



**Background:** The native Amerindian population of Cuba began to decline after the European discovery of the island by Christopher Columbus in 1492 and following its development as a Spanish colony during the next several centuries. Large numbers of African slaves were imported to work the coffee and sugar plantations, and Havana became the launching point

for the annual treasure fleets bound for Spain from Mexico and Peru. Spanish rule, marked initially by neglect, became increasingly repressive, provoking an independence movement and occasional rebellions that were harshly suppressed. It was US intervention during the Spanish-American War in 1898 that finally overthrew Spanish rule. The subsequent Treaty of Paris established Cuban independence, which was granted in 1902 after a three-year transition period. Fidel Castro led a rebel army to victory in 1959; his iron rule has held the regime together since then. Cuba's Communist revolution, with Soviet support, was exported throughout Latin America and Africa during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. The country is now slowly recovering from a severe economic recession in 1990, following the withdrawal of former Soviet subsidies.

**Geography Cuba:** Location: Caribbean, island between the Caribbean Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean, 150 km south of Key West, Florida. Area: total: 110,860 sq km. Area - comparative: slightly smaller than Pennsylvania. Land boundaries: total: 29 km. Border countries: US Naval Base at Guantánamo Bay 29 km note: Guantánamo Naval Base is leased by the US but remains part of Cuba. Coastline: 3,735 km. Climate: tropical; moderated by trade winds; dry season (November to April); rainy season (May to October). Terrain: mostly flat to rolling plains, with rugged hills and mountains in the southeast. Natural resources: cobalt, nickel, iron ore, chromium, copper, salt, timber, silica, petroleum, arable land. Natural hazards: the east coast is subject to hurricanes from August to November (in general, the country averages about one hurricane every other year); droughts are common. Environment - current issues: air and water pollution; biodiversity loss; deforestation. Geography - note: largest country in Caribbean and westernmost island of the Greater Antilles. (CIA Factbook 2006)

**1925 Car, Armd, 4x2. Blindado, Camion, Mod 1925.** Armored truck with chain drive.

**1943 Veh, Recce, 4x4. M3A1 Scout Car.**

**Remarks:** Between 1943 and 1946, Cuba received four M3A1s from the US as part of the Lend-Lease program (see US for vehicle details).

**1948 Car, Armd, 4x4. T17E1 Staghound.**



**Remarks:** After WWII, Cuba received 60 T17E1s from the US as part of a Military Aid program. Vehicle shown was captured by revolutionists circa 1970 (see US for vehicle details).

**1950 Car, Armd, 6x6. M8 Light Armored Car.** (see US for vehicle details).

195x Carr, Pers, Armd, 6x6. APC, BTR-152. (see Russia for vehicle details).

1960 Carr, Pers, Armd, 8x8. BTR-60. (see Russia for vehicle details).

**1965 Veh, Recce. BRDM-1.**

**Remarks:** During the Soviet years, an unknown number of BRDM-1 reconnaissance vehicles were supplied to Cuba for their armed forces and internal security (see Russia for vehicle details).

1970 Carr, Anti-Aircraft. Carr, Anti-Aircraft, 30mm, 8x8

**2006 Carr. Wpns. BRDM with heavy mortar.**



*Above: Vehicle on display at 2006 Cuban Revolution celebration.*

**Remarks:** Cuban modification of basic BRDM-2 to a mortar carrier.

**2006 Car, Armd, 8x8. BTR-70 with 100 mm Cannon.**



*Above: Vehicle on display at 2006 Cuban Revolution celebration.*

**Remarks:** Cuban modification of basic BTR-70 APC to a 100mm cannon armed assault vehicle.