

2026

CUBAN INTELLIGENCE



• PAX[®] •
CONSULTING

Pax Consulting

25-07-2026

Index

1. SCOPE 3

2. CONTEMPORARY CUBAN INTELLIGENCE 3

3. RUSSIAN HUMINT AND TECHNICAL INTEGRATION..... 4

4. SINO-RUSSIAN SIGINT EXPANSION IN THE CARIBBEAN..... 5

5. REGIONAL IMPACT..... 7

 5.1 Affected regional actors.....7

6. STRATEGIC OUTLOOK..... 8

7. SOFT POWER USED BY CUBA..... 10

1. SCOPE

Cuba is at odds with the current Trump administration. **Pressure is mounting** on the regime which nominally controls President Díaz-Canel.

Its survival may be getting to an exhaustion point which seems to be accelerated by Trump. At the same time, Cuba has its own **allies, namely Russia, China and Iran** to name a few. **Venezuela is no longer to be counted** among those allies after the fall of Maduro and the US-supervised government imposed under the aegis of Delcy Rodríguez.

The exchange of security for oil that worked for decades between Venezuela and Cuba is over. **The island relies on Mexico and Russia** to barely supply its population with the very basic energy needs. But it is insufficient. This is leading to a raising sentiment against the regime among local population.

However, the regime is able to **extend its survival due to the intelligence services it controls**. Repression and good external information may provide the regime with the required oxygen to survive.

In this paper we will analyse how Cuba has used its intelligence apparatus to instil positive sentiment and support all over the world.

2. CONTEMPORARY CUBAN INTELLIGENCE

Havana has successfully pivoted from its Cold War role as a monolithic Soviet satellite to a **modern, multi-user forward operating node** facilitating the strategic objectives of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China (PRC).

Despite the prevailing focus on extra-territorial cyber warfare, **Cuba's geography remains a critical and constant vulnerability for U.S. national security**. Its proximity to the American mainland allows adversaries to circumvent the geographic limitations of the Eastern Hemisphere, providing a permanent, **low-cost platform** for signals collection and regional destabilization.

By operating as a strategic surrogate, the Cuban regime trades sovereign territory for regime survival, maintaining a trilateral cooperation framework that integrates Russian human intelligence (HUMINT) and technical cadres with Chinese capital and telecommunications infrastructure.

3. RUSSIAN HUMINT AND TECHNICAL INTEGRATION

Current intelligence confirms a revitalization of the Russian GRU Rezidentura (Residency) in Havana, reportedly led by General Pyotr Kulikov.

This residency utilizes specialized human capital that transcends traditional diplomatic functions. Data obtained from the Russian embassy school reveals the deployment of specialists from Military Base No. 47747 (Klimovsk) and the 309th Radio Direction Finding Center (Military Base No. 34608)—both elite SIGINT hubs.

These "diplomats" are frequently graduates of the Bauman Moscow State Technical University or MIREA (Cybernetics/Mathematics), who provide the mathematical and systemic expertise required for modern electronic warfare and aerospace monitoring.

The GRU maintains high-yield operational covers through commercial and religious entities¹:

- **VDA "American" Faculty Integration:** Yevgeny Voskoboynik, head of Aeroflot in Havana, is a graduate of the prestigious "American" faculty of the Military Diplomatic Academy (VDA)². His role facilitates the monitoring of passenger traffic and potential recruitment of assets moving through the Havana-Mexico-U.S. corridor.
- **Secret Communications Cadres:** Personnel like Sergei Donets, formerly of the 38th Airborne Forces Communications Control Brigade, provide the technical depth for secure military links and regional tactical coordination.
- **The Spiritual Veil:** Father Savva Gagloev (Russian Orthodox Church) operates as an ideological surrogate, utilizing "Russian World" narratives to mask tradecraft-heavy public engagement and influence operations.
- **Paramilitary Leadership:** General Andrei Gushchin (Hero of Russia) currently heads a group of specialists in-country, leveraging his experience in the Chechen and

¹ The names of individuals are valid for 2023 (Kanev, "Our Men in Havana."). These names and others were found by investigating 37 children of the Russian embassy school in Cuba whose parents were not listed on the official diplomatic roster.

² The VDA is an elite secret training institution in Moscow run by Russia's military intelligence agency, the GRU. It is known as the *Conservatory*.

Syrian theatres to coordinate paramilitary interoperability.

The integration of Russian technical expertise with Cuban local access creates a high-yield intelligence environment that **effectively offsets Moscow's military overextension in Ukraine.**

For a marginal cost, **Russia maintains a persistent threat profile against the U.S. Southeastern Seaboard.** Notably, the regime's reliance on Russia remains uneven; **while Beijing provides digital modernization, Moscow recently supplied 20,000 "officer's rulers"**—a stark reminder of Havana's continued dependence on Russian low-tech military basics for tactical navigation.

These organizational networks provide the human requisite for the island's expanding physical surveillance infrastructure.

4. SINO-RUSSIAN SIGINT EXPANSION IN THE CARIBBEAN

Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) is the **cornerstone of the current era of great power competition.** By leveraging Cuban soil, Beijing and Moscow bypass the curvature of the Earth and atmospheric limitations to intercept sensitive U.S. data.

This infrastructure allows for the persistent monitoring of the Southeastern Seaboard—a **region housing the densest cluster of U.S. military** and aerospace assets—providing a "treasure trove" of unencrypted commercial and military data that is otherwise shielded by distance.

The Bejucal facility, **notorious for housing Soviet nuclear warheads during the 1962 missile crisis,** has undergone expansive updates over the last decade. Current intelligence indicates a transition from Soviet-era dormancy to a sophisticated multi-mission site:

- **ELINT Radomes:** Installation of new Electronic Intelligence (ELINT) radomes capable of tracking sensitive radar signatures and launch emissions.
- **Satellite Interception:** Interception of U.S. communication satellites and NASA traffic from the Florida Mission Control Center.
- **360-Degree Beamforming:** Utilization of modern Circularly Disposed Antenna Arrays (CDAA) for precise signal origin determination.

Beijing has significantly modernized the Cuban surveillance footprint. The following sites represent the core of Chinese-linked SIGINT operations:

Site	Location	Primary Technical Features	Probable Intelligence Targets
Bejucal	Near Havana	Large ELINT radomes; historic Soviet complex.	U.S. government communications; Florida military activity.
El Salao	Near Santiago de Cuba	CDAAs (130–200m diameter); Range 3,000–8,000 NM.	Naval Station Guantanamo Bay; air/maritime domain awareness.
Wajay	10km N of Bejucal	12 terrestrial antennas; military security fencing.	Terrestrial signal interception; U.S. military tactical transmissions.
Calabazar	Near Havana	Over a dozen dish antennas; pole antenna arrays.	U.S. space assets; satellite downlinks; aerospace telemetry.



The CDAAs array at El Salao, with an operational reach of up to 15,000 km, provides China with unprecedented domain

awareness over U.S. Navy maneuvers. Furthermore, the ability to monitor SpaceX Falcon 9 and Falcon Heavy telemetry from Cape Canaveral directly **serves China's strategic goal of achieving military and technological parity in reusable rocket systems.** Access to such data provides insights into U.S. military practices and technological thresholds that are **unattainable through cyber-espionage alone.**

This technical expansion is the primary currency in the regime's quest for economic and political survival.

5. REGIONAL IMPACT

The Díaz-Canel administration employs a "Lifeline Strategy," trading **sovereign access for the economic inputs required to prevent state collapse.** This "base in exchange for oil" model allows Havana to maintain its authoritarian structure despite systemic economic failure.

5.1 Affected regional actors.

United States: Direct threat to the "Southeastern Seaboard" clusters, specifically SOUTHCOM (Miami), CENTCOM/SOCOM (Tampa), and strategic military launch facilities in Florida.

Colombia: Russian maritime support to Nicaragua directly threatens the security of Colombia's San Andres Island. Furthermore, Russia has provided Venezuela with radio-electronic capabilities used to intercept Colombian military communications.

Brazil: The proliferation of seven GLONASS ground stations in Brazil allows Russia to synchronize military navigation and positioning, providing a Russian equivalent to GPS for regional military coordination.

Havana's extra-hemispheric partners provide the essential mechanisms for internal repression:

- **Economic Solvency:** Russia provided a 90% debt write-off of \$35 billion; China serves as the primary lender for telecommunications modernization.
- **Industrial-Intelligence Hubs:** The "Cayo Digital" project on the Isle of Youth covers 450 hectares and includes laboratories, factories, and housing for 15,000 tech experts—creating a permanent Chinese-backed strategic enclave.
- **Technical Repression:** Huawei and ZTE provide the backbone for the regime's digital censorship, while

Russian specialists provide training in military communications and internal security.

This cooperation allows the Cuban regime to withstand historic economic pressures. Chinese-assisted social media blocking and Russian-backed signal jamming ensure that **internal dissent is managed with technical precision**, effectively forestalling democratic transitions by **modernizing the regime's tools of repression.**

The reliance on these external lifelines underscores the **systemic fragility of the Díaz-Canel government** as it navigates an intensifying war of attrition.

6. STRATEGIC OUTLOOK

The Cuban government is navigating its **most severe economic crisis since the 1990s**, characterized by the "Díaz-Canel weakness"—an inability to provide basic food and fuel without massive external subsidies. **Havana's transition into an "intelligence hotel" for foreign powers is a sign of desperation, not strength.**

The regime remains trapped between **intense U.S. political and economic pressure** and a **domestic population radicalized by the 2020–2021 protests.** While extra-hemispheric lifelines from Russia, China, and Iran provide enough resources to maintain the security state, they cannot fix the underlying economic rot. Havana is increasingly a "host" that is **unable to refuse dangerous provocations**—such as the potential hosting of offensive assets—despite the heightened risk of U.S. retaliation.

Current trajectories suggest that **Cuba's role as a forward operating node is a high-risk survival tactic** rather than a sustainable long-term strategy.

The regime has essentially mortgaged its sovereignty to extra-hemispheric adversaries, making the island a "gateway" for Russian and Chinese military entry into the West. Operational implications include a permanent loss of privacy for U.S. commercial and military communications in the Caribbean and a **significantly increased risk of a catastrophic regime collapse** should these external lifelines be severed or should the U.S. choose to **decisively disrupt the intelligence infrastructure.**

In order to watch and assess developments on the island the following indicators are to be followed:

1. **S-400 Triumph Deployment:** Confirmation of a Russian S-400 missile division near Havana (assess with moderate confidence as a future indicator).

2. **El Salao CDAA Status:** Completion and activation of the Santiago de Cuba antenna array.
3. **Military Sniper Competitions:** Joint paramilitary interoperability exercises involving teams from Russia, China, and Iran on Cuban or Venezuelan soil.
4. **Cayo Digital Construction:** Rapid scaling of the 450-hectare facility on the Isle of Youth as a Chinese technology transfer node.

The revitalization of Cuba as a multilateral platform for foreign espionage remains an enduring concern for the international intelligence community. The Cuban regime's desperation has created a subsidized haven for Russian and Chinese intelligence, granting them unprecedented access to the U.S. digital and military perimeter.

For as long as the regime remains in control, **Cuba will persist as the primary node for electronic reconnaissance and regional destabilization.** This collaborative footprint signals a permanent shift toward a more contested security landscape in the Western Hemisphere.



7. SOFT POWER USED BY CUBA.

Cuba has historically relied on a sophisticated and highly integrated **soft power apparatus to cultivate international solidarity, project influence, and counter U.S. foreign policy**. Rather than relying on traditional diplomacy alone, the Cuban regime has built its soft power around ideological alignment, "revolutionary tourism," racial solidarity, and institutional exchange programs.

Cuba's soft power strategy is driven by several key pillars:

1. The Ideological Battlefront and "Third Worldism"

Beginning in the 1960s, Cuba positioned itself as the intellectual and ideological capital of the global radical left. Rather than relying strictly on orthodox Soviet-style economic Marxism, Havana pioneered **Third Worldism (*tercermundismo*)**, which reinterpreted global conflict as a civilizational struggle between Western imperialists and the colonized peoples of the Global South. By hosting major international events like the **Tricontinental Conference (1966)** and distributing the highly influential *Tricontinental* magazine globally, Cuba established itself as the premier site for anti-colonial and anti-imperialist iconography.

2. "Revolutionary" and Socio-Political Tourism

Havana has perfected a "travel and exchange" model to build a highly motivated, organic column of defenders in Western countries.

- **The Venceremos Brigade:** Since 1969, the Brigade has transported over 10,000 American activists, student leaders, and progressives to Cuba to network with regime officials and receive political education.
- **Solidarity Delegations and Caravans:** Programs like the **IFCO/Pastors for Peace "Friendshipment Caravans"** (operating since 1992) and the **Nuestra América Convoy (March 2026)** transport humanitarian goods in defiance of U.S. sanctions. These trips bring prominent Western politicians, academics, and digital influencers (including Jeremy Corbyn, Pablo Iglesias, and Hasan Piker) to the island. This "revolutionary tourism" successfully transforms visitors into vocal domestic lobbyists who advocate for lifting the embargo and removing Cuba from the State Sponsor of Terrorism list.

3. Appeals to International Racial Solidarity

A central element of Cuba's soft power is the exploitation of domestic racial grievances in the United States.

- **Cultivating Black Power Movements:** From the early years of the revolution, Castro hosted prominent African American civil rights figures (such as Malcolm X, Robert F. Williams, and Stokely Carmichael), framing the Black civil rights struggle and the Cuban Revolution as two fronts of the same war against Yankee imperialism.
- **The "Shakur Strategy":** Cuba has long served as a safe harbour for radical U.S. fugitives, most notably former Black Panther **Assata Shakur**. By granting Shakur asylum, government-funded living expenses, and a platform as a political celebrity, Cuba successfully crafted an image of itself as a sanctuary of racial liberation. This strategy continues to pay major dividends, securing the "unequivocal support" of modern movements like Black Lives Matter, which publicly blame U.S. sanctions for Cuba's internal crises.

4. Institutional Front Groups: ICAP and NNOC

The **Instituto Cubano de Amistad con los Pueblos (ICAP)**, founded in 1960, is the central organizational node of Cuba's international influence. ICAP oversees a global network of over 2,000 solidarity organizations in 150 countries.

- In the United States, ICAP coordinates closely with the **National Network on Cuba (NNOC)**—a coalition of over 60 left-wing groups (including the Democratic Socialists of America, Code Pink, and the National Lawyers Guild).
- Through ICAP, Cuba establishes academic exchanges with elite U.S. universities, coordinates "sister-city" partnerships, and mobilizes local city councils and labour unions to pass pro-regime resolutions.

5. Educational and Medical Diplomacy

Cuba utilizes targeted educational programs to embed ideologically sympathetic professionals in foreign countries. A key example is the **Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM)** in Havana. Administered in the U.S. solely by IFCO, ELAM provides low-income American students with full-ride medical scholarships on the sole condition that they return to practice medicine in the United States. This program serves a dual purpose: it builds goodwill internationally while placing graduates immersed in Cuban revolutionary ideology in over 30 U.S. states.