

THE WASHINGTON POST
15 June 1978

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE A-1,17

media
Felix
media

Carter Decries Castro Failure to Stop Attack

U.S. Releases Summary of Its Evidence

By John M. Goshko
and Edward Walsh

Washington Post Staff Writers

In a reaction to continued questioning of President Carter's charges of Cuban complicity in the invasion of Zaire, the White House yesterday made available a summary of the evidence on which the president based his accusations.

This intelligence summary draws a picture of Cuban troops in Angola training the Katangese rebels and later accompanying them to the launching point for their invasion on the Angola-Zaire border. The rebels invaded Zaire's Shaba Province last month.

However, while the summary contains a number of specific assertions about Cuban involvement in the invasion, it does not contain any backup documentation. A senior White House official, who described the summary as a "sanitized" selection of information from intelligence reports, said the backup material could not be made public without revealing intelligence sources.

As a result, the White House summary seemed unlikely to resolve what has been the central issue in the controversy about Carter's charges—whether the administration's evidence comes from sources that are sufficiently reliable and conclusive to prove Cuban involvement.

The White House official insisted that the information in the summary was reliable. He described it as coming from a variety of sources—European, African and what he called "U.S. intelligence assets."

The administration, the source added, has a lot of additional information that was not included in the summary because it was regarded as less reliable by U.S. intelligence analysts.

For example, he said, none of the material in the summary came from Zairian sources.

However, several members of Congress and some State Department sources, who have seen at least part of the backup data, have continued to insist that it appears too circumstantial and too dependent on sources of questionable reliability to establish the administration's case convincingly.

During recent days, these sources have given piecemeal accounts of the evidence that has been made available on a selective basis to Congress. They have described it as consisting, in large measure, of data collected by the CIA from African diplomats, captured Katangese rebels and agents of European governments.

But, the sources have noted, much of it is clearly identified in CIA reports as information received at second or third hand or from persons of unproven reliability. Some of the specific data has been described by these sources as a report of a conversation with a Soviet diplomat in a third country or accounts of persons who appeared to be speaking Spanish working with the rebels.

The sources concede that the evidence does point to some kind of Cuban involvement with the rebels—at least in the past—and provided an adequate intelligence basis for Carter's policy decision to assist the airlift of French and Belgian paratroopers to Zaire.

Instead, these sources say, they question whether the evidence was strong enough to justify the administration's attempts to influence world opinion by making public accusations against another government.

President Fidel Castro has denied the U.S. charges vehemently, and some State Department officials are known to fear privately that Washington doesn't have the ammunition to win its escalating war of rhetoric with Havana, particularly where the attitudes of Third World countries are involved.

The main points of the White House summary allege that Cuba may have

equipped and reorganized the Katangese forces in Angola as early as 1975, provided planning and training for an invasion of Shaba by 2,000 Katangese in March 1977, and, following the failure of that foray, continued to aid the rebels until shortly before their latest invasion attempt last month.

The summary charges that Cuban and Soviet advisers asked Angola's Marxist government in 1976 to permit raids into Zaire and that Cuban and East German personnel trained the rebels at Saurimo air base in Angola's Lunda Province.

Following the 1977 invasion, the summary says, Cuban instructors provided training for the rebels at five bases in northeastern Angola—Cazombo, Nova, Chaves, Chicapo, Sereimo and Kamisfomo.

By early this year, the summary continues, the Katangese leader, Nathaniel M'Bumba, was declaring his intention to topple the Zaire government and asserting he had the support of the Angola regime. NBC News reported last night that this claim was made in a letter asking permission from neighboring Zambia to cross its territory in order to enter Shaba Province.

Throughout this period, the summary says, Cubans were involved in organizing the logistics of the rebels' movement toward the Zambian border and accompanied them to the point where they left Angola to enter Zaire through a small strip of Zambian territory. The summary added that the United States has no proof that Cubans went with the rebels into Zaire.

In the upper righthand corner of the White House summary, there appear the initials H.E.H., which stand for Herbert E. Hetu, the public information director at the Central Intelligence Agency who supervised production of the document. The summary, dated June 2, was the last of several draft summaries written to back up Carter's allegations against the Cubans in Africa.