

**Chronicle on Cuba**  
**SUMMARY OF NEWS ITEMS REPORTED ON CUBA**  
**January-December, 2003**

*This web resource highlights the most significant news items on Cuba listed in FOCAL's monthly Chronicle on Cuba throughout 2003, and groups these according to a wide range of key topics. Web links to important documents and statements are also included.*

**SECURITY**

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES AND TREATIES**

Cuba complies with all atomic energy safety standards, according to a senior official of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). "Cuba is in compliance with the established norms, which is encouraging not only for us but for its own population as well," said Ana María Cotto, deputy director general of IAEA. (June, Security)

Putting together common policies on disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, policies expected to influence the world, is one of the objectives of the regional conference that began in Havana. Over 150 delegates from 50 nations, including 33 Latin American and Caribbean signers of the Tlatelolco Treaty, are attending the 28th OPANAL session (Proscription of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean). Seven international organizations and 12 NGOs are also participating in the Havana meeting. The main objective is to declare Latin America and the Caribbean the first densely-populated zone on the planet, free of nuclear weapons. Enrique Román Romey, a representative of UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, is attending the Conference. OPANAL is an inter-governmental organism created as a result of the 1967 Treaty of Tlatelolco. Cuba ratified the Treaty of Tlatelolco on October 23, 2002. (November, Foreign Affairs)

Opening the 18th OPANAL Conference in Havana, Fernando Remírez de Estenoz, first deputy minister of foreign affairs, affirmed that "despite continuing to be the victim of the blockade, aggression and threats, our country's military expenditure has not grown; on the contrary, it has dramatically fallen in the last 10 years, while we have decided to maintain and increase spending in the sectors prioritized by our Revolution: education, public health, social security, culture and sports." (November, Foreign Affairs)

The approval of the Havana Declaration, in the regional conference on nuclear disarmament, has a transcendental value, establishing a common position in Latin America and the Caribbean toward the threat of these weapons, affirmed Ricardo Alarcon de Quesada, president of the Cuban Congress, who closed the OPANAL session (Organism for the Proscription of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean). To declare the region a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (FZNWs) was one of the essential objectives of this two-day meeting at the Havana Conference Center. Alarcon stressed that it is not enough that the Tlatelolco Treaty ratify the commitment to only use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, because if there are military enclaves within their borders, there are actions contrary to its object. It is not enough for the Zone to apply the Treaty, he emphasized, if some powers appropriate the right to use atomic weapons in determined circumstances in this nuclear-free territory. (November, Foreign Affairs)

## **MILITARY RELATIONS**

### **Angola**

Military teams from Angola and Cuba are discussing in Luanda the training of Angolan cadres in the field of defense. The delegations are led by Aldiral Gaspar Rufino, Deputy Defense Minister for the National Policies, and the Cuban Prime Vice-Minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, General Julio Casas Regueiro. The Angolan delegation at the meeting, which occurs behind closed doors, is made up by the head of FAA's General Staff, General Armando da Cruz Neto, his Deputy, General Geraldo Nunda, the chief of the Airforce, General Pedro Neto, among others. No more details were given about the meeting which is taking place in the Ministry of Defense. Angola and Cuba have relations in the field of Defense since 1975. (March, Security)

A technical and military cooperation protocol between the Defense Ministries of Angola and Cuba, signed in Havana, in the year 2002, has been approved by the Angolan Cabinet Council, as stated in a recent edition of the state's Gazette. The protocol aims at increasing and strengthening cooperation relations in the military sector between both countries. The document explains that the current protocol is valid for five years, and renewable for equal successive periods of time, except if one of the parties rescinds it. The terms in the document outlines the exchange of military delegations, through official and working visits, for the strengthening of mutual trust, the training and preparation of Angolan army officers in Cuban military training centres, the training of soldiers in exploring, conserving and repairing of artillery and military equipment, as well as the consultation and exchange of technical and scientific information about subjects of military bilateral interest. (December, Security)

### **China**

Armed Forces Minister, Army General Raúl Castro, met at the Armed Forces Ministry headquarters with the delegation from China's Popular Liberation Army, headed by Col. General Qian Shugen, Deputy Chief of Staff. The Chinese delegation was accompanied by their country's Ambassador to Cuba, Wang Zhiguan. (March, Security)

Lieutenant General Ramon Espinosa Martin met with Colonel General Cao Gangchuan, vice-chairman of the Central Military Commission and China's defense minister. Espinosa, member of the Cuban Communist Party Board of Directors and chief of the Cuban eastern army, is in Beijing on an official visit with a delegation of generals and officers of the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR). During its stay in China, the Cuban delegation will make a tour for several provinces in the interior of the country and visit units of the Chinese army, navy and air forces, as well as centers of military education and tourist and historic sites. (October, Security)

Lieutenant General Ramón Espinosa Martín concluded a one week long official visit to China, where he held talks with Chinese military authorities. Espinosa, also member of the Cuban Communist Party Politburo and chief of the Eastern Army, arrived in Beijing heading a delegation joined by other generals and top officers from the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR). (October, Security)

### **Congo**

Minister Delegate to Congo's Presidency, Division General Jacques Yvon Ndolou, has begun an official visit to Cuba. Defense Minister of the African Nation, Ndolou, and his delegation also visited a Tanks Unit where were welcomed by its Chief Brigadier General, Onelio Aguilera Bermúdez. Accompanied by Armed Forces Deputy Minister, the delegation toured several facilities belonging to that army unit. (September, Security)

General Raúl Castro, Cuban Minister of Armed Forces (FAR), received Major General Jacques Yvon Ndolou, Minister of Defense of the Republic of Congo. (September, Security)

## **Russia**

Current developments across the world have prompted Moscow and Havana to further strengthen their cooperation, Russian Security Council Secretary Vladimir Rushailo said. "The acute nature of the current situation in security matters throughout the world underscores the need for strengthening and advancing Russian-Cuban cooperation," Rushailo said at a meeting with Cuba's First Deputy Foreign Minister Fernando Remirez in the Kremlin. During their meeting, Rushailo and Remirez addressed a wide range of security issues, according to a Security Council press release. "The two men exchanged their views on a wide range of issues of international security, strategic stability, disarmament, the nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the fight against international terrorism. The situation surrounding Afghanistan and Iraq was discussed as well," the press release says. (November, Foreign Affairs)

## **Viet Nam**

A Vietnamese military delegation arrived in Havana, headed by General Lieutenant Le Van Dung, chief of the General Political Direction of the Army and Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of that country. The delegation's visiting schedule includes military units, teaching centers and meetings with Armed Forces leaders as well. (June, Security)

Army General, Raúl Castro Ruz, Minister of Revolutionary Armed Forces, greeted Lieutenant General, Le Van Dung, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Viet Nam and chief of the Political General Direction of the Popular Army. The meeting was held during official talks carried out at Armed Forces' headquarter between the Vietnamese military delegation and Chief Vice minister of Major General State, Body Army General , Alvaro López Miera. (June, Security)

According to a report in the Cuban Communist Party newspaper, Granma, a high-ranking military delegation from China began a series of meetings with Cuban army officers and other officials in Havana, as the two countries seek to deepen their military links. Lieutenant General Tan Yuexin, director general of the Administration Office of China's Central Military Commission, is heading the visiting delegation. (September, Security)

## **NATIONAL DEFENSE**

Army General Raúl Castro, Minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR), presided over a military council of the Central Region Army which dealt with important aspects of the defense preparedness of a territory that stretches from Matanzas province to Ciego de Ávila. (September, Security)

Thousands of Cubans participated in defense exercises held all across the island in conjunction with National Defense Day. The mobilization included units of the reserve, the militia, special forces and the so-called Production and Defense Brigades of companies, learning institutions and communities, the local press reported. The exercises had among their objectives to test and improve the combat readiness of the public and the military command. The activities also included testing evacuation and relocation plans for the population, as well as procedures to outfit the populace to defend the island against foreign invasion. (September, Security)

During National Defense Day, military activities carried out in Cienfuegos were attended by Raúl Castro, Minister of the Armed Forces. Antiaircraft alarms were sounded in Cuba as part of a national exercise to test military readiness. (December, Security)