

NATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHIC INTERPRETATION CENTER



**Secret**

*NOFORN*

25X1

(See inside cover)

**imagery analysis report**

**Recent Angolan and UNITA  
Operations in Moxico and  
Cuando Cubango Provinces, Angola (S)**

110

**Secret**

*WNINTEL*

Z-12095/83

IAR-0065/83

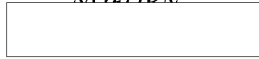
SEPTEMBER 1983

Copy 43

**Page Denied**

**SECRET**

*NOFORN*



25X1

## **RECENT ANGOLAN AND UNITA OPERATIONS IN MOXICO AND CUANDO CUBANGO PROVINCES, ANGOLA (S)**

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) claims to have launched an offensive against Angolan government-held garrisons and other targets of opportunity since early August.<sup>1</sup> This report describes imagery-derived evidence of current hostilities between Angolan-Cuban forces and UNITA at three locations—Cangamba, Tempue, and Lupire—in eastern Angola (Figure 1). Concurrent with this offensive, there has been an increase in activity by Angolan-Cuban forces at major air and ground installations at Luena and Menongue, provincial capitals and major garrison towns in Moxico and Cuando Cubango provinces respectively. This apparent response to UNITA's recent efforts and the location and status of the few remaining government-held garrisons in Cuando Cubango province will also be summarized in this report which uses all applicable imagery through [redacted] (S/WN)

25X1

### **DESCRIPTION**

#### **Evidence of Recent UNITA Operations**

2. Analysis of imagery acquired since late July of Cangamba and Tempue in Moxico province and of Lupire in Cuando Cubango province supports the UNITA claim of increased operations in eastern Angola. Cangamba, which apparently fell to UNITA in mid-August, was typical of government-controlled towns in eastern and southeastern Angola. Protection is provided for these towns by a perimeter defense line of trenches with weapons-firing positions. Within the perimeter defenses are one or more small military camps with separate defensive trenches, a graded-earth airstrip, and a civilian-populated village area. Villages have usually been enlarged by the relocation of civilians from the surrounding countryside in an effort to lessen contacts with UNITA. Lupire and Tempue are much smaller outposts, each consisting of an airstrip and a small military camp, but with no appreciable civilian population. (S/WN)

3. Imagery of [redacted] corroborates Angolan government and UNITA reports of a major battle during this period at Cangamba, but it does not resolve conflicting claims by each side of whether South African or Angolan aircraft had bombed the town. Imagery of Cangamba on [redacted] showed numerous small craters probably resulting from mortar and rocket rounds. These craters were along the length of the runway, in the adjoining fortified military camp, and along the defensive trench network (Figure 2). Evidence that a battle was underway—smoke and dust, probably a result of incoming rounds—was also visible (not shown on graphic). The runway appeared to remain serviceable, and one CURL transport aircraft was on the parking apron. Except for minor roof damage, the major buildings in both the military and civilian portion of Cangamba were intact on [redacted]. Subsequent imagery of [redacted] showed that hostilities had continued and that UNITA had overrun the town (Figure 3). Extensive damage resulting not only from fighting between ground forces, but also from airstrikes, was clearly evident. In addition to a larger number of mortar and rocket craters than were seen on [redacted] at least 30 large aircraft

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

(Continued p. 5)



25X1

SECRET

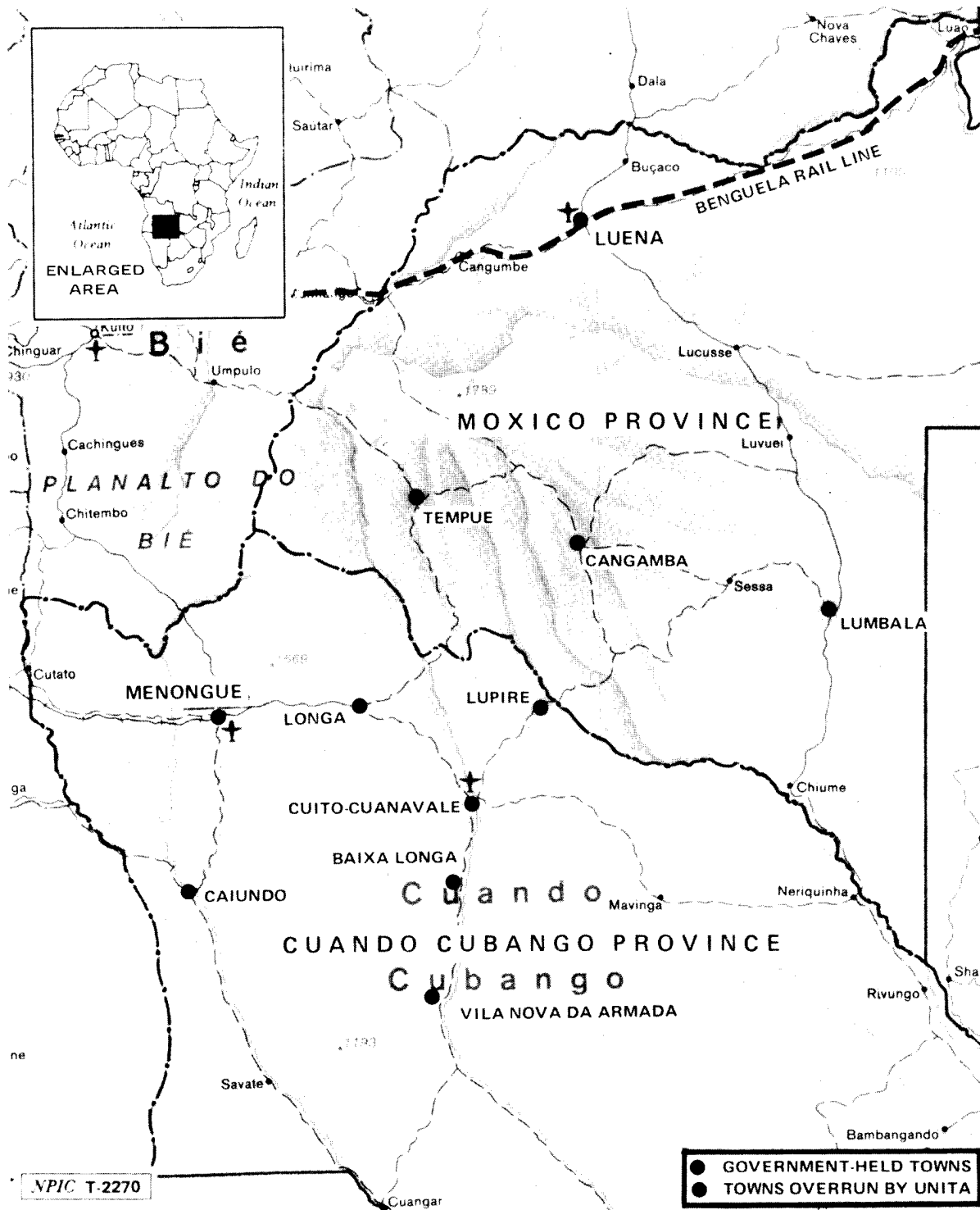


FIGURE 1. MOXICO AND CUANDO CUBANGO PROVINCES, ANGOLA

**Page Denied**

Next 1 Page(s) In Document Denied

**SECRET**

bomb craters were in the fortified military camp adjacent to the airstrip and on the north end of the runway. The runway was rendered unserviceable by approximately 25 smaller craters resulting from set explosive charges placed in a linear pattern along the length of the runway. This technique has been associated with prior UNITA attacks on Angolan installations. In 1979, the runway at Cuangar Airfield [ ] was damaged in a similar fashion. A CURL, probably the same aircraft observed there on 3 August, was destroyed on the parking apron. (S/WN)

25X1

4. The natural-surface runways at both Lupire and Tempue have also been rendered unserviceable by craters resulting from set charges. In December 1982, following the fall of Lumbala Nguimba (formerly Gago Coutinho) to UNITA, the runway at Gago Coutinho Airfield (BE [ ]) was damaged by this same technique of set charges. The damaging of these runways, along with the destruction of remaining buildings in adjoining military camps or villages, complicates any attempt by Angolan-Cuban forces to reoccupy these locations once UNITA withdraws. (S/WN)

25X1

5. Imagery of [ ] showed the natural surface airstrip adjacent to Lupire Military Area [ ] had been damaged by at least 18 craters. None of this damage was present on [ ]. Evidence of hostilities was observed in the military area; however, additional defensive trenches were dug between late June and late July indicating the government may have reoccupied the area but then withdrew again. In the past, control of several towns in remote portions of Angola has alternated between Angolan and UNITA forces. With the hostilities at Lupire, it is not entirely clear what course of events preceded the damaging of the runway. (S/WN)

25X1

25X1

25X1

6. The runway at Tempue, known as Alto Cuito New Airfield [ ] was also observed on imagery of [ ] to be rendered unserviceable. Six small craters, resulting from set charges, were in the center portion of the runway, and at least 13 ditches effectively destroyed the remaining length of the runway. At Tempue Military Installation [ ] three buildings had been destroyed and numerous small mortar and rocket craters were visible in the area. On previous coverage of the Tempue area on [ ] there had been no discernible damage to the runway, although some small craters had been seen at the military installation, and the three buildings that were destroyed prior to [ ] were intact. It appears that Tempue fell to UNITA forces during the same period as the fall of Cangamba. (S/WN)

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

7. With the loss of Cangamba and Tempue, there are no known major Angolan garrisons between these two towns and the Benguela rail line, which virtually bisects the geographic center of Angola. (S/WN)

**Angolan Military Reaction to UNITA Offensive**

8. While UNITA has been increasing its military operations, the Angolans have apparently expanded facilities at air and ground force installations at Luena and Menongue. At Menongue East Airfield [ ] increased air activity in early August and subsequent construction suggests future deployments of additional tactical aircraft. Menongue East Airfield is the primary tactical air base in southeastern Angola used in operations against UNITA. The nine FISHBEDs at Menongue on [ ] were the largest number of combat aircraft ever seen there. Prior fighter deployments to Menongue have usually consisted of three to four FISHBEDs or three to six FRESCOs. On subsequent coverage of the airfield on [ ] no FISHBEDs were observed. Between [ ] construction began on eight aircraft revetments in both the military and civil support areas (Figure 4). Each of these revetments is large enough to accommodate two

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

**SECRET**

fighter aircraft or two helicopters. Menongue also houses the largest concentration of Angolan and Cuban combat units in eastern and southeastern Angola. One Cuban brigade remains in garrison in a well-protected camp just north of the airfield, and major elements of a probable Angolan brigade are deployed in two camps on the outskirts of Menongue. (S/WN)

9. An unusually high level of air, ground, and logistics activity was observed at Luenda Airfield ( [redacted] alternate spelling of Luena) and Luena Military Installation Luso Airfield [redacted] from early July through [redacted]. Construction in the area has also been extensive, especially since [redacted] and is resulting in the upgrading of the airfield into a tactical fighter base and the probable augmenting of existing ground forces in the area. (S/WN)

25X1  
25X1  
25X1



25X1

**SECRET**

10. Since [ ] the air order-of-battle at the airfield has included as many as three 25X1  
 FISHBEDs, two FRESCO, five HIP-Cs, and two Alouette IIIs. None of these aircraft or helicopters  
 are regularly seen there. The numbers of transport aircraft and their associated logistics activity 25X1  
 have also been higher than normal since [ ] CUB, L-100/C-130, CURL, and COLT aircraft  
 have been seen on the large parking apron with stacks of unidentified material nearby. The  
 loading/offloading of personnel and supplies onto trucks and other vehicles has been observed.  
 On [ ] seven cargo trucks (four in convoy formation) and at least 30 personnel were in the 25X1  
 support area of the airfield (Figure 5). Ongoing construction and improvements at the airfield  
 through [ ] have included four new six-position anti-aircraft batteries, twelve fighter 25X1  
 aircraft revetments with alert taxiways, and the installation of a SPOON REST air warning radar.  
 (S/WN)

11. At the nearby military installation, a probable company-sized reconnaissance unit  
 (equipped with three probable PT-76 light tanks and four BRDM-2 armored vehicles), along with  
 motor transport units (varying in size) and groups of personnel in formations, were seen in and  
 out of garrison indicating movement of men and equipment in and through the Luena area.  
 Ground forces-related construction in nearby areas has included new vehicle revetments (some  
 occupied with tanks and other vehicles), fortifications (including personnel trenches), and a new  
 deployment area with numerous vehicle revetments one nautical mile (nm) north of the airfield.  
 (S/WN)

12. While there was no evidence on imagery of any hostilities in the immediate vicinity of  
 Luena, open press reports of July and August<sup>1-3</sup> reported that UNITA forces had clashed with  
 Angolan troops west and southwest of Luena along the Benguela rail line and that a train carrying  
 government forces had been destroyed east of Luena while enroute to Luao near the Angolan-  
 Zairian border. Imagery of Luao during July and August showed no increased levels of activity at  
 the small military post and airstrip within the town. (S/WN)

13. Garrisons which can be confirmed on imagery as remaining under Angolan control in  
 Cuando Cubango province as of late August include Cuito Cuanavale Airfield [ ] and 25X1  
 the adjoining military camp, Longa Military Installations [ ] and Baixa Longa 25X1  
 Military Area [ ] At two other locations, Caiundo and Vila Nova da Armada, there 25X1  
 may still be a government presence; however, the level of activity at these towns has decreased  
 during 1983. Angolan troops may have withdrawn from Caiundo and Vila Nova da Armada since  
 there are no indications of any apparent hostilities. As with Cangamba, there are civilians at these  
 locations in addition to the military garrison; however, there is no indication on imagery to  
 suggest a sizable Cuban presence. (S/WN)

**REFERENCES****IMAGERY**

All applicable satellite imagery acquired from [ ] was used in 25X1  
 the preparation of this report. (S/WN)

**DOCUMENTS**

1. FBIS-MEA-83-153, *Daily Report: Middle East and Africa*, Vol V No 158, 8 Aug 83 (UNCLASSIFIED)
2. FBIS-MEA-83-160, *Daily Report: Middle East and Africa*, Vol V No 160, 15 Aug 83 (UNCLASSIFIED)
3. FBIS-MEA-83-162, *Daily Report: Middle East and Africa*, Vol V No 162, 17 Aug 83 (UNCLASSIFIED)

Comments and queries regarding this report are welcome. They may be directed to [ ] 25X1  
 [ ] Third World Forces Division, Imagery Exploitation Group, NPIC, [ ] 25X1  
 (S)



**Secret**

**Secret**