 422
 Kubitschek, President Juscelino (Brazil), 359, 360
 Kuwait, 398
 Kwanza Norte, 421

L-39, 416
 La Banda (Dominican Republic), 351
 La Cabaña, 26, 148, 181, 182, 207, 210, 264, 305
 La Chata (farm owned by Pres. Prio), 197, 207
 La Chorrera, 24
 La Diana, 87
 La Demajaqua, 58
 La Escalera (conspiracy), 49
 La Esperanza, 117
 La Granja, 48
 La Habana (see Habana)
 La Maya, 121-123
 La Otilia (farm), 358
 La Palma, 179
 La Paz, 358
 La Pentarquía, 153
 La Plata (river), 233, 234
 La Plata (Cuban town), 220-222
 La Plata (Cuban ship), 401
 La Porra (Bludgeon Party), 147, 149
 La Punta Castle, 1, 25, 140, 207
 Laborí, 87
 Lachambre, Gen. José, 81
 Lacret, José, 85
 Lago, Roberto, 153
 Lagos Besteiro, Lt. Victoria M., 168
 Lahera, Santiago, 163
 Laine, Francisco Alejandro, 54
 Lalita (schooner), 172
 Lancis, Antonio, 237
 Landeiros, Lt. Col., 186
 Lanny (ship), 63
 Laos, 383, 414
 Lara Miret, General, 122
 Lara Roselló, Gen. Cesar, 233, 515
 Laredo Bró, Col. Federico, 134
 Las Cuevas, 223
 Las Guásimas, 68
 Las Mercedes, 87
 Las Niñas, 358
 Las Taironas (battle), 14
 Lastre Pacheco, Gen. Manuel, 471, 515
 Las Vegas de Jibacoa, 234
 Las Villas, 66, 78, 81-83, 85, 88-91, 121, 128, 137, 188
 Las Guásimas, 68
 Las Villas, 232, 238

Latin America, 9, 13, 16-18, 63, 132, 143, 146, 212, 227, 234, 261, 290, 293, 311, 315, 379
Latin American Congress of University Students (1948), 192
Laurada (ship), 86
Laurent, Emilio, 148, 153
Laurent, Captain Julio, 226, 228
LCA (See Liga de Comunistas Armados)
Lebanon, 387, 398, 431, 434
Lee, Capt. Acón, 60, 239, 514
Lendiris, Nick, 378
Lenin, 385
León González, Capt. Mario, 229
León Lemus, José, 215
León Lemus, Orlando (El Colorado), 184, 186, 192, 197, 198, 201, 215
León León, Maj. Vicente, 263
Leonard, Maj. Ciro, 157-158
Leonhardy, Consul General Terrance E., 392, 393
Leoni, Raul, 352
Leopville, 368
Le Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu, 41
Letelier, Orlando, 281
Ley de Procedimiento en la Jurisdicción de Guerra, 160
Leyva Fuentes, Enio, 515
Lezcano Pérez, Brig. Gen. Carlos, 469, 515
Libby Prison, 59
Liberal Constitution (Spain), 46
Liberal Party (Spain), 54, 70
Liberal Party (Cuba), 90, 106, 107, 111, 114, 116, 118, 120, 128, 129, 133, 164
Liberal Party (Colombia), 192
Liberal Reforms (Spain), 46
Liberia (Africa), 383
Libya, 362, 387, 398, 405, 431, 433, 435, 438, 440
Liga de Comunistas Armados (LCA), 394
Lillian (ship), 63
Lima, Peru, 391
Lima, Turcios (Guatemala), 354
Limonar, 83
Linares, Gen., 14, 92
Lincoln, Pres. Abraham, 162
Llaverías, Ambassador, 214
Llorente León, Gen. Miguel A., 460, 471, 515
Lobatón, Guillermo, 355
Lock-head (airplanes), 170
Lodi (battle), 38
Loma del Toro, 148
Loma Redonda, 87
Lomas de Tapia, 87
López, Gen. Narciso, 49, 50-54

López, René, 514
López Cuba, Gen. Nestor, 439, 460, 469, 471, 515
López de Loyola, Don Inigo, 259
López-Figueroa, Rufo, 260
López Migoya, Col. Manuel, 48, 151, 165, 166, 173, 183
Lora, 372
Lorenzo, Gen. Manuel, 48
Lorenzo Castro, Gen. Orlando, 470, 515
Loret de Mola, Major Luis, 128
Los Angeles, 168
Louisiana, 3, 25, 33, 274
Loynaz del Castillo, Gen Enrique, 142
Luaces, Antonio, 59
Luanda (Angola), 400, 401, 421, 423
Lubota, Francisco Xavier (Angola), 403
Lubumbashi, 368
Lucero, Oscar, 222
Ludlow, Gen. (U.S. Army), 131
Luque, Gen. Antonio, 81
Lumumba, Patrice (Congo-Zaire), 367
Lüning, Heinz August (German sov), 170, 171, 185, 226
Lune, Enrique, 170
Lusaka (Zambia), 383
Lussón, E.A., 238
M-19 (19th of April Movement) (Colombia), 391
M-26-7 (See Movimiento 26 de Julio)
M-41 "Walker" tanks, 278
Maceo (Cuban Navy ship- previously named Intrépido), 117, 210
Maceo, Marcos, 79
Maceo y Grajales, Gen. Antonio, 10, 65, 67, 70, 71, 76, 77, 79-89, 97, 116, 232, 470
Maceo y Grajales, Domingo, 79
Maceo y Grajales, Gen. José M., 79-80, 470
Maceo y Grajales, José Tomás, 79
Maceo y Grajales, Julio, 79
Maceo y Grajales, María Baldomera, 79-80
Maceo y Grajales, Miguel, 79
Maceo y Grajales, Rafael, 79
Machado, President Gerardo, 88, 124, 137, 139, 141-143, 146-149, 152-155, 169, 179, 183, 190, 197, 198, 208, 258, 294, 496
Machado Rodríguez, José, 225
Machel, Samora Moises, 417, 425, 429, 430
machete, 10, 12, 62, 65, 78, 83, 95
Machurucutu Beach (Venezuela), 353
Machín, Maj. Gustavo, 376
Macías, Juan Manuel, 51
McKinley, Pres. William, 90, 91
Madagascar, 383

Madison, Pres. James, 43, 45
 Madrid, 40, 48, 162, 376
 Magdason, 143
 Magidson, Miguel, 142
 Magloire, President (Haiti), 213
 Magoon, Charles, 110-112
 Mahbes, 432
 Maine, USS, 90
 Majana, 84, 87
 Malaierca, Isidoro, 212, 424
 Mal Tiempo (battle of), 14, 83
 Malawi, 365
 Mali (Africa), 383, 414, 415
 Mambi (Cuban soldiers during the War of Independence), 300
 Managua, 411
 Mangada Rosenorn, Gen. Julio, 12
 Mangos de Baragua, 80
 Manifest Destiny, 45
 Mantua, 84
 Manuel Rodríguez Patriotic Front (Chile), 444
 Manuit, Gen. Amadeo, 60
 Manzanillo, 95, 193
 Mañach, Jorge, 147
 Mao Tse Tung, 292
 Maoist organizations, 290, 371, 375, 429
 Maputo, 425
 Maria Cristina Spanish Regent), 50
 Mariano, 184, 187
 Mariategui, Carlos (Peru), 357
 Mariel, 84, 87, 117, 140
 Mariel Exodus, 6, 440
 Mariel Naval Academy, 170, 303
 Marighella, Carlos (Brazil), 385, 386
 Marina de Guerra (See Appendix IV, p. 485 and Cuban Navy)
 Marinello, Juan, 160, 163, 166, 193
 Marines, U.S. (See U.S. Marines)
 Márquez, Juan Manuel, 219
 Márquez Sterling, Carlos, 51, 237
 Márquez Sterling, Manuel, 51
 Marrero, Levy, 160
 Marrero Ronda, Gen. Alejandro, 463, 516
 Martí Carrión, Gen. Angel Mariano, 461
 "Martí" (Cuban Navy ship), 117, 210
 Martí (theater), 134
 Martí Pérez, José Julian (José Martí), 4, 5, 10, 75-77, 79, 80, 83, 84, 97, 114, 118, 232
 Martí y Zayas Bazan, Gen. José, 133
 Martín Elena, Col. Eduardo, 208
 Martín González, Col. Lain, 462
 Martí Hernández, Col. Heriberto E., 478
 Martín Lavandero, Daniel, 187
 Martín Pérez, Col. Lutgardo, 215
 Martínez, Juan, 502
 Martínez Campos, Gen. Arsenio, 69, 81, 83, 85
 Martínez Gil, Gen. Pascual, 461, 462, 507, 516
 Martínez Leiro, Lt. Aurelio, 229
 Martínez Márquez, Guillermo, 160
 Martínez Ortiz, Sec. of State Rafael, 144
 Martínez Sáenz, Joaquín, 147
 Martínez Sanchez, Maj. Augusto, 238, 266
 Martínez Sierra, Col. Angel, 469
 Martínez Tamayo, Capt. José María, 354, 358, 360, 375, 376
 Martínez (sic) Tamayo, Lt. René, 376
 Martínez Villena, Rubén, 134
 Martí Carrión, Angel Mariano, 516
 Martull, Capt. Guillermo, 140, 157
 Marvin, George, 129
 Marxist-Leninist Constitution (See Cuban Constitution of 1976)
 Mas Canosa, Jorge, 280
 Masferrer Rojas, Rolando, 6, 162-163, 183, 184, 187-190, 192, 201, 213, 227
 Masferrer's Tigers, 227
 Masó, Gen. Bartolomé, 12, 78, 93, 98-100
 Masó, José Luis, 191
 Massawa (port of Ethiopia), 406, 408
 Massemba-Debat, President Alphonse, 366
 Masetti, Jorge Ricardo, 358
 Massip, Chief of Police Estanislao, 147
 Mastrada Pérez, Col. William, 471
 Matabele, 431
 Matanzas, 23, 49, 78, 81, 83-85, 87, 90, 95, 147, 160, 165, 208, 216, 277, 278, 281
 Matanzas (ship), 117, 128, 141
 Mathews, Herbert, 222
 Matos, Maj. Hubert, 238, 270
 Matos Bozán, Col. Rolando, 463
 Mauritania, 383, 432
 Maxie Theater, 134
 Mazola, Dept. Foreign Minister Biraldo, 432
 Maximilian of Austria (Archduke), (Mexico), 12, 59
 Máximo Gómez Revolutionary Armed Forces Academy, 305
 Máximo Gómez (Cuban Navy ship), 210, 349
 Máximo Gómez Mixed Artillery Regiment, 230
 Mayarí Mountains, 234
 mayorales, 220
 McNeil-Lehrer Hour, 413
 McCone, John, 282
 McCullough, (U.S. Police Officer), 131
 Medellín (Colombia), 353, 445
 Mejía, Gustavo, 201
 Melena del Sur, 84
 Melenas Mora, 224

Mella, Julio Antonio, 142, 154
Méndez Capote, General Domingo, 89, 93
Méndez Coainches, Gen. José Joaquín, 442, 461, 507, 508
Méndez Peñate, Col. Roberto, 148
Méndez Peñate, Rodolfo, 237
Méndez Sierra, Gen. Juan Agustín, 516
Mendieta Montefur, Col. Carlos, 147, 159
Mendive, Rafael María, 54
Menéndez, Lt. Col. E., 183
Menéndez Martínez, Maj., 233
Menéndez Rodríguez, Capt. Mario, 266
Menéndez Tomassevich, Gen. Raúl, 238, 239, 403, 459, 497, 508
Mengistu Haile Miriam (Ethiopia) (See Haile Miriam, Mengistu)
Menocal, Col. Jacinto, 226
Meoqui, Maj. Roberto, 184, 185
Mercano, Luis Francisco, 58
Merino, 234
Meruelo, Homero, 163
Mesa Lago, Carmelo, 295
Messersmith, U.S. Amb. George S., 166
Mexican Air Force, 393
Mexican Army, 12
Mexican Communist Party, 146, 371, 392
Mexican Embassy in Havana, 208
Mexican Government, 392-394
Mexican guerrillas, 392
Mexican Police, 392
Mexican War College, 227
Mexican workers, 53
Mexican radicals, 392
Mexico, 2, 12, 21, 47-49, 53, 54, 59, 60, 63, 75, 143, 145, 146, 158, 173, 181, 218, 219, 250, 273, 311, 371, 384, 391-394, 446
Mexico City, 219, 393, 394
Miami, Fla., 5, 6, 11, 63, 147, 159, 165, 174, 197, 217-219, 236, 410, 413, 440
Miami International Airport, 410
Middle East, 16, 18, 375, 431, 432
Mi-1 Hare, 482
Mi-4 Hound, 482
Mi-8 HIP, 391, 438, 439
Mi-17, 439, 482
Mi-24/25 Hind D, 438, 439, 482
Migs, 421, 422, 285, 437, 479-481
Mig 15, 293, 375, 481
Mig 17, 293, 375, 481
Mig 19, 293, 481
Mig 21, 293, 375, 416, 480
Mig 23 (Flogger B), 302, 408, 415, 416, 419, 479
Mig 27 (Flogger D), 479
Mikoyan, Anastas, 271
Milanés, Jácome, 23
Milanés, José Jacinto, 54
Miles, General, 91
Milián Pino, Gen. José A., 516
Milián Rivero, Col. Gustavo, 478
Milicia de Tropas Territoriales (See Territorial Militia Troops)
Milicia Popular de Resistencia (PRI), 355
Military Intelligence Service (SIM), 217
Militia Training Academy, 281
Military Technical Institute (See Instituto Técnico Militar)
Mina de la Rosa Cubana (conspiracy), 49
Minas Gerais, 359, 377
MINFAR (See Cuban Ministry of the Armed Forces and Appendix I, p. 457), 233, 306, 310, 418, 443
MININT (See Cuban Ministry of the Interior and Appendix I, p. 457), 306, 310, 311, 313, 442
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores -MINREX (See Cuban Ministry of Foreign Relations)
MIR (see Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria)
MIR (see Movimiento Insurreccional Revolucionario)
Miramar, 201
Miranda, Lt. Abelardo, 229
Miranda, Juan, 502
Mird Cardona, Dr. José, 260, 264, 268
Mississippi, 1, 3, 11, 16, 33
Mississippi River, 21
Mixed Tank Regiment, 231
MLD (See Movement for the Liberation of Djibuti)
MNR, 430
Mobile, 3, 33
Mobutu, Gen. Joseph D. (See Mobutu Sese Seko)
Mobutu Sese Seko (Congo-Zaire), 367, 368, 400, 409
Moleón, José, 502
Molina, Gen., 87
MOLINACO (see National Liberation Movement of Comoras)
Molinet, Gen. Eugenio, 89
Moncada Barracks, 15, 123, 210-212, 216, 218, 219, 260
Mondlane, Eduardo, 429
Monge, Mario (Bolivia), 377
Monogue, 422
Monroe, President James, 45
Montalvo y O'Farrill, Field Marshall Juan 12

Moro Drozco, Iraldo, 518 Monteagudo, Gen. José de Jesus, 88, 111, 112, 116, 117, 123
 Monteagudo, Capt. José E., 205, 263
 Monterrey, Mexico, 393, 394
 Montes, Maj. Cesar (Guatemala), 354
 Montesquieu (See Le Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu), 41
 Montevideo, Uruguay, 376
 Montgomery County, Pa., 155
 Montatre Nightclub, 217
 Montonero Guerrillas (Argentina), 354, 385
 Montero, Rafael, 70
 Montseny Vaca, Demetrio, (Villa), 238, 239
 Mora, Victor, 238
 Mora, Pres. Juan Rafael, 54
 Mora Díaz, Col. Federico, 462
 Mora Morales, Menelao, 224
 Moracán, Gen. Rafael, 516
 Morales, Mario, 163
 Morales Beraudes, Gen. Francisco (Peru), 391
 Morales Paula, Lt. Francisco S., 229
 Morales Velázquez, Col. Rafael, 459
 Moralitos, 86
 Morán, José (El Gallego), 219
 Morel de Santa Cruz, Bishop Pedro A., 25
 Morelia, Mexico, 393
 Morgan, Henry (pirate), 23
 Morgan, Henry (banker), 132
 Morgan, Maj. William, 238, 350
 Morell Romero, José, 153
 Moret Law, 3
 Morfa Gonzalez, Gen. José Arnaldo, 516
 Morín Dopico, Maj. Antonio, 184, 185, 187
 Moro Drozco, Brig. Gen. Iraldo, 470, 471, 516
 Moroccan Armed Forces, 364, 417, 426, 432, 433
 Moroccan Riff Tribesmen, 133
 Morocco, 16, 48, 345, 362, 363, 409, 429, 432, 433
 Morote, Katia (Peru), 357
 Morote, Osman (Peru), 357
 Morro Castle (Havana), 22, 25, 26, 140, 181, 216
 Morua Delgado Amendment, 113, 119, 121
 Moscow, 145, 274, 361, 410
 Moscow Returns the Punches (film), 173
 Moshen, Zuhair, 434
 Moslems, 410
 Moss, Robert, 446
 Mostoles, 40
 Mount Hermon (Siria/Israel), 363
 Movement for the Liberation of Djibuti (MLD), 384
 Movimiento Acción Revolucionaria (MAR), 394
 Movimiento 23 de Septiembre, 394
 Movimiento 26 de Julio (M-26-7), 218, 221, 224, 225, 228, 233, 236, 260, 267, 296, 358
 Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (MIR), 335
 Movimiento de Liberación Nacional (Mexico), 371
 Movimiento Insurreccional Revolucionario (MIR), (Venezuela), 352
 Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario, 210, 224
 Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amaru (MRTA) (Peru), 391
 Movimiento Socialista Revolucionario, (Masferrer), 184, 201, 227
 Moxico (Angola), 421
 Mozambique, 365, 368, 414, 415, 417, 425, 428-430
 Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO), 320, 384, 428, 429
 Moya, Rolando, 220
 MPLA (see Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola)
 MRTA (see Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement), 391,
 MTT (see Milicia de Tropas Territoriales)
 Mubarak, Pres. Hosni, 426
 Mugabe, Robert (Zimbabwe-Rhodesia), 369, 430, 431
 Mujal Barniol, Eusebio, 182, 199, 236
 Muñoz Grandes, 133
 Murray, Hugo (CIA-Bolivia), 378
 Muslim Fundamentalists, 315
 Mussolini, 359
 Muzorewa, Bishop Abel, 430
 Nafka, 408
 Namibia (See also South West Africa), 405, 423, 424, 431
 Nancahuaso (Nancahuaso), (Bolivia) 357, 377, 378
 Napoleon (See Bonaparte, Napoleon)
 Napoleonic Wars, 33, 38, 39, 42, 45, 46
 Napoles, 50
 Naranjal, 234
 Naranjo, 67, 68
 Narvaez, Pánfilo, 21
 Narvaez, Gen. Ramón, 48
 Nasser, Gamal Abdel (Egypt), 383
 National Assembly of the People's Government (Cuba), 281, 316, 400
 National Council of Veterans, 119, 120, 122
 National Defense Board (U.S.), 132
 National Executive Committee, 121
 National Fishing Institute, 310

National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA), 384, 396, 400, 403, 405
National Council of the Revolution, 367
National Liberation Army (ELN) (Colombia), 353, 445
National Liberation Movement of Comoras (MOLINACO), 384
National Resistance of Mozambique (RENAMO), 429, 430
National Union for the Total Liberation of Angola (UNITA), 400, 403
National University of San Cristobal de Huamanga, 357
Navarra, 50
Nazareno, 87
Nehru, Jawaharial, 383
Nelson, Admiral, 26, 39
nepotism, 8
Neptune (MHS), 26, 63
Neptuno (Spanish ship), 63
Neto, Agostinho (Angola), 369, 399, 400, 402, 404, 405
Neupart, Col. Fernando, 240
New England, 82
New Jersey, 168, 314
New Jewel Movement (NJM), 440, 441
New Orleans, 3, 44, 45, 91
New York City, 51, 63, 75, 76, 86, 98, 99, 104, 142, 162, 180, 215, 218, 311, 313, 314, 349, 383, 410
Ngouabi, Capt. Marien, 366, 367
Nguema Biyondo, Masie, 426, 370
Nguema Mbasongo, Teoro Obiang, 426, 371
Nicaragua, 16, 54, 55, 212, 233, 273, 277, 287, 315, 353, 387, 390, 411, 414, 438, 439, 435, 438-441, 444, 446
Nicaraguan leaders, 385
Nichols, Col. Edward, 44
Nigeria, 383
Nipe Bay (Oriente), 188
NJM (see New Jewel Movement)
Nkomo, Joshua (Zimbabwe-Rhodesia), 369, 431
N'krumah, Kwame, 364, 365
Nogales, Sonora, Mexico, 393
North Africa, 415
North Korea, 414
Novas Calvo, Lino, 163
Novo Estado (Brazil), 359
Nueva Gerona, 117
Nujona, Sam, 424
Numantia, 11
Núñez, Gen. Emilio, 86, 99, 119, 122
Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, Alvar, 21
Núñez Bill, Lt. Oscar A., 443

Núñez Jiménez, Antonio, 238
Núñez Portuondo, Ricardo, 193
OCRR (See Organización Celular Radical Revolucionaria)
O'Brien, Captain Johny, 86
O'Donnell, Gen. Leopoldo, 48
O'Farrill, Juan R., 12, 105
O'Gaban, Juan Bernardo, 41
O'Reilly, Field Marshall Alejandro, 26
O'Ryan, Gen. William, 60
Ochoa Sánchez, Gen. Arnaldo T., 8, 18, 439, 459, 508, 509
October Revolution, 134
Oduardo, Gen. José R., 516
Oficina de Investigación de Actividades Enemigas
Office of Historical Affairs, Cuban Council of State, 281
Ogaden Province (Somalia/Ethiopia), 299, 306, 406, 407, 439
Ojeda, Fabricio (Venezuela), 352
Ojeda Bartumeu, Corv. Capt. Armando, 488
OLAS, 290, 371-373, 411
Old Bahama Channel, 172
Oliva, Gen. Erneldo, 13, 275, 280
Olivera, Tomás, 122
Olivera Moya, Gen. Filiberto, 516
OMEGA 7, 410
"Operación 15 de Enero de 1972-Chihuahua," 392
Operación Toga, 11
Orange County, 98
Ordoqui, Joaquín, 225
Organisation de l'Armée Secrète (OAS), 363
Organización Auténtica (OA), 224, 233
Organización del Pueblo en Armas (ORPA), 335
Organización Insurreccional Revolucionaria (Dieguez), 185
Organization of American States (OAS), 192, 312, 350, 351, 360, 384, 391
Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, 441
Organization of Latin American Solidarity (OLAS), 290
Oriente Province, 58, 62, 66, 77, 78-80- 88, 90, 91, 95, 121-124, 128, 147, 152, 153, 188, 207-211, 213, 218-220, 222, 223, 226, 231-233, 234, 237, 239, 240, 258, 261, 264
Orihuela, Maj. José M. M., 228
ORPA (see Organización del Pueblo en Armas)
Ortega, Daniel (Nicaragua), 436, 443, 446, 482
Ortiz, Arsenio, 123, 124, 147, 258
Ortiz, José María Ignacio, 394
Orthodox Party, 203, 205, 211
OSA 1 Class Missile Boats, 375

Osaan, 357
 Osvaldo Sánchez School, 285
 Ovaros, Enrique, 191
 Osorio, Adairal, 63
 Ovaros, Lt. José, 157
 Oviabundo Tribe (Angola), 399
 Oyster Bay, 108

 P-38, 189, 191
 Pages, Senator, 202
 PAIGC, 368, 369, 396, 428
 Pais, Frank, 218, 225, 226, 232, 260, 306
 Pakenham, General Sir Edward, 44
 Palestinians, 383, 398, 433-435
 Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), 346, 373, 384, 397, 398, 411, 426, 433, 434, 438
 Palestinian revolutionaries, 397
 Palma Mocha, 221, 234
 PALM (see Popular Front for the Liberation of Namibia)
 Pamplona, 259
 Pan-African Congress (PAC), 384
 Pan-American Conference, Second (1948), 192
 Pan American Union, 192
 Panama, 249, 250, 254, 274, 348, 383, 394, 446
 Panama Canal, 180
 Pantoja, Capt. Orlando (Antonio), 376
 Pardo Guerra, Gen. Ramón, 470, 516
 Pareda Calvo, Francisco, 168
 Pareja, 210
 Paris, 36, 38, 40, 42, 144, 145, 173
 Parr, Capt. Owen, 166
 Parrasón Spencer, Capt. Jorge, 229
 Parti Congolais du Travail, 365
 Partido Auténtico (See Partido Revolucionario Cubano Auténtico)
 Partido Comunista de Cuba (See Cuban Communist Party)
 Partido Comunista del Perú-Bandera Roja, 357, 391
 Partido Comunista del Perú en el Sendero Luminoso de Mariátegui (Sendero Luminoso) (see Shining Path), 357, 391
 Partido de los Pobres, 394
 Partido del Pueblo Libre, 237
 Partido Guatemalteco del Trabajo, 354
 Partido Independiente de Color (PIC) (See Independent Black Party), 114, 119
 Partido del Pueblo Cubano (Ortodoxo), 193, 204, 205
 Partido Revolucionario Cubano (PRC), 76
 Partido Revolucionario Cubano Auténtico, 164, 182, 189-190, 351
 Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Mexico), 371, 392
 Partido Social Cristiano (COPEI), 352
 Partido Socialista Popular (PSP) (see Cuban Communist Party), 222, 225, 268, 289, 293, 295, 296
 Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro, 360
 Partido Unión Cubana, 237
 Paseo del Prado, 199
 Paso Real-de San Diego, 86
 Patria (newspaper), 76
 Patria (Cuban Navy ship), 117, 121, 141, 156, 158, 210
 Patriotic Military Education Commission, 298
 PAU, 203
 Paulina, 179
 Payan, Col. José, 60
 Pazos, Felipe, 236, 260
 PCM-L (Bolivia), 372
 Peace Committee of the Organization of American States, 214
 Peace of Ryswick, 23
 Pearl Harbor, 166
 Pedraza, Gen. José Eleuterio, 48, 151, 152, 164-166, 174, 183, 240, 257, 258
 Pedro Luis Boitel Commandos, 410
 Pedroso, Regino, 160
 Peking, 361
 Pena, Félix, 238, 239, 508
 Pensacola, 3, 33, 44, 254
 Peña, Capt. Hermes 358
 Peña, Lázaro, 164, 193
 Peña Vilabos, José, 142
 Peoples' Guerrilla Army (EBP) (Argentina)
 People's Liberation Army (EPL) (Colombia), 353, 445
 People's Militia, 366
 Peoples' Republic of China (see China)
 Peoples' Republic of Korea (see Korea)
 Peoples' Republic of Stanleyville (see Stanleyville)
 People's Revolutionary Union/Popular Liberation Movement, (URP/MPL) (Honduras), 444
 Pepe Antonio (See Gómez-Bujones, J.A.)
 Peraza, General, 147
 Pereira, Aristides, 425
 Perera Ruiz, Capt. Pedro, 487
 Pérez, Col. Alfonso, 200
 Pérez, Lt. Com. Demetrio José, 280
 Pérez, Faustino, 238
 Pérez, José Miguel, 142
 Pérez, Luis A., 153
 Pérez Betancourt, Adm. Pedro M., 459, 487, 488, 518

Pérez Coujil, Col. Leopoldo, 226
 Pérez Crespo, Miguel, 13, 204
 Pérez Dásera, Gen. Genovevo, 183, 188, 200, 205
 Pérez Hernández, Faustino, 219
 Pérez Herrero, Antonio, 212
 Pérez Jiménez, Pres. Marcos (Venezuela), 352
 Pérez Lezcano, Gen. Sergio, 518
 Pérez Pena, Col. Orgelino, 470
 Pérez San Román, José, 275
 Pérez Sarante, Monsenor, 212
 Pérez Shelto, Lt. Col. Ernesto, 462
 Permanent Military Executive Commission, 48
 Peronist Party, 385
 Perrit (ship), 61, 63
 Persia, 11
 personalism, 8
 Peru, 16, 48, 49, 356, 357, 376, 384, 386, 390, 391
 Peruvian Communist Party (See Partido Comunista del Peru)
 Peruvian guerrillas, 376
 Petersburg, 59
 Petrov, Soviet General Yuri, 422
 PFLP (ss Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine)
 Philadelphia, 63, 75, 97, 117
 Philadelphia shipyards, 117
 Philippines, 92
 Piedra, Judge Carlos, 263
 Piedra, Col. Manuel, 131
 Pila, Alfredo, 313
 Pinango, Dr. N., 193
 Pinar del Rio, 52, 78, 81, 84, 85-87, 90, 95, 117, 128, 147, 165, 167, 172, 179, 197, 226, 266, 276, 304
 Pinar del Rio (Cuban Navy ship), 141
 Pinochet, Gen. Augusto (Chile), 355, 389, 444
 Pinto da Costa, President Manuel, 428
 Pifeiro, Manuel, 239, 282
 piracy, 21-23
 Pitcher, Captain, 131
 Pizarro León-Gómez, Carlos, 445
 Placetas, 239
 Plana Mayor, 209
 Platt Amendment, 101, 106, 159
 Platt, Sen. Orville H., 97, 99, 100, 159
 Playa Girón (See Bay of Pigs)
 Plaza Hotel, 180
 PLD (See Palestinian Liberation Organization)
 Po, Fernando, 370
 Pocock, Ada. George, 24
 Pointe-Noire, 367
 Point Salines (Brenada), 441
 Poland, 60, 143, 396, 414
 Police Headquarters, 15
 POLISARIO (See also Morocco), 415, 417, 433
 Poloncy landing crafts, 416
 POLITBURO (See Cuban Communist Party, Politburo)
 Ponce Goizueta, Capt. Miguel, 229
 Pope Clement XIV, 259
 Pope Pius VII, 259
 Popular Cubano Party, 164
 Popular Front for the Liberation Namibia (PALN), 423, 424
 Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), 433
 Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), 299, 306, 366, 368, 369, 384, 399, 400, 403-405, 409, 424, 428
 Popular Revolutionary Army, 411
 Popular Revolutionary Forces-Lorenzo Zelaya (FPR) (Honduras), 444
 Popular Revolutionary Vanguard, 360
 Popular Socialist Party (Mexico), 371
 Popular Party, 133
 Popular Union Party of Seychelles (SPUP), 384
 POR, 372
 porra, la (Machado regime), 147, 149
 Portela, Guillermo, 153
 Portillo, Gen., 67
 Portell Vilas, Herminio, 52
 Porto Novo, 428
 Port Royal, 23
 Portugal, 9, 16, 39, 259, 368, 396, 397, 399, 400, 403, 420, 425, 427-429
 Portuguese, 384, 396, 397, 401
 Potrillo, 273
 POW's, U.S. (in Vietnam), 380, 381
 Prado, Col. Leoncio, 60
 Pratz, Gen. Luis, 81, 87
 Pravda (newspaper), 181, 374
 precaristas, 221
 Prendes Quintana, Lt. Alvaro, 229, 282
 Prensa Latina, 358
 Presidential Palace (see Cuban Presidential Palace)
 PRI (Mexico) (See Partido Revolucionario Institucional)
 Primmles, Raul, 160
 Primo de Rivera, Gen.
 PRIN (Bolivia), 372
 Principe, 26
 Principe Liberation Front (MLSTP), 427, 428
 Prio Socarrás, Antonio, 203
 Prio Socarrás, Pres. Carlos, 153, 182, 183, 193, 197-200, 202, 204, 205, 207, 208, 215-218, 222, 228, 255, 260

Progressive Labor Party (PLP), 375
 Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic, 362
 PT-76 (light tanks), 430, 438, 473
 PT boats, 210
 Puertas, Lt. Mariano ("Yeyo"), 186
 Puerto Maldonado, 356
 Puerto Príncipe, 21, 23, 81, 95
 Puerto Rico, 42, 60, 92, 134, 227
 Puerto Rican Socialist Party (PSP), 384
 Pujol Sánchez, Gen. Juan, 516
 Pujol, Guillermo Alonso, 193
 Punic War (Second), 11
 Punta Brava, 84, 87
 Punta Gorda, 170
 Punta Santa Ana (Naval Academy), 486
 Pupo Pérez, Gen. Pedro Ramón, 462, 518
 Putinstsev, Rear Admiral Mikhail, 300

Quebrada del Churo, 357, 377
 Quechua, 376
 Querejeta, Gen. Gregorio, 15, 158, 181, 257, 266
 Querétaro (Mexico), 12
 Quedo, Maj. José, 233, 234
 Quedo, Miguel Angel, 160
 Quezada, General, 59, 60
 Quintana, Adalberto (ICAP), 393
 Quintas Solas, Gen. Joaquín, 470, 509
 Quiñones (sic), Col., 128
 Quitman, Gen. John A., 54
 Quivacán, 84

Rabí, Gen. Jesús (See Sablón Moreno), 85, 88, 89
 Radio El Mundo of Buenos Aires, 358
 Radio Rebelde, 240
 Radio Reloj (Havana), 225
 racial war in Cuba, 113, 114, 118, 124, 125
 Ragged Island, 437
 Raigoroski, Moises, 163
 Ramírez, Maj. Leonardo, 470
 Ramírez, Porfirio, 17, 272
 Ramírez Kindelán, Col. Evelio, 470
 Ramos, Gregorio, 22, 23
 Rancho Boyeros Airport (now José Martí), 187
 Randisch, 226
 Rangel, Col. Desiderio, 137
 Rasco, José Ignacio, 191
 Raveló Renedo, Amb. Fernando, 6
 Ravier, 60
 Ray, Capt. Thomas W., 282
 Ray Rivero, Manuel, 260
 Reagan, President Ronald, 380, 381, 431

Rebel Army, 350
 Rebel Armed Forces (FAR (Guatemala), 355
 Racio, Senator Tomás, 119
 Red Army (Soviet), 13
 Red Army in Action (Soviet film), 173
 Red Brigades (Italy), 356
 Redondo García, Ciro, 219
 Red Tanks (Soviet film), 173
 Reeve, Alexander (father Gen. Reeve), 61
 Reeve, Gen. Henry, 12, 60
 Reeve, Madia Carroll, 61
 Rego Rubido, Col. José, 246, 264, 266
 Rego Rubio, Captain José M., 186
 Rego, Gen. Alfredo, 122
 Reid Cabral, Pres. Donald (Dom. Rep.), 331
 Remedios, 66, 239
 Republic of the Congo (See Peoples' Republic of the Congo and Congo)
 Republic of Cuba (see Cuba)
 Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), 353, 445
 Revolucionario Realista, Partido, 164
 Rey, Lt. Lázaro, 229
 Rey, Santiago, 189
 Reyes, Col. Eduardo, 462
 Reyes Rodríguez, Capt. Eliseo, 376
 Reyes Spindola, Octavio, 159
 Reyes Vega, Cuban Chargé d'Affairs Jorge (Mexico), 393
 Reyes, Lt. Israel, 376
 Reyna Chirino, Waldo, 238
 Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), 369, 417, 423-425, 429-431, 433, 436, 441
 Riano de Gamboa, Francisco, 23
 Ricardo Franco Front (Colombia), 353, 445
 Rico, Tomás, 111
 Riera Medina, Judge J., 184
 Riff Tribesmen, 133
 Rio Chaviano, Col. Alberto, 211
 Rio de Janeiro, 359
 Rio de Janeiro Pact, 198
 Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil), 359
 Rio Mondo, 86
 Rio Muni, 370
 Rios Gutiérrez, Sergeant Santiago, 228
 Rio Verde, 147
 Risquet, Jorge, 212, 424, 429, 520
 Rius Rivera, Gen. Juan, 60, 85, 87, 89
 Riva, General Armando J., 131
 Rivero, Luis, 163
 Rivero Agüero, Andrés, 237
 Rivero Setién, Manuel, 163
 Rivero, Col. Rigoberto, 470
 Rivoli, 38

Roa, Raul, 389
 Roa Kouri, Raúl, 437, 515
 Robainas Piedra, Maj. General Luis, 230
 Roberto, Holden (Angola), 400, 405
 Roberts, Gen. Hugo, 89
 Rochambeau, General, 34, 35
 Rodes Noros, Gen. Carlos, 516
 Rodiles Planas, Gen. Samuel, 238, 517
 Rodean (U.S.S.), 199
 Rodríguez, Gen. Alejandro, 89, 93, 96, 105, 209
 Rodríguez, Lt. Col. Armando, 220
 Rodríguez, Emilio, 142
 Rodríguez, Fructuoso, 225
 Rodríguez, Lt. Gaspar Antonio, 49
 Rodríguez, Gen. José María, 78, 82, 89
 Rodríguez, Juan (Dominican), 188
 Rodríguez, Henerio, 518
 Rodríguez, Brig. Gen. Juan Antonio, 468
 Rodríguez, Luis Orlando, 238
 Rodríguez, Marcos, 225
 Rodríguez, Col. Pedro Luis, 282
 Rodríguez, Capt. Ramiro A., 266
 Rodríguez, René, 220, 238, 424
 Rodríguez, Sergeant Pablo (Mar of Independence), 48
 Rodríguez, Sergeant Pablo (1933, Sergeants Insurrection), 151, 156
 Rodríguez, Roberto, 518
 Rodríguez, Selso, 280
 Rodríguez, Thome, 12, 23
 Rodríguez, Venacio, 142
 Rodríguez Acosta, Brig. Gen. Juan Daniel, 488
 Rodríguez Avila, Lt. General Pedro, 230
 Rodríguez Calderón, Adm. José E., 207
 Rodríguez Cruz, René, 6
 Rodríguez de la Vega, Adolfo, 238
 Rodríguez del Pozo, Gen. Guillermo, 517
 Rodríguez Hernández, Horacio, 238
 Rodríguez Peralta, Major Pedro, 369
 Rodríguez Pérez, Gen. Juan Antonio, 469, 517
 Rodríguez Planas, Brig. Gen. Samuel, 470
 Rodríguez Puertas, Gen. Orlando, 519
 Rodríguez Rocha, Lt. Col. Raimundo, 462
 Rodríguez Rodríguez, Carlos Rafael, 163, 212, 225, 236, 293, 295
 Rogers, Sec. of State William, 393, 400
 Rogueiferos Brajales, Felipe, 79
 Rogueiferos Brajales, Fermín, 79
 Rogueiferos Brajales, Justo, 79
 Rogueiferos Brajales, Manuel, 79
 Rogueiferos Hecheverría, Fructuoso, 79
 Roig Palenzuela, Maj. José, 470
 Rojas González, Maj. Gen. Juan, 230
 Roloff, Gen. Carlos, 60, 70, 470
 Romero Padilla, Manuel, 163
 Ronda Marrero, Alejandro, 517
 Roosevelt, Pres. Franklyn D., 158, 159, 180
 Roosevelt, Pres. Theodore, 91, 92, 108
 Roque, Gen. José, 85
 Rosales del Toro, Gen. Ulises, 458, 469, 505, 506, 509
 Roscoe, Arthur, 191
 Roselló, General, 516
 Rough Riders, 91, 92
 Rousseau, Jean Jacques, 41
 Rowan, Lieutenant Andrew S., 91
 RP6-7 (Sagger), 472
 Rubaya Ali, President Salea, 409
 Rubio Baso, Coma. Mario, 266
 Rubio Padilla, Juan A., 153
 Ruiz Gonzalez, 372
 Ruiz Mendoza, Lt. Jacinto, 40
 Ruiz Roja, Lt. Col. Fabio, 184
 Ruiz Zárate, Serafín, 238
 Ruiz, Col. Fabio 184, 185
 Ruiz, Humberto, 191
 Rumania, 396
 Rural Guard (see Cuban Rural Guard)
 Russia, (See also Soviet Union), 38, 134
 Russian Revolution, 374
 Russian Troops, 38
 Rutgers University, 313
 SA-2, 483
 SA-3, 391, 430, 474
 SA-5, 436
 SA-6, 474, 483
 SA-7, 474
 SA-9, 474
 Saa González, Lt. Jesus, 229
 Sabas Marín, Gen., 67
 Sabiabi, Jonas (Angola), 400, 404
 Sablon Moreno, Gen. (see Jesús Rabi)
 Saco, José Antonio, 54
 Sagasta Praxedes, Mateo, 90
 Sagua, 66
 Sagua la Grande (town), 121
 Sagunto, 11
 Sahara, 432, 433
 Saharan Democratic Republic, 432
 Saigon, 380, 412
 Saint-Cyr, 38
 Saint Simon, Claude Henri, 34
 Salabarría, Major Mario, 6, 184-187
 Salabarría, J., 201
 Saladrigas, Carlos, 147, 174
 Salas Amaro, Alberto, 237

Salas Caffizares, Col. José María, 188, 226, 231, 258
 Salas Caffizares, Gen. Rafael, 207, 215, 217, 218, 226, 231, 243, 258
 Salas Labrada, Capt. Alfredo, 469
 Salazar Callico, Wichy, 215
 Salazar Callico, Noel, 215
 Saleh, President Ali Abdullah, 410
 Salta (Argentina), 358
 Salvador (ship), 63
 Salvadorean guerrillas (See also Farabundo Martí Popular Liberation Front), 412
 SAM System (Angola), 419
 Sampson, Adm., 92
 San Ambrosio barracks, 15, 157
 San Antonio de los Baños Airfield, 167, 172, 181, 276
 San Antonio, Texas, 254
 San Cristobal, 21, 350,
 Sancti Spiritus, 66
 Sandinistas 55, 390
 Sandinista Government, 55, 286, 413
 Sandinista Revolution, 387, 411
 Sang, 410
 San Juan Hill, 14, 92
 San Julian Airfield, 167, 172, 181, 276, 304
 San Lorenzo, 234
 San Marcial, 40
 San Martín, María del Pilar, 179
 San Pedro Sula (Honduras), 444
 San Román Toledo, Capt. José Dionisio, 228
 San Román, Roberto, 275
 Sánchez Amaya, Fernando, 220
 Sánchez Arango, Aureliano, 204, 208, 215, 216, 260
 Sánchez Agramonte, Gen. Eugenio 89, 131
 Sánchez Barnet, Mario, 186
 Sánchez Díaz, Antonio (Pinares), 238
 Sánchez Díaz, Maj. Marcos, 376
 Sánchez Figueras, Gen. Silveiro, 84, 122
 Sánchez Gómez, Brig. Gen. Julio, 231
 Sánchez Mosquera, 221, 222, 233
 Sánchez, Calixto, 221-223, 233
 Sánchez, Capt. Juan (Lam Fu Kim), 60
 Sánchez, Gen. Serafín, 88, 89, 137
 Sánchez, Universo, 219, 238
 Sancti Spiritus, 21, 239
 Sandinistas, 315, 435, 438-440
 Sangüily, Gen. Julio, 11, 12
 Sangüily, Gen. Manuel, 93
 Sangüily y Echarte, Col. Julio R., 131
 Sanjurjo, 133
 Santa Clara, 15, 95, 116, 128, 137, 197, 229, 231, 239, 258
 Santa Cruz del Norte, 87
 Santa Cruz del Sur, 61
 Santa María del Rosario, 87
 Santa María Island, 403
 Santamaría, Mayde, 11, 510
 Santamaría, Israel, 445
 Santamaría Cuadrado, Adm. Aldo, 6, 459, 487, 510
 Santana, Lt., 152
 Santana, Rolando, 220
 Santander (Colombia), 353
 Santiago de Chile, 389
 Santiago de Cuba, 15, 21-24, 35, 42, 48, 65, 81, 91, 92, 94, 95, 117, 123, 197, 208, 211, 212, 216, 225, 226, 231, 238, 239, 264, 265, 276
 Santiago, Major Antonio, 233
 Santo Domingo (Dom. Rep.), 23, 49, 59, 214, 234, 349-351,
 Santísima Trinidad (ship), 26
 Santos Suárez, 215
 Sao Paulo, 359, 376
 Sao Tomé, 396, 414, 427, 428
 Sargentos Cívico-Militares, 163
 Sarria Tartabull, Lt. Pedro M., 212
 Sassou Ngouesso, Dennis, 367
 Saurimo (Angola), 401
 Schamburger, Maj. Iley, 282
 Schmidt, William E., 7
 School of the Americas, 254
 Schweg Colas, Gen. Victor, 18, 403, 424, 470, 517
 Scipio Aemilianus, 11
 SDS (see Students for a Democratic Society)
 Sea Furies (war airplanes), 16, 235, 276, 278, 282
 Second Punic War, 11
 Segundo Frente Nacional del Escambray, 233
 Seigel, Lt., 152
 Sekou Touré, Ahmed (Guinea), 362, 369, 396, 397, 405, 426, 427
 Selassie I, Hailu, 12, 406, 407
 Semovich, Yunquer, 142
 Sendero Luminoso (Peru) (see Partido Comunista del Peru-Bandera Roja), 391
 Senegal (Africa), 383
 Serra, Maj. Juan, 166
 Serrano, Gen. Francisco, 48
 Servicio de Investigaciones e Informaciones Extraordinarias, 184-186
 Servicio de Investigaciones de Actividades Enemigas, 226
 Servicio Militar Obligatorio (SMO), 298
 Sese Seko, Mobutu, (See Mobutu)

Seven Year's War, 24, 25
 Seville, 40, 41, 45, 161,
 SEPMI (See Society for Patriotic Military
 Education)
 Seychelles, 414
 Shaffter, Gen. William R., 91, 92
 Shaba (formerly Katanga), 368, 408, 409
 Sha of Iran, 315
 Shining Path (Peru) (See Sendero Luminoso)
 Servicio de Inteligencia Militar (SIM), 226,
 227, 231
 Shuqairy, Ahmed, 433
 Siad Barre, General Mohammed, 406
 Siboney Indians, 20, 54
 Sickles, Gen., 59
 Sierra Cristal, 233, 239, 296
 Sierra Leone (Africa), 396
 Sierra Maestra Mountains, 219, 233, 237, 239,
 257, 259, 358, 376, 396
 Sigsbee, Charles Swight, 90
 SIM (see Servicio de Inteligencia Militar)
 Silva, José R., 518
 Slocum, Captain H.J. (USA), 95
 Small War, 58, 71
 Smith Adam, 42
 Smith, U.S. Amb. Earl E.T., 235, 236, 267, 268
 Smith, José, 281
 Smith, Ian, 430
 SMO (See Servicio Militar Obligatorio)
 SO-1, 430
 Sobrado, Mario, 163
 Socialist Revolutionary Movement, 201
 Socialist Vanguard Party of Algeria, 363
 Society for Patriotic Military Education
 (SEPMI), 298
 Sogo Hernández, Gen. Dámaso, 231
 Solano, Colonel, 128
 Soler, Lt., 222
 Soler, Policarpo, 192
 Somalia (Africa), 299, 306, 405-408, 439
 Somalian guerrillas, 299, 306
 Somalia (leaders), 405
 Somoza-Debayle, Anastasio (Nicaragua), 385,
 411, 438
 Sonora (Mexico), 393
 Sorí Marín, Humberto, 238, 260
 Soria, Rolando, 163
 Soroa, 87
 Sosa de Quesada, Defense Minister, 174
 Sosa, Luis, 280
 Sosa de Quesada, Maj. Gen. Aristides, 227
 Sosa, Maj. Merob, 223
 Soto Rodríguez, Martín, 186
 Sotolongo, Lt. Eduardo, 229
 Sotomayor, Gen. Pedro, 84
 Sotomayor García, Brig. Gen. Romérico, 469, 517
 Soumaliot, Gaston (Zaire), 367
 South Africa, 7, 16, 403, 413, 424, 425, 429,
 431,
 432
 South African Armed Forces, 306, 396, 400-403,
 405
 South African Government, 403
 South America, 2, 20, 21, 144
 South Korea, 203
 South West Africa (Namibia), 403, 423, 424
 South West Africa People's Organization
 (SWAPO), 384, 423, 424
 South West Africa Territorial Force (SWATF),
 424
 South Yemen (Middle East), 383, 387, 398, 405,
 409, 410, 431, 432, 435
 Soviet Union, 3, 13, 17, 18, 144-146, 146, 161,
 164, 167, 173, 181, 182, 203, 270, 271, 273,
 279, 283, 284, 290, 292, 293, 295, 296, 298,
 302, 309, 311, 315, 345, 361, 362, 367, 369,
 372-375, 378, 383, 391, 392, 396, 401, 403,
 405, 406, 408, 410, 420, 421, 423-430, 436,
 438-442
 Soviet Intelligence, 282, 305, 310
 Soviet Pacific Fleet, 423
 Soviets in Cuba, 407
 Soviet West Africa Patrol, 423
 Soy Cubano (Cuban tune), 139
 Spain, 3, 9, 11, 14, 21-27, 33, 39-50, 52-54,
 58-59, 61-71, 75-89-92, 94, 105, 117, 118,
 119, 132, 133, 134, 146, 161, 163, 169, 171,
 179, 187, 207, 211, 224, 250, 251, 259, 370,
 374, 420, 426, 432
 Spanish Army, 48, 52, 59, 63, 69, 81-83, 98,
 134, 162, 251
 Spanish Civil War, 6, 12, 134, 183-185, 187,
 189,
 211, 216, 218, 220, 224
 Spanish Constitution, 42
 Spanish Sahara, 432
 Spanish Liberalism, 41
 Spanish Morocco, 161
 Spanish Navy, 26, 81
 Spanish Republic, 161
 Spanish Republican Army, 187
 Spanish Troops, 46
 Spanish War of Independence, 41
 Speyer and Company, 104
 Spiro, Ambassador Herbert, 405
 Spoto, Juan Bautista, 70
 Springer, John, 23
 Squiers, U.S. Minister, 105

St. Augustine, 3, 33
 St. Helen, 42
 St. Lucia, 442
 Stanhope, Dorothy, 78
 Stanleyville, 367, 368
 Statutes of Bayona, 40
 Stein, Miguel, 143
 Steinhart, Frank, 112
 Sternfield, Larry, 378
 Stockwell, John (CIA), 402
 Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), 373, 379
 Styz Missiles, 375
 SU-22, 419
 SU-100, 473
 Suárez Bayol, Capt. (El Rubio), 376
 Suárez Lorenzo, Gen. Jorge, 469, 517
 Suárez Soulet, Maj., 234
 Suárez Valdez, General, 84
 Suárez, Father Francisco, 41
 Suárez, Gen. Manuel, 68, 89
 Suárez, General Saumeli, 122
 Suro, Hugo, 275, 280
 Sudan, 365, 408, 415
 Sukarno (Indonesia), 362
 Sumner Smith (ship), 86
 Superior War College (Mexico), 205
 Supreme Military Tribunal, 265
 Suslov, Mikhail, 308
 Swiss, 312, 420
 Syria, 16, 18, 346, 397, 431, 434

 T-33, 16, 276, 278, 282
 T-34, 473
 T-34/35, 302, 391, 408, 438, 473, 416
 T-62, 473, 416
 "Tinias" (Ship) (Dom. Rep.), 349
 Tabernilla Dolz, Gen. Francisco, 152, 207, 209, 213, 230, 231, 235, 240, 259
 Tabernilla Palmeri, Gen. Francisco, 173, 181, 231
 Tabernilla, Gen. Carlos, 231
 Tabernilla, Lt. Col. Marcelo, 231
 Taft, William H., 108, 110
 Taino Indians, 20
 Talleyrand, 38
 Tamayo y Tamayo, Col. Esteban, 82, 84
 Tamayo, Min. Int. Dr. Diego, 106
 Tambo, Oliver (President of the ANC), 424
 Tampa, 21, 63, 75, 86
 Tanganyika (See Tanzania)
 Tangier, 362
 Tania (See also Tamara Bunker), 378
 Tanzania (Africa), 367, 370, 386, 405, 414, 415
 Tarafa, Col. Miguel, 104
 Taylor, President Zacharay, 51
 Tegucigalpa (Honduras), 444
 Tejera, Diego Vicente, 215
 Teller, Senator Henry M., 96
 Temerary (HMS), 26
 Temple, Texas, 168
 Tenencias, 210
 Ten Year's War (1868-1878), 11, 14, 58-90, 98, 118, 137, 149, 164, 300
 Tercio Táctico, 137, 138, 209
 Terrero, Erasmo, 212
 Territorial Militia (See Appendix V, p. 495 and Cuban militia), 299, 233
 Teurbe Tolón, Miguel, 51
 Texas, 50, 218
 The Defense of Tsaraisin (Soviet film), 173
 Therapylae (battle), 11
 The Sun (newspaper), 51
 Third Military District (Cagaguay), 231
 Three Friends (ship), 86
 Trejo, Dr. Rafael, 208
 Tinias (ship), 349
 Tito, Josip Broz (Yugoslavia), 383
 Togo, 364
 Toledano, Lombardo, 371
 Toreros Rizo, Julian, 442
 Toronto, 43, 60
 Torras, Vice-Minister Pelegrin, 437
 Torrajón, Lt. Andrés, 40
 Torres, Camilo (Colombia), 353
 Torres Menier, Army Captain, 148
 Tortolo Comas, Col. Pedro, 442
 Tortugas, 23
 trade union movement, 113
 Trafalgar (battle), 26, 39
 Traore, Col. Diara, 427
 Treaty of Ghent, 43
 Treaty of Paris, 35
 Trejo, Rafael, 198
 Tri-Continental Congress (1966 Havana), 290, 345, 371-373, 392, 397, 434
 Tribunal of Accounts, 197
 Trinidad, 21-23, 52, 66
 Trinidad-Tobago, 383, 394
 Triple A, 216, 224
 Tró, Emilio, 6, 162, 163, 184-186, 201
 trocha, 81, 84, 87
 Trotsky-Communists (Trotskyists), 371, 385
 Trotskyists guerrillas, 392
 Trovada, P.M. Miguel, 428
 Trujillo, Rafael L. (Dominican Republic), 187-189, 211, 213, 214, 218, 224, 348-350

Truman, Pres. Harry S., 198
 Tshombe, Moises (Zaire), 367, 399
 TU-95 BEAR D, 423
 Tunis, 362, 434
 Tunney Amendment, 402
 Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA)
 (Peru) (see Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac
 Amaru)
 Tupamaro Guerrillas (Uruguay), 356, 385
 Tuxpan, Port of (Mexico), 219, 392

 U-176 (German submarine sunk by Cuban Navy),
 172
 U-2, 284
 U-boats, 1, 172
 UCLA, 295
 Ulyanovsky, R.A., 388
 United States, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 235, 237,
 254, 267, 269-271, 273-275, 277, 279-281, 283-
 291, 304, 305, 311-316, 358-360, 372, 379, 380
 U.S. Agency for International Development, 431
 U.S. Air Attaché, 235
 U.S. Armed Forces, 13, 43, 280, 351
 U.S. Arms Export Control Act, 402
 U.S. Army, 13, 52, 60, 78, 91, 166, 168, 172,
 204, 280
 U.S. Army Appropriations Bill (1901), 97
 U.S. Army (Military Information Division), 113
 U.S. Attorney General, 52, 168
 U.S. Capitol, 201, 204, 373
 U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, 228-230, 235,
 236, 273, 279, 313, 356, 368, 378, 390, 402
 U.S. Civil War, 12, 54, 59-62
 U.S. Communist Party, 161-164, 173, 373
 U.S. Congress, 42, 45, 96, 124, 401
 U.S. Continental Army, 34
 U.S. Coast Guard, 286
 U.S. Customs, 191
 U.S. Declaration of Independence, 33
 U.S. Department of Defense, 419, 438
 U.S. Department of State, 143, 145, 235, 255,
 267, 271
 U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), 6
 U.S. Embassy (Havana), 154, 230, 235
 U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI),
 145, 171
 U.S. Foreign Service, 393
 U.S. Government, 230, 235, 254, 275, 302
 U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service,
 217, 310
 U.S. leftists, 379, 380
 U.S. Marine Corps, 13, 270, 275
 U.S. Military Academy, 304
 U.S. Military Mission in Cuba, 267

 U.S. National Archives, 142
 U.S. Naval Academy, 13
 U.S. Navy, 91, 92, 172, 180, 280, 386
 U.S. Neutrality Act, 215
 U.S. Provisional Government in Cuba, 249
 U.S. Secretary of State, 142, 143
 U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee,
 Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs, 312
 U.S. Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, 269
 U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Security and
 Terrorism of the Committee on the Judiciary,
 312
 U.S. Union Army, 12, 13, 59-61
 U.S. War College, 305
 U.S. War of Independence, 3, 33-34, 37, 41
 U.S. War Powers Act, 402
 U.S. White House, 43
 U.S.S. Lafayette (submarine), 13
 U.S.S. Rodman, 199, 205
 Ugalde Carrillo, Col.
 Uige (Angola), 421
 Ulate, Otilio, 190
 Ulloa, Capt. Carlos, 282
 Unidades Militares de Ayuda a la Producción
 (UMAP), 298
 Unaligned Countries (Movement), 383, 384, 433
 First Summit Conference, 383
 Second Summit Conference, 383
 Third Summit Conference, 383
 Fourth Summit Conference, 383
 Sixth Summit Conference,
 315, 408
 Unión del Pueblo (UP), 394
 Unión Insurreccional Revolucionaria (UIR), 184,
 201, 215
 Unión Nacionalista, 164
 Unión Republicana Democrata, 352
 Unión Revolucionaria Comunista, 164
 UNITA (Angola), 7, 31f, 313, 396, 403, 404,
 405, 417-423
 United Nations, 192, 203, 204, 367, 383, 405,
 424, 434, 437
 United Nations Security Council, 203
 United Nations, Cuban Delegation to, 313
 United States, 51-54, 59, 61, 62, 66, 75, 76,
 85
 United African National Council, 430
 United Party of the Socialist Revolution
 (PURS), 289
 University of Havana, 201, 205, 208, 210, 211,
 216, 235, 256, 260, 269
 University of New Mexico, 295
 University of Pittsburgh, 295
 Uober Volta, 364

Uria, Gen. Quirino, 200, 201
Urquiza, Congressman, 192
Urrutia, President Manuel, 236, 264, 269
Uruguay, 51, 356, 385, 386
Uruguayan military, 385

Vado del Yeso (Bolivia), 357
Vainstock, Dora, 143
Valdez Gonzalez, Gen. Amado, 463, 520
Valdés Menéndez, Ramiro, 219, 223, 238, 261, 274, 282, 442, 461, 502, 503
Valdeza Morejón, Juan, 186
Valdez, Gen. Gerónimo, 50
Valdés Daussá, Ramiro, 153
Valdés, Berardo, 142
Valdés, Miguel, 142
Valdés Rodríguez, José Manuel, 160
Valdés, Nelson P., 295
Valle del Cauca, 445
Valle Miranda, Ship Capt. Miguel, 487
Van Dunem, José (Angola), 404
Vara del Rey, Gen. Joaquín, 14, 96, 133
Varela Castro, Col. Manuel, 227, 263
Varela Conosa, Com. Joaquín, 266
Varela y Morales, Felipe, 54
Vargas, Getulio (Brazil), 359
Varkaziz, 432
Varona, Enrique José, 110
Vasallo, Ramón, 163
Vasconcelos, Ramón, 185
Vasserman, 142
Vázquez, Fabio (Colombia), 353
Vázquez, Francisco Miguel, 23
Vázquez Bello, Senator, 141, 142, 147
Vázquez Rojas, Genaro, 394
Vega de Morales, 87
Veguitas, 152
Velarde, Lt. Pedro, 40
Velasco Alvarado, President Raul, 384, 390, 391
Vélez Hernández, Gen. Félix, 518
Velázquez, Diego, 20, 21
Veliz Hernández, Brig. Gen., Félix, 462
Venezuela, 16, 20, 48, 49, 60, 63, 75, 79, 190, 240, 273, 348, 350, 352, 353, 373, 383, 394, 410
Venezuelan Armed Forces, 352
Venezuelan Communist Party, 352, 374, 410
Venezuelan Consulate (New York), 410
Venezuelan Embassy, 208
Venezuelan Party, 374
Ventura Novo, Col. Esteban, 226, 243, 258
Ventura, Capt. Juan de Dios, 349
Vera, Aldo, 238
Veracruz, 23, 145, 392

Verdecia Perdomo, Gen. Marcelo, 471, 518
Vereda Nueva, 84
Vernon, Adm., 24
Victoria de Girón Citrus Fruit Enterprises, 281
Vidal, Cruz, 151
Vidal Yebra, Capt. José M., 229
Viera, Joao Bernardino, 396 425
Viera Estrada, Gen. Roberto T., 471, 518
Viet Nam Heroico (Cuban Navy ship), 303, 401
Vietnam, 280, 290, 380, 414, 422, 440
Vietnam War, 13, 314, 379
Villa Clara, 66
Villa de Madrid (Spanish ship), 170
Villafañá, Capt. Vicente, 263
Villalón, Gen. José Ramón, 93
Villas (ship), 141
Villaverde, Cirilo, 51
Villegas, Capt. Harry, 375, 376
Vinent, Juliat A., 193
Virginia, 59, 82
Virginus (ship), 63
Virgó, Lt. Emilio, 229
Vitoria, 40
Vivas, Col. Ramón O., 215
Vizcalla, 50
VK750 SAM, 483
"voluntarios," 81
Vough-Sikorskys (planes), 170

Wacco (airplane), 170
Waldheim, (Sec. Gen. United Nations), 405
Walker, William, 54, 55
War of 1812, 43
Washington, Gen. George, 34, 35, 82
Washington, D.C., 6, 43, 93, 97, 123, 143, 144, 159, 171, 173, 198, 213, 222, 228, 235, 236, 267, 280, 281, 312, 393, 445
Watergate Affair, 281
Watterson, Capt., 168
Weathermen (U.S. terrorist group), 373
Wells, Amb. Sumner, 148, 155, 158
Wessin y Wessin, Col. José, 351
Westbrook, Joe, 225
West Central Africa, 365
West Germany, 427
Westbrook, Joe, 225
Western Air Brigade (Cuba), 478
Western Hemisphere, 2, 3
Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF), 406
Westland S-55 (helicopters), 235
West Point, 304
Weyler, Capt. Gen., 85, 87, 89, 90
Wheeler, Gen., 91
White House, 180

Whiteside, Col., 95
Wigdil, Arthur, 112
Wilkinson, General James, 45
William I, 423
Williamson, William (CIA), 230
Wong, Capt. Liborio, 60
Wood, Gen. Leonard, 91, 94-96, 100
North, Gen. William Jenkins, 50
WWI, 3, 128, 132, 133, 139, 140, 167, 423, 433
WWII, 3, 13, 164, 167, 169, 170, 179, 180, 182,
185, 189, 190, 203, 210, 224, 226, 270, 274,
275, 304, 364, 365, 424, 433

Yaguajay, 239
"Yara" (Cuban Navy ship, previous name Humberto
Rodríguez), 117, 141
Yara (Cuban town), 20-22
Yaracuy Mountains (Venezuela), 353
Yemen Arab Republic (North Yemen), 409, 410
Yhombi-Opongo, J., 367
Yon Sosa, Marco Antonio (See also "Jon"
Sosa) (Guatemala), 353
Yorktown (battle), 33-35
Young, Amb. Andrew, 402
Young Communist Union (Cuba), 442
Youth Labor Army, 233, 298, 413
Yucatan, 21, 47, 53, 60

Zacapa, 354
Zaire (See also Congo), 365, 368, 369, 399,
400, 405, 408
Zaire Armed Forces, 409
Zaldivar, Carmela, 152
Zaldivar, Rubén, (See Fulgencio Batista) 152
Zalkind, 144-146
Zambia, 365, 400, 415, 430
Zanzibar, 370
Zayas Bazan, Maj. Rogelio, 143
Zayas, Gen. Juan Bruno, 84
Zayas, Alfonso, 514
Zayas, Pres. Alfredo, 116, 104, 106, 107, 111,
114, 116, 120, 128, 133, 134,
Zenea, Juan Clemente, 34, 54
Zimbabwe (Formerly Rhodesia), 365, 374, 384
Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), 369,
424, 430, 431
Zimbabwe African Peoples' Union (ZAPU), 369,
430, 431
Zimbabwe Popular Union (ZAPU), 384
Zionists, 433
Ziin, 326
ZPU-2, 474
ZPU-4, 474
ZSU-23, 474

ZSU-57-2, 474
Zuluaga, Félix, 12

