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White House Cites C.I.A. Material on a Cuban Role in Zaire Invasion

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WASHINGTON, June 15—The Administration has added a new dimension to its efforts to substantiate President Carter's assertions that Cuba was deeply involved in training the Katangan rebels who invaded Zaire last month from bases in Angola.

Faced with repeated denials by Fidel Castro, the Cuban leader, that Havana was involved in any way and expressions of skepticism by some members of Congress about Mr. Carter's evidence, the White House has been concerned that Mr. Carter's credibility was being challenged, officials acknowledged today.

Until now, the Administration had refused to make public any documentation of the charges against Cuba. But yesterday, Jody Powell, the President's spokesman, authorized disclosure to reporters, on a private basis, of declassified memorandum by Herbert E. Hetu, the Central Intelligence Agency's head of public information, summarizing the Administration's position. The document is dated June 2.

A C.I.A. spokesman said today that Mr. Hetu had not actually drafted the material but had only conveyed it in memorandum form to the White House, at its request.

He said the White House had wanted "a sanitized" statement about the intelligence information and it was the White House's decision on what to do with the document.

'Wide Variety of Sources'

The memorandum flatly asserts that "evidence from a wide variety of sources over the past two years refutes Castro's

denials of any direct or indirect involvement."

But the document lacks details on the sources of the C.I.A.'s information. It has been the reluctance of the Administration to divulge these sources in detail that has produced the most criticism on Capitol Hill.

One Democratic member of the House, who requested anonymity, said today that on the basis of a briefing from the C.I.A. and Mr. Castro's denials, I think an impartial jury would acquit Castro for lack of evidence."

The Katangans, members of the Lunda tribe, which predominates in northeast Angola and southern Zaire, crossed into Shaba Province in southern Zaire from Angola, via Zambia, on May 13 and overran the town of Kolwezi, which they left a few days later.

In March 1977, the Katangans also crossed into Zaire and were driven out two months later.

In the first days after the latest Katangan invasion, the Zaire Government charged that the Cubans were behind it, but the Administration said repeatedly it could not confirm that until May 19, when Tom Reston, a State Department spokesman, said new information had become available showing "recent" Cuban training of the rebels.

Castro Admits Cuban Training Role

It had been known that Katangans had received Cuban training in 1975, something admitted by Mr. Castro, but the Cuban leader in a meeting with the chief American diplomat in Havana on May 17 specifically denied any recent involvement.

Since Mr. Reston's statement, enlarged upon by Mr. Carter on May 25 and again yesterday, the Administration has been engaged in trying to prove its case.

The C.I.A. memorandum said that there was "no independent information" to confirm press reports that Cubans had accompanied the Katangans into Zaire. But the evidence, it said, does "contradict" Mr. Castro's other disclaimers.

Among the assertions in the memo are the following:

¶As early as the summer of 1976, Soviet and Cuban advisers requested President Agostinho Neto of Angola "to support incursions by Katangans into Zaire." No source was listed for the information.

¶In mid-1976, Cuban and East German officials provided military training to the Katangans at Saurimo Air Base in Lunda Province. No source was given.

¶The invasion of Zaire in March 1977 was supported by Cuban troops in Lunda Province who were with the Katangan troops before and at the time of the invasion. No source was given.

¶After the first invasion, military training for the Katangans continued in northeast Angola "with the active support of Cuban instructors." Over the summer, the guerrillas had established training bases in at least five Angolan towns: Cazombo, Nova Chaves, Chicapa, Saurimo, and Camissombo. No source was given.

¶In August 1977, 5,000 Katangan recruits and 1,500 veterans of the first Shaba invasion were reported to be under the control of Cuban and East German instructors and in addition "Cuban and Angolan troops transported large quantities of weapons from Luanda to a camp near Cazombo for the use of Katangans around this time."

¶In early 1978, the Katangan leader, Nathaniel M'Bumbo, announced his intention to invade Zaire and said that Cubans were providing arms and training. It was reported elsewhere that this was done in a letter to the Zambian Government.

¶At the same time, Cubans were reportedly organizing the movement of a large number of Katangan troops from northeast Angola toward the Zambian border, and the Cubans accompanied the force as advisers. No source was given for the information.

3 Major Conclusions Listed

The memorandum listed three major conclusions:

"1. The Cuban presence in Angola is pervasive. Little of importance is done without their involvement.

"2. Katangan insurgents have been trained and armed by the Cubans and possibly by the East Germans for several years. This assistance has had the active support of the Angolan government. The Soviets have been indirectly involved in this activity.

"3. The May 1978 invasion of Shaba province, as well as the March 1977 attack took place with the cooperation of the Angolan government and the Cubans."

Several senators, when advised of the C.I.A. memorandum, said that it was a close summary of what they had been told in a briefing by Adm. Stansfield Turner, Director of Central Intelligence. But they said that despite rather extensive questioning, he did not provide the sourcing information they had requested.

Traditionally, the intelligence community has been extremely reluctant to provide details about the sources of information.

The members of Congress were told that the material had come from Katangan prisoners and African and European diplomats, but they were not told much more than that, senators said.

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