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# **The Cuban Territorial Militia: An Expanded Source of Manpower for Cuba's Military Forces (U)**

**A Research Paper**

**Top Secret**

*IA 85-10046CX*

*June 1985*

*Copy 30*

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M – MORAY S – SPOKE U – UMBRA  
G – GAMMA



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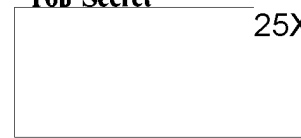
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### The Cuban Territorial Militia: An Expanded Source of Manpower for Cuba's Military Forces (U)

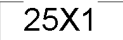
#### Summary

Information available as of mid-March 1985 was used in this report. (U)

The Territorial Militia Troops (Milicias Tropas Territoriales, or MTT) was formed in 1980 as a new Cuban reserve force, and it has since become an integral part of the country's defense structure. With a current strength of over 1.2 million, the primary missions of the MTT are fourfold:

- To defend local areas in the event of an invasion of Cuba.
- To support combat operations by constructing fortifications, emplacing obstacles, and providing essential rear services such as security patrols and traffic control.
- To augment or replace regular Cuban units in last-ditch defense efforts, despite having only rudimentary training and being lightly armed.
- To conduct guerrilla warfare should Cuba become occupied by foreign forces. (S  25X1)

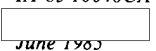
In addition to its formal missions, the MTT fulfills two other functions. According to special intelligence, special units of the MTT, or uniquely trained militia members with "special destinations," are helping the Nicaraguans establish their own militia force. These specially trained MTT personnel are possibly also serving as military advisers to other Nicaraguan para-military organizations. Another important MTT function is to politically indoctrinate a significant portion of the Cuban population in accordance with Castro's ideology. (TS  25X1)

There has been no attempt to make the MTT equal in military capability to the Cuban regular or reserve forces. A training system that includes schools and military instruction programs different than those of the regular Cuban military forces has been developed for the MTT. The militia is equipped with the types of small arms common throughout Cuba's regular forces, but has no heavy equipment or vehicles. Despite the limited amounts and types of weapons, enough are provided that, with the help of its ambitious training programs, the MTT is properly organized and equipped to accomplish its missions. (S  25X1)

The Militia strengthens Cuba's defense capabilities at limited cost and without any apparent adverse economic impact. We believe the MTT



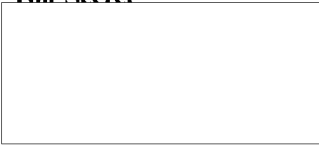
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will further mature, refining its training program and improving its defense capability. Its basic role in Cuba's defense strategy, however, is not likely to change. The MTT's dependence on the Cuban Defense Ministry for some of its funding probably will not change either, though it is supposed to be totally self-supporting. (S )

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## The Cuban Territorial Militia: An Expanded Source of Manpower for Cuba's Military Forces (U)

### Introduction

During the 1960s, the Cuban Armed Forces had between 250,000 and 300,000 men and women on active duty. When the Cuban economy worsened in the early 1970s the Cubans, with Soviet urging, reduced their regular forces to 120,000. The Cuban government also instituted a three-year obligatory term of service for most Cuban men and created regular reserve forces. This reduced the cost of maintaining the Armed Forces, which since then has been a combination of active duty and regular reserve units. The active duty component has grown gradually since the early 1970s to its present strength of about 150,000, and an additional 110,000 to 135,000 personnel are in the regular reserve component. (S [redacted])

An additional reserve force, called the Territorial Militia Troops (MTT), was formed in 1980 to encompass those people not already in the armed forces. The Castro ideology encourages revolutionary zeal and calls for all Cuban citizens to participate in defense. Militia training, in consonance with this view, helps keep the population ideologically aligned and disinclined toward dissent. (S [redacted])

### Missions

Open sources indicate that the primary mission of the MTT is to help defend the island against foreign aggression. Cuba considers the US its principal threat and has expected invasion several times. Most of the MTT consists of light infantry forces whose collective purpose is to protect their home localities. According to open sources, most defense scenarios for the MTT involve repelling an enemy paratroop assault or similar action. MTT units are probably assigned to defend specific local targets, such as bridges and radio relay stations, as well as homes and workplaces. (S [redacted])

Militia units are also assigned combat support missions, according to Cuban military journals. This role may be their most valuable contribution to the Cuban military, as it relieves many active duty and regular reserve units from a support role and frees them to concentrate on combat. Cuban military journals show that MTT units receive training and conduct exercises for building fighting positions and emplacing land mines and obstacles. They also train to provide security for selected facilities, control traffic, and direct military convoys. Further, the units practice aiding and relocating civilians and manufacturing articles such as ammunition pouches and uniforms (figure 1). Militia units also prepare and disseminate defense information and political propaganda to the civilian population. (S [redacted]) 25X1

Should Cuba become occupied by invading forces, MTT members are under standing orders to conduct guerrilla warfare to harass and weaken the occupying forces, according to the Cuban press. Militia members are encouraged to identify strongly with this guerrilla role, as it is in keeping with the revolutionary spirit of the Cuban Communist Party. (S [redacted]) 25X1

Our analysis of all available information indicates that MTT units are decidedly inferior in training, equipment, and capability to their active duty and regular reserve counterparts in the Cuban military. They nonetheless are considered integral to the defense force. The MTT could conceivably augment or even assume the mission of some of Cuba's regular forces in island defense, although they would probably do so only under extraordinary circumstances—for example, if a lightly defended area were attacked unexpectedly, or in an overall final defensive effort. (S [redacted]) 25X1

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**Figure 1**  
**MTT Member Making Ammunition Pouch, 17 May 1984**



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The MTT also plays a political role. Political indoctrination is a vital aspect of military training in Cuba, as in most communist societies, and the political officer holds an important position in the force structure of all Cuban armed forces—including the MTT. The MTT's provincial structure allows the Cuban government to reach more people individually with their intense indoctrination programs than are reached through conventional civilian propaganda methods, such as broadcasts and posters. (S [redacted])

With its revolutionary overtones, the MTT is an excellent propaganda generator for the Cuban Communist Party. A great deal of Cuban press coverage praises the country's militiamen, and features stories detailing their heroic resolve and numerous sacrifices. Many militia training events are undoubtedly staged or timed for propaganda purposes. MTT units are often the showpieces of civil defense exercises in Cuba and frequently are featured in Cuban military magazines. Well-orchestrated provincial exercises (recent examples being Baluarte 84 and Defensa 84) involve civilians in defense scenarios, but highlight MTT units simu-

lating combat missions. These staged exercises usually involve repelling an enemy airborne attack or beach landing. (S [redacted])

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Joining the MTT has apparently become a politically astute thing to do for party members and political climbers. A human source of undetermined reliability reports that aspiring party members view MTT membership almost as obligatory, suggesting that some MTT leaders may exert more effort making good political contacts than in developing their military skills. (S [redacted])

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### Organization

The MTT is an organization of Cuban citizen-soldiers. It is most aptly described as a Home Guard and consists of citizens who have received some military training. The MTT is subordinate to the Ministry of the Armed Forces (MINFAR), as are the rest of the Cuban ground, navy, air, and air defense forces and regular reserves. In late 1983, MINFAR announced that the position of Deputy Minister for the MTT was created in the MINFAR and a division general was appointed, his stature indicating the importance of the position. An MTT Directorate was established at the same time within the MINFAR general staff, which the Deputy Minister for the MTT heads. (C)

The MTT's structure, as established by the Directorate, consists of conventionally organized platoons, companies, battalions, regiments, and divisions. Cuban military journals indicate that there is also one army corps uniquely organized in the Havana area. An unsubstantiated human source described the strength of an MTT regiment at just under 2,000 members. According to this source, a regiment consists of four infantry battalions, one sapper company, one communications and reconnaissance company, one service company, one artillery battery (most equipped with mortars), one bazooka company, a medical unit, and a regimental Headquarters (figure 2). The elements of a single regiment may be scattered over several municipalities or provinces. (S [redacted])

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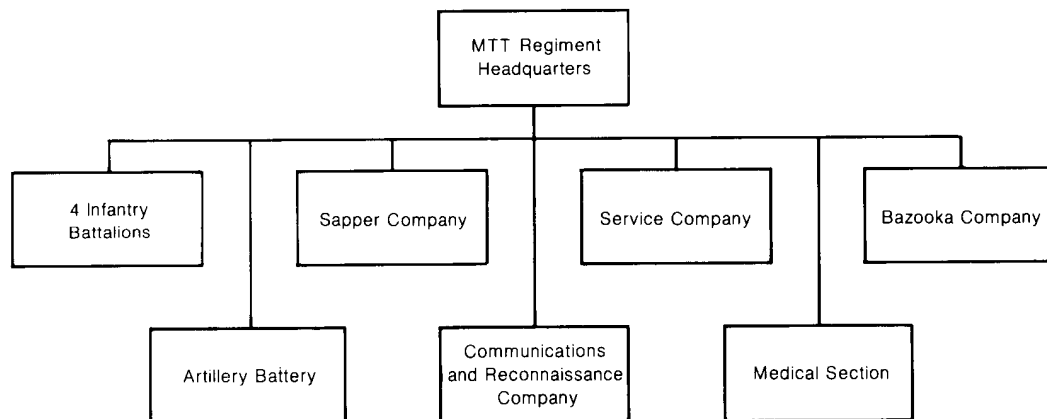
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**Figure 2**  
**Organization of An MTT Regiment**



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The organizational structure of MTT units parallels provincial subdivisions within the country. Each provincial and municipal people's president (roughly equivalent to a state or county chief executive) has a FAR officer assigned to him for Militia matters.<sup>1</sup> This officer is the Military Adjunct to the President and frequently is referred to as the MTT Chief of Staff for that area. A human source of undetermined reliability reports that commanders for MTT regiments and divisions are regular FAR officers with command experience. Commanders of lower-level units are appointed from within the MTT. (S)

The MTT Corps in Havana City is different from other MTT units. A Cuban military journal states that the FAR officers serving as instructors at the Maximo Gomez Revolutionary Armed Forces Academy, in Havana city, also command the MTT units that make up the Corps; the academy direc-

<sup>1</sup>FAR is the abbreviation for Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias, which translates to Revolutionary Armed Forces. This term refers to all regular career soldiers, conscripts on active duty, and Cuban reservists. References to battalions or schools alone denote an active duty or regular reserve unit. Territorial Militia units are always separately identified as MTT battalions, MTT schools, and so on. (U)

tor serves as corps commander. The academy faculty wrote the MTT regulations and developed the training courses for MTT units and command cadres. (U)

Open source references to MTT units show that they are identified by three-digit military unit numbers (MUNs), as opposed to four-digit numbers for FAR units. The exceptions are MTT training schools, which also have four-digit MUNs—perhaps denoting their full-time status (see appendix). The three-digit MUNs for militia units correspond with geographic areas (figure 3). MUNs in the 100 sequence are MTT units from Havana City Province—the MTT Corps there is MUN 163, for example. Militia units with 200 and 300 identifiers are in the central provinces of Sancti Spiritus, Villa Clara, Cienfuegos, and Matanzas. The 400, 500, and 600 identifiers are in the eastern provinces of Guantanamo, Granma, Holguin, Santiago de Cuba, and Camaguey. The 700 identifiers are in Pinar del Rio Province. (C)

The MTT has nearly doubled in size since mid-1982, and open sources place its current strength at over 1.2 million, out of a total population of 10

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million. Membership is open to any Cuban citizens who do not have active or reserve military obligations. Thus, a large part of some MTT units are composed of women, and men too old or young to be regular soldiers or active reservists. The main criteria for membership seems to be that the individual be physically capable of participating in training. Membership is "voluntary," though pressure to volunteer is probably exerted on individuals in some areas where recruitment falls short of goals. (S [redacted])

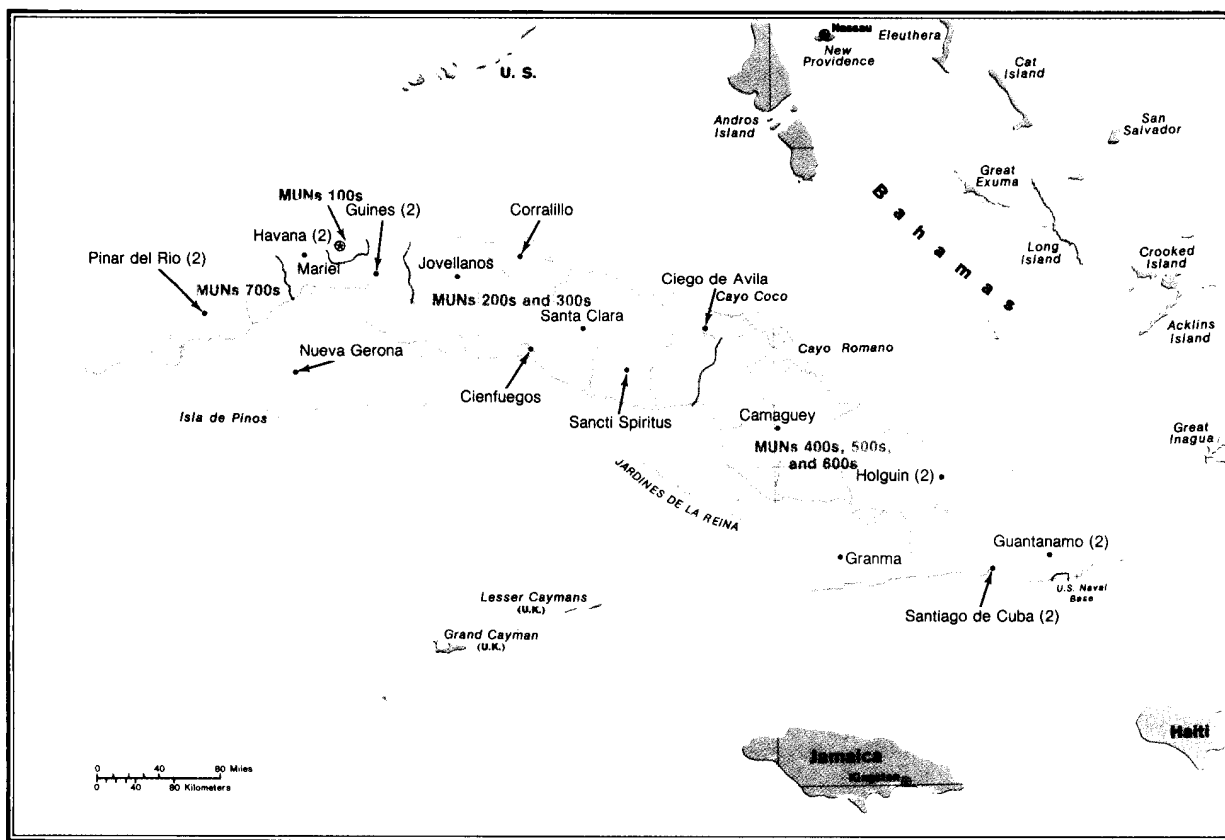
- 16-to-25-year-olds who are exempted from active service (usually university students).
- 25-to-60-year-olds who are less physically capable for combat. They are mainly oriented towards civil defense activities, such as shelter construction, defense of the workplace, and aiding civilians.
- Special Units who have received unique training and have "special destinations" (one of which may recently have been Nicaragua). Their mission and disposition remain obscure. (S [redacted])

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Militia members fall into three categories:

Figure 3  
Location of MTT Training Centers



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**MTT Special Forces:  
The Cuban-Nicaraguan Connection**

*Special intelligence indicates that special MTT units have been formed in eastern Cuba. The precise mission and disposition of these units is not known, but at least one MTT unit underwent special training in preparation for deployment to Nicaragua. Special Intelligence has indicated that individual MTT members were sent to a military school identified as El Cacho, in western Cuba, before leaving for Nicaragua in September 1984. Significantly, Nicaragua has started its own territorial militia, patterned after the Cuban MTT organization. Some, if not all, of the Cuban militiamen sent to Nicaragua probably went to help organize and train the Nicaraguan militia. (TS [Redacted])*

*Cuba has sent civilians to Nicaragua since 1979 as educators, technicians, and administrators under Cuba's general assistance program to Nicaragua. We currently estimate that there are between 3,775 and 4,725 Cuban civilians in Nicaragua.<sup>a</sup> Since the US action in Grenada in October 1983, all civilians sent by Cuba to Nicaragua have had some military training, and it is highly likely that some are Territorial Militia members. (S [Redacted])*

*The number and distribution of the Cubans in Nicaragua are such that in the major population centers there are probably enough to form all-Cuban militia units. Open press sources have stated that Cubans in Nicaragua will fight alongside their Sandinista counterparts if necessary, and that "no more Grenadas" will occur. A source of undetermined reliability said that Cubans in Nicaragua have been told where to report for military duty in the event of a US invasion of Nicaragua. (S [Redacted])*

*Whether Cuban militia members sent to Nicaragua as civilian specialists are performing those jobs, or whether they are using their titles as covers for military roles, is not known. By using civilian positions as a screen, however, Cuba and Nicaragua could more easily conceal the true number of Cuban military personnel in Nicaragua. (S [Redacted])*

<sup>a</sup>For further information on the Cuban presence in Nicaragua, see OIA Research Paper IA 85-10039C, (TS [Redacted] May 1985, *Cubans in Nicaragua: Castro's Continuing Commitment to the Sandinistas*. (S [Redacted])

**Training and Equipment**

The MTT has a training program distinct from that of the rest of Cuba's military forces. Most militia members receive basic training at one of approximately 22 MTT military training centers or MTT schools located throughout Cuba (figure 3), according to Cuban military journals. Each of Cuba's 15 provinces has at least one center to train militia command cadres, either exclusively or in conjunction with courses for non-cadre militiamen (figure 4).<sup>2</sup> Satellite imagery confirms open source reporting that several abandoned military facilities have been reopened and refurbished to become MTT training centers. Also, many new centers have been built—often under short deadlines, which underscores the importance placed on these 25X1 schools. The schools are the only facilities associated with the MTT that can be seen on overhead photography. Individual MTT units may have only an equipment room and perhaps a small-arms range at their disposal in their own locale. (S [Redacted] 25X1 [Redacted] 25X1)

Several Cuban sources of undetermined reliability have described militia training programs for both militia officers and enlisted personnel. The training centers, staffed mainly by regular FAR officers and instructors, give a variety of courses developed by the faculty at Cuba's military academy. New militia officers first receive a 45-day course at an MTT school, and eventually attend either a 5 1/2- or 11-month course for command cadres. Whether the brief or longer version is attended may depend on the time that can be devoted to such training with respect to one's civilian occupation, or the specific skills required for the position. For example, a course qualifying a political or artillery officer for the MTT would probably require 11 months of training, compared to a 5 1/2-month session for an infantry officer. (S [Redacted] 25X1 [Redacted] 25X1)

All militia members are required to participate in a concentrated 10-day training program at the battalion level every 5 years (figure 5). These programs, conducted at the MTT training centers, 25X1

<sup>2</sup>Cuba has 13 provinces, but the Isle of Youth and Havana City are also counted as provinces in the MTT organization. (S [Redacted] 25X1 [Redacted] 25X1)

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consist of daily military classes and field exercises, as well as political study, sports, and physical training. The training centers hold a 5-day cadre course for each battalion command group prior to each 10-day course for the entire unit, so that command groups can help train their units. Special courses for political officers and regimental and battalion staffs are also part of the MTT school curriculum. (S )

a training center. The local training is conducted by both militia cadre and FAR advisers to the MTT. New MTT recruits receive 22 hours of preliminary training, including target practice, before taking their military oath. Militia unit training is usually for four hours one Sunday per month, 10 months per year. This 40-hour training requirement is halved every fifth year, when the 10-day training event occurs. (S )

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Most of an enlisted militiaman's training takes place in his own home locality with his unit, not at

Most of the available information on militia training comes from Cuban open press sources. Given

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**Figure 5**  
**MTT Member Undergoing Training, 17 May 1984**



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their obvious propaganda viewpoint, it is difficult to say how effective the militia training program is—for example, there is no reporting on how seriously it is taken. Some special intelligence reports have made reference to periodic breakdowns in supply and transportation support for some MTT schools, but this is unlikely to seriously degrade training operations. Most of the exercises reported in the open press appear to be relatively simple, but nonetheless they strongly support the militia's primary mission of defending and securing their home locales. (S [redacted])

The MTT is equipped with an assortment of standard Soviet-manufactured light arms typically found throughout the Cuban forces: light machine-guns, antitank weapons, and 82-mm mortars, as well as rifles and pistols. There is no evidence of heavier weapons and equipment or vehicles being assigned to MTT units, although civilian vehicles may be routinely used. In an emergency MTT units are probably to use readily available civilian transportation, tools, and materials, and to draw on local areas for medical supplies. They undoubtedly receive ammunition allotments, first aid supplies, and civil defense equipment from the FAR each year, though probably in small quantities. (TS [redacted])

### Economic Impact

The MTT was designed to be a self-supporting organization, according to a former Cuban government official. Members, who receive no pay, purchase their own uniforms and equipment, but weapons are provided by the Soviet Union. Other expenses are defrayed by contributions from labor organizations and fund drives. Despite these measures, the Cuban Ministry of Armed Forces (MIN-FAR) still has to help support the MTT, especially by funding training programs. According to a Cuban government official quoted in an open source, the MTT cost \$66 million from 1 May 1980 to 15 March 1982. Of this amount, the Cuban national and local governments had to provide \$25 million, the rest being covered by fund drives. (C)

Although the MTT has not been totally self-supporting, the cost is much less than that necessary to maintain a large standing army. Although it is of lesser quality than other Cuban military forces, the MTT has moderately increased Cuba's defense posture, while permitting most militia members to hold full-time civilian jobs. (S [redacted])

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### Outlook

We believe the MTT is firmly entrenched as part of the Cuban military structure, and the Cuban government will continue to commit the necessary resources for the MTT's training and development. (S [redacted])

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The MTT has grown very rapidly during the last three years, but the rate will inevitably slow as the majority of those eligible for membership become recruited. Cuban officials have projected an eventual militia strength of 2.5 million. This figure probably will not be reached for several years, if at all, as it most likely hinges unrealistically on retaining most members from the original recruiting drive and adding new members as they reach eligible age or finish other military obligations. (S [redacted])

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The training programs will probably improve. The force and its training program are barely five years old, and consequently it is reasonable to expect that as militia members gain experience, the quality and thoroughness of the training will be enhanced. (S [Redacted])

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The MTT is not likely to take on new missions or roles. Its organization and training now support its assigned missions, but the force cannot do more without considerably upgrading its equipment, training, and support. The MTT was obviously created to perform specific roles within Cuba. MTT units will probably not deploy outside of Cuba—or even outside of their own localities within the country—except for limited numbers of militiamen on special missions, as in Nicaragua's case. (S [Redacted])

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## Appendix

Locations of MTT Units and Schools<sup>a</sup>

MTT Units and Schools	Location	MTT Units and Schools	Location
Aleyda Fernandez School	Guines (Havana)	San Rafael MTT School	Santiago De Cuba
Andre Voisin MTT School	Guines (Havana)	Santa Ana MTT School	Camaguey
Auxiliary Officers MTT School	Unknown	Santa Rosa MTT School	Villa Clara
Baracoa MTT School	Guantanamo	Santiago De Cuba MTT School	Santiago De Cuba
Bartolome MTT School	Villa Clara	Sibamiecu MTT School	Camaguey
Camilo Cienfuegos MTT School	Holguin	Turiquano MTT School	Unknown
Columna Invasora Ciro Redon	Granma	U/I <sup>c</sup> MTT Rapid Deployment (Guantanamo) Force	Baracoa
Commandante Camilo Cienfuegos	Unknown	U/I MTT Unit	Imias (Guantanamo)
Commandante Pinares MTT School	Guillen (Pinar Del Rio)	U/I MTT Unit	San Antonio Del Sur (Guantanamo)
Commandante Gust Macil Beche	Vuelta Abajo (Pinar Del Rio)	U/I MTT School	Nueva Gerona (Isle of Youth)
Corallilo MTT School	Villa Clara	U/I MTT School	Bueycito
El Cacho MTT School (MUN 1790 and 3257)	Los Palacios (Pinar Del Rio)	Yateritas MTT School	San Antonio Del Sur (Guantanamo)
Gen Antonio Maceo Far	Havana Province	101 MTT Regiment	Havana City
Gen Jose Maceo MTT School	Santiago De Cuba	112 MTT Regiment	Diez De Octubre (Havana City)
Havana City Province MTT School <sup>b</sup>	Colinas De Villareal (Havana City)	113 MTT Regiment	Diez De Octubre (Havana City)
La Coronella MTT School <sup>b</sup>	Havana City (Reparto Alamar)	115 MTT Battalion	Guanabacoas (Havana City)
La Yuca MTT School	Cienfuegos	117 MTT Regiment	Diez De Octubre (Havana City)
Los Cocos School	Holguin	118 MTT Regiment	Cerro (Havana City)
Mariel MTT Officers School (MUN 5881)	Mariel (Havana)	123 MTT Battalion	Guanabacoa
Micara Military School	Mayari	123 MTT Regiment	Regla District (Havana City)
MTT Cadre Formation School	Elguea, Corallilo (Villo Clara)	144 MTT Regiment	Diez De Octubre (Havana City)
MTT center in Marti	Marti (Matanzas)	147 MTT Division	Havana City
MTT Training Center Central Army	Santa Rosa, Remedios (Villa Clara)	154 MTT Regiment	University of Havana
National Civil Defense School	Unknown	163 MTT Corps	Havana City
Purino MTT School	Holguin		

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**Locations of MTT Units and Schools<sup>a</sup> (continued)**

MTT Units and Schools	Location	MTT Units and Schools	Location
182 MTT Regiment	Havana City	446 MTT Regiment	Santa Cruz Del Sur (Camaguey)
201 MTT Division	Matanzas Province	459 MTT Regiment	Camaguey City
202 MTT Regiment	Matanzas	500 MTT Regiment	Ciego De Avila Province
204 MTT Battalion	Matanzas (Possibly Buey Jaca)	506 MTT Regiment	Palma Soriano (Santiago De Cuba)
262 MTT Regiment	Juan Francisco, Yaguajay, Sancti Spiritus	5184 MTT School	Mariel (Havana)
290 MTT Regiment	Camajuani (Villa Clara)	570 MTT Regiment	Bayamo (Granma)
290 MTT Battalion	Fomento Sancti Spiritus (El Pedrero)	573 MTT Battalion	El Salvador (Guantanamo)
309 MTT Regiment	Placetas (Villa Clara)	578 MTT Battalion	Santiago De Cuba
310 MTT Division	Villa Clara, Santa Clara	579 MTT Battalion	El Salvador (Guantanamo)
315 MTT Regiment	Abel Santia Maria Plaza (Santa Clara)	590 MTT Regiment	Bayamo (Granma)
317 MTT Regiment	Ranchuelo (Villa Clara)	591 MTT Battalion	El Salvador (Guantanamo)
321 MTT Regiment	Sangua la Grande (Villa Clara)	612 MTT Regiment	Guantanamo City
332 MTT Regiment	Manicaragua (Villa Clara)	641 MTT Regiment	Segundo Frente (S. De Cuba)
360 MTT Regiment	Cienfuegos City	6461 MTT School	Holguin <sup>d</sup>
363 MTT Regiment	Enerucijada (Villa Clara)	654 MTT Regiment	Guantanamo City
375 MTT Regiment	Santa Clara (Villa Clara)	661 MTT Regiment	Guantanamo City
379 U/I MTT Unit	Caibarien (Villa Clara)	690 MTT Regiment	Santiago De Cuba
420 MTT Division	Holguin City	712 MTT Battalion	Minas De Matahambre (Pinar Del Rio)
431 MTT Regiment	Cruce De Los Banos, Tercer Frente	748 MTT Regiment	Sumidero (Minas De Matahambre)
		779 MTT Regiment	Vinales (Pinar Del Rio)
		Province MTT School	Jovellanos (Matanzas)

<sup>a</sup>This list was compiled from open sources, and is not necessarily complete. Some schools or units may be listed twice under different names, or once by name and once by MUN. Because sources refer to these schools variously by names or MUNs, some confusion results. In some cases two MTT Schools, one for cadres and one for troops, are collocated. Some units have been referenced in sources, but remain unlocated.

This appendix is Secret

<sup>b</sup>Probably two names for the same school.

<sup>c</sup>U/I Unidentified.

<sup>d</sup>This school in Holguin province is named either Los Cocos or Camilo Cienfuegos, both of which are listed by name in the appendix as well.

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