



Report

Cuba -- Military's Profile in State Media Limited, Positive

President Raul Castro was atypically visible and engaged during a Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR) exercise in late 2009, but more commonly he presents himself as a civilian rather than military leader. Current senior military officers maintain a largely ceremonial presence in state media, where the military receives limited but overwhelmingly favorable coverage.

Raul Castro Selectively Shown in Uniform

State media highlighted Castro's close involvement in the 27- 29 November 2009 "Bastion" exercise -- held every four years -- but most public appearances show him in a non-military context.^a

- Coverage of Castro during the exercises included rare audio bites, and he was shown chairing meetings and interacting closely with participants, reinforcing his image as an experienced commander (Cubavision, 27-29 November 2009).^{1 2 3}
- Castro appeared in uniform in about one-fourth of his media appearances during 2009, down from just over a third in 2008. He consistently wears a uniform to military-related events, but there appears to be no pattern to his other appearances in uniform.^b
- Castro generally meets foreign visitors wearing a suit or a more casual guayabera, but he wore a uniform to receive the South African foreign minister, the Angolan defense minister, and the Brazilian minister of development, industry, and foreign trade (Cubavision, 3 December 2009, 10 July 2009, 17 June 2009).^{4 5 6} While he appeared in uniform at a Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA) summit in Venezuela in April 2009, he wore a guayabera to other ALBA summits in June and December (Cubavision, 17 April 2009, 30 June 2009, 14 December 2009).^{7 8 9}

Defense, Military Officials' Portrayal Largely Ceremonial

Senior defense and military officials -- the defense ministers, three vice ministers, and regional army chiefs -- who saw considerable turnover between February 2008 and January 2009, maintained a limited and largely ceremonial presence in state media.^c

^a For information on Castro's media profile image after formally assuming the presidency, see the 8 January 2009 OSC Analysis, **Raul Castro Using State Media To Cement Image as Cuba's Top Leader** (LAF20090109420001).

^b Data on leadership appearances are based on a review of OSC's weekly "Cuban Leaders' Activities" series.

- Senior defense officials appeared slightly less often in 2009 than they did in 2008, when most of the turnover occurred, including the creation of two additional FAR vice minister positions and the replacement of two of three regional army chiefs. FAR Minister Julio Casas Regueiro appeared in state media on 10 occasions in 2009, down from 14 times in 2008. The most visible military leader is FAR Vice Minister and Corps General Leopoldo Cintra Frias, who appeared two fewer times in 2009 (17) than in 2008 (19). Cintra is the only military leader reported to have traveled abroad.^d
- Cuban military officials also received prominent coverage during the "Bastion" exercise, but otherwise they generally are only seen attending anniversary celebrations or military ceremonies and graduations. Casas was shown meeting with Russian and African military leaders in 2009, and Cintra also met with Russian and African leaders at home and abroad (Cubavision, 9 December 2009, 13 November 2009, 18 September 2009, 28 April 2009, 5 February 2009 24 January 2009).^{10 11 12 13 14 15}
- Regional Army Chiefs Rodriguez, Aguilera, and Morales -- all division generals -- were less visible in Cuban media during 2009 than their predecessors were in 2008. Eastern Army Chief Aguilera, appointed on 5 January 2009, appeared only eight times, while his predecessor, Corps General Ramon Espinosa, appeared 18 times in 2008, although some of these were related to the three hurricanes that hit Cuba that year.
- Central Army Chief Rodriguez appeared three times in 2009; his predecessor Corps General Joaquin Quintas, appeared nine times until he was appointed FAR vice minister in May 2008. Western Army Chief Morales appeared six times in 2009; his predecessor, Cintra, appeared 17 times before being promoted to vice minister in October.

Military Coverage Favorable Compared to Civilians; Economic Role Ignored

More generally, state media portray the military as a model of collective and individual performance, but regularly find fault with civilian agencies and workers. State media gave the "Bastion" exercise high-profile treatment, but coverage of the military is generally limited and silent on the subject of FAR involvement in the Cuban economy.

- State media in 2009 repeatedly reported on shortcomings in transportation, agriculture, construction, and the service industries -- which are run by civilians -- but had only one

^c For information on those changes, see the 11 February 2009 OSC Report, **Cuban Military Leadership Undergoes Changes Over Past Year** (LAP20090211467001).

^d Data on leadership appearances are based on a review of OSC's weekly "Cuban Leaders' Activities" series.

mildly critical report on the military: a call for improved living conditions for active duty soldiers which allowed that some improvements were already under way (Cubavision, 24 May 2009).¹⁶ ^e Radio Rebelde directly contrasted what it praised as the immediate FAR response to the 2008 hurricanes, in contrast to the slow pace of civilian-led recovery work (2 September 2009).¹⁷

- Cubavision dedicated an average of 10 minutes during the noon and evening newscasts to coverage of "Bastion," and party daily *Granma* featured a special section (26-30 November 2009).^{18 19 20 21 22} Media coverage of the military usually is limited to reporting on ceremonial events (Cubavision, 27 October 2009; 22, 15 June 2009; 22 April 2009).^{23 24 25 26}
- State media have occasionally profiled various FAR specialties such as snipers and tank drivers, praising their dedication and highlighting their extensive training (*Juventud Rebelde.cu*, 23 November 2009; *Granma Online*, 24 June 2009, 23 April 2009).^{27 28 29} They also have quoted soldiers commenting favorably on their experiences while in training (Cubavision, 19 November 2009, 21, 14 July 2009; AIN, 4 April 2009; *Granma Online*, 31 January 2009).^{30 31 32 33 34}
- State media are generally silent on the FAR's role in Cuba's economy. An off-island website claimed that it had taken over several hard currency retail outlets, but failed to improve the availability or quality of products (CubaNet, 10 January 2010, 30 November 2009, 25 August 2009).

^e For information on Cuban media coverage of shortcomings in other economic sectors, see the 1 February OSC Report, **Cuba -- Minimal Progress Toward Greater Food Self-Sufficiency** (LAP20100201498001), the 5 August 2009 OSC Report, **Cuba -- Commentators Urge Further Labor Reform, Cite Obstacles**, and the 26 June 2009 OSC Analysis, **Cuban Media Seek To Ease Public Concern Over Economy** (LAF20090626463001).

¹ [OSC | | LAP20091127391002 | 27 November 2009 | | Program Summary: Havana Cubavision NTV Spanish 0100 GMT 27 Nov 09 [HAV] | | (U) | (U) | Havana Cubavision in Spanish -- government owned, government-controlled television station]

² [OSC | | LAP20091128391001 | 28 November 2009 | | Program Summary: Havana Cubavision NTV Spanish 0100 GMT 28 Nov 09 [HAV] | | (U) | Description of Source: Havana Cubavision in Spanish -- government owned, government-controlled television station]

³ [OSC | | LAP20091130464001 | 30 November 2009 | | Program Summary: Havana Cubavision NTV Spanish 0100 GMT 30 Nov 09 [HAV] | | (U) | (U) | Havana Cubavision in Spanish -- government owned, government-controlled television station]

⁴ [OSC | | LAP20091203391005 | 3 Dec 2009 | | Program Summary: Havana Cubavision NTV Spanish 1800 GMT 3 Dec 09 [HAV] | | (U) | (U) | Description of Source: Havana Cubavision in Spanish -- government owned, government-controlled television station]

⁵ [OSC | | LAP20090710391002 | 10 July 2009 | | Program Summary: Havana Cubavision NTV Spanish 1700 GMT 10 Jul 09 [HAV] | | (U) | Description of Source: Havana Cubavision in Spanish -- government owned, government-controlled television station]

⁶ [OSC | | LAP20090617499001 | 17 June 2009 | | Program Summary: Havana Cubavision NTV Spanish 0000 GMT 17 Jun 09 [HAV] | | (U) | (U) | Havana Cubavision in Spanish -- government owned, government-controlled television station]

⁷ [OSC | | LAP20090417380003 | 17 April 2009 | | Program Summary: Havana Cubavision NTV Spanish 0000 GMT 17 Apr 09 [HAV] | | (U) | Description of Source: Havana Cubavision in Spanish -- government owned, government-controlled television station]

⁸ [OSC | | LAP20090630391001 | 30 June 2009 | | Program Summary: Havana Cubavision NTV Spanish 0000 GMT 30 Jun 09 [HAV] | | (U) | (U) | Havana Cubavision in Spanish -- government owned, government-controlled television station]

⁹ [OSC | | LAP20091214361001 | 14 December 2009 | | Program Summary: Havana Cubavision NTV Spanish 0100 GMT 14 Dec 09 [HAV] | | (U) | (U) | Havana Cubavision in Spanish -- government owned, government-controlled television station]

¹⁰ [OSC | | LAP20091209499002 | 9 Dec 2009 | | Program Summary: Havana Cubavision NTV Spanish 0100 GMT 9 Dec 09 [HAV] | | (U) | Description of Source: Havana Cubavision in Spanish -- government owned, government-controlled television station]

¹¹ [OSC | | LAP20091113391002 | 13 November 2009 | | Program Summary: Havana Cubavision NTV Spanish 1800 GMT 13 Nov 09 [HAV] | | (U) | (U) | Havana Cubavision in Spanish -- government owned, government-controlled television station]

¹² [OSC | | | 18 September 2009 | | Program Summary: Havana Cubavision NTV Spanish 0000 GMT 18 Sep 09 [HAV] | | (U) | (U) | Havana Cubavision in Spanish -- government owned, government-controlled television station]

¹³ [OSC | | LAP20090428391001 | 28 April 2009 | | Program Summary: Havana Cubavision NTV Spanish 1700 GMT 28 Apr 09 [HAV] | | (U) | Description of Source: Havana Cubavision in Spanish -- government owned, government-controlled television station]

¹⁴ [OSC | | LAP20090205391002 | 5 Feb 2009 | | Program Summary: Havana Cubavision NTV Spanish 0100 GMT 5 Feb 09 [HAV] | | (U) | Description of Source: Havana Cubavision in Spanish -- government owned, government-controlled television station]

¹⁵ [OSC | | LAP20090124499001 | 24 January 2009 | | Program Summary: Havana Cubavision NTV Spanish 0100 GMT 24 Jan 09 [HAV] | | (U) | (U) | Havana Cubavision in Spanish -- government owned, government-controlled television station]

¹⁶ [OSC | | LAP20090524499001 | 24 May 2009 | | Program Summary: Havana Cubavision NTV Spanish 0000 GMT 24 May 09 [HAV] | | (U) | Description of Source: Havana Cubavision in Spanish -- government owned, government-controlled television station]

This OSC product is based exclusively on the content and behavior of selected media and has not been coordinated with other US Government components.

- ¹⁷ [OSC | | LAP20090909391006 | 9 Sep 2009 | | Program Summary: Havana Radio Rebelde 1000 GMT 9 Sep 09 | | (U) | Description of Source: Havana Radio Rebelde in Spanish -- leading government radio station; Cuba's preeminent domestic radio network]
- ¹⁸ [OSC | | LAP20091127391002 | 27 November 2009 | | Program Summary: Havana Cubavision NTV Spanish 0100 GMT 27 Nov 09 [HAV] | | (U) | (U) | Havana Cubavision in Spanish -- government owned, government-controlled television station]
- ¹⁹ [OSC | | LAP20091128391001 | 28 November 2009 | | Program Summary: Havana Cubavision NTV Spanish 0100 GMT 28 Nov 09 [HAV] | | (U) | Description of Source: Havana Cubavision in Spanish -- government owned, government-controlled television station]
- ²⁰ [OSC | | LAP20091129464001 | 29 November 2009 | | Program Summary: Havana Cubavision NTV Spanish 0100 GMT 29 Nov 09 [HAV] | | (U) | (U) | Havana Cubavision in Spanish -- government owned, government-controlled television station]
- ²¹ [OSC | | LAP20091130464001 | 30 November 2009 | | Program Summary: Havana Cubavision NTV Spanish 0100 GMT 30 Nov 09 [HAV] | | (U) | (U) | Havana Cubavision in Spanish -- government owned, government-controlled television station]
- ²² [Open Source (Not OSC) | | <http://www.granma.cubaweb.cu/secciones/bastion-2009/index.html> | 26 November 2009 | | BASTIÓN 2009: LA GUERRA DE TODO EL PUEBLO | | (U) |]
- ²³ [OSC | | LAP20091027380001 | 27 Oct 2009 | | Program Summary: Havana Cubavision NTV Spanish 0100 GMT 27 Oct 09 [HAV] | | (U) | Description of Source: Havana Cubavision in Spanish -- government owned, government-controlled television station]]
- ²⁴ [OSC | | LAP20090622361001 | 22 June 2009 | | Program Summary: Havana Cubavision NTV Spanish 0000 GMT 22 Jun 09 [HAV] | | (U) | Description of Source: Havana Cubavision in Spanish -- government owned, government-controlled television station]
- ²⁵ [OSC | | LAP20090615499001 | 15 June 2009 | | Program Summary: Havana Cubavision NTV Spanish 0000 GMT 15 Jun 09 [HAV] | | (U) | (U) | Havana Cubavision in Spanish -- government owned, government-controlled television station]
- ²⁶ [OSC | | LAP20090422380001 | 22 April 2009 | | Program Summary: Havana Cubavision NTV Spanish 0000 GMT 22 Apr 09 [HAV] | | (U) | Description of Source: Havana Cubavision in Spanish -- government owned, government-controlled television station]
- ²⁷ [OSC | | LAP20091124464001 | 23 November 2009 | | Cuban Daily Highlights Military Weaponry | | (U) | (U) | Havana Juventud Rebelde.cu in Spanish -- Website of daily published by the Union of Young Communists, UJC; URL: <http://www.juventudrebelde.cu/>]
- ²⁸ [OSC | | LAP20090624499001 | 24 June 2009 | | Cuba: Granma Highlights Importance of Snipers to Armed Forces | | (U) | Description of Source: Havana Granma Online in Spanish -- Website of the official daily of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba; URL: <http://www.granma.cubaweb.cu/>]
- ²⁹ [OSC | | LAP20090423361003 | 23 April 2009 | | Cuba: Training Advances Improve Tank Operators' Readiness | | (U) | Description of Source: Havana Granma Online in Spanish -- Website of the official daily of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba; URL: <http://www.granma.cubaweb.cu/>]
- ³⁰ [OSC | | LAP20091119391005 | 19 Nov 2009 | | Program Summary: Havana Cubavision NTV Spanish 1800 GMT 19 Nov 09 [HAV] | | (U) | Description of Source: Havana Cubavision in Spanish -- government owned, government-controlled television station]
- ³¹ [OSC | | LAP20090721391002 | 21 July 2009 | | Program Summary: Havana Cubavision NTV Spanish 1700 GMT 21 Jul 09 [HAV] | | (U) | (U) | Havana Cubavision in Spanish -- government owned, government-controlled television station]
- ³² [OSC | | LAP20090714499006 | 14 July 2009 | | Program Summary: Havana Cubavision NTV Spanish 1700 GMT 14 Jul 09 [HAV] | | (U) | (U) | Havana Cubavision in Spanish -- government owned, government-controlled television station]
- ³³ [OSC | | LAP20090406391004 | 4 April 2009 | | Cuban Naval Cadets Initiate Training Voyage | | (U) | Description of Source: Havana ACN in Spanish -- Official news agency; a division of AIN (Cuba's National News Agency); URL: <http://www.ain.cu/>]

³⁴ [OSC | | LAP20090201380004 | 31 January 2009 | | Cuba: Article Discusses FAR Officer Training | | (U) | Description of Source: Havana Granma (Internet Version-WWW) in Spanish -- Official daily of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba. Internet: <http://www.granma.cubaweb.cu/>]

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