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ANGOLA-CUBA

Political and economic conditions in Angola weigh heavily in favor of a continued large-scale Cuban presence there for several years to come. The overall reduction in Cuban strength during this period will be keyed to the success the Angolans and the Cubans achieve in establishing a credible Angolan army, suppressing a lingering insurgency, and reviving the Angolan economic. The reduction is likely to be offset to some degree, however by the introduction of specialized military units and increasing members of civilian personnel.

Havana provides the vast majority of the military, technical, economic, and social welfare personnel currently engaged in supporting the Neto government. It faces no competition and no other government is likely to supplant the Cubans. Portugal, because of its own political and economic uncertainties and the strained state of relations with Luanda, is in no position to offer assistance. Western governments capable of rendering assistance have been discredited by the new regime for their support for the Popular Movement's rivals during the civil war. Western business interests are being allowed to continue their operations, however. With the exception of its contribution of military hardware, even the Soviet Union has not contributed significantly to Angola's post-civil war development.

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Angolan President Neto to Cuba and the agreements signed during Neto's visit, ties between the two countries are likely to expand in the coming years.

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Military Support

Castro, speaking at the 26 July ceremonies, promised that Cuban forces "will stay as long as necessary to organize, equip, and train" the Angolan armed forces.

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no illusions that the task can be quickly accomplished.

During the latter years of Portuguese rule in Angola, the Popular Movement waged a lackluster insurgency characterized by small-scale ambushes and minor acts of sabotage against transportation and communications facilities. Face-to-face encounters with Portuguese troops were few and casualties were light.

By the time the civil war was over the Popular Movement may have had some 10,000 men under arms. Most of them were hastily recruited and poorly trained. Few of them had any experience in conventional warfare.

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The Angolan army is hobbled by ideological disputes among senior officials, administrative failures, logistical shortcomings, and weak leadership in the field.

Thus, the Cubans are faced with the challenge of transforming a largely illiterate, poorly-motivated army of at least 10,000 into a relatively efficient military force familiar with using and maintaining modern military equipment such as tanks and artillery.

Although government forces apparently have had some success against guerrilla operations by the National Front and the National Union, their successes in some cases can be credited to the weaknesses of their adversaries. Moreover, the Cubans are playing a major support role

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the level of insurgency is persistent enough and sufficiently dispersed throughout Angola that it has tied down a large part of the government's limited resources and has distracted both the Angolans and Cubans from concentrating on upgrading the military's efficiency.

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Non-Military Support

Cubans in large numbers have replaced Western technicians, advisers, and skilled workers. It seems likely that a large number

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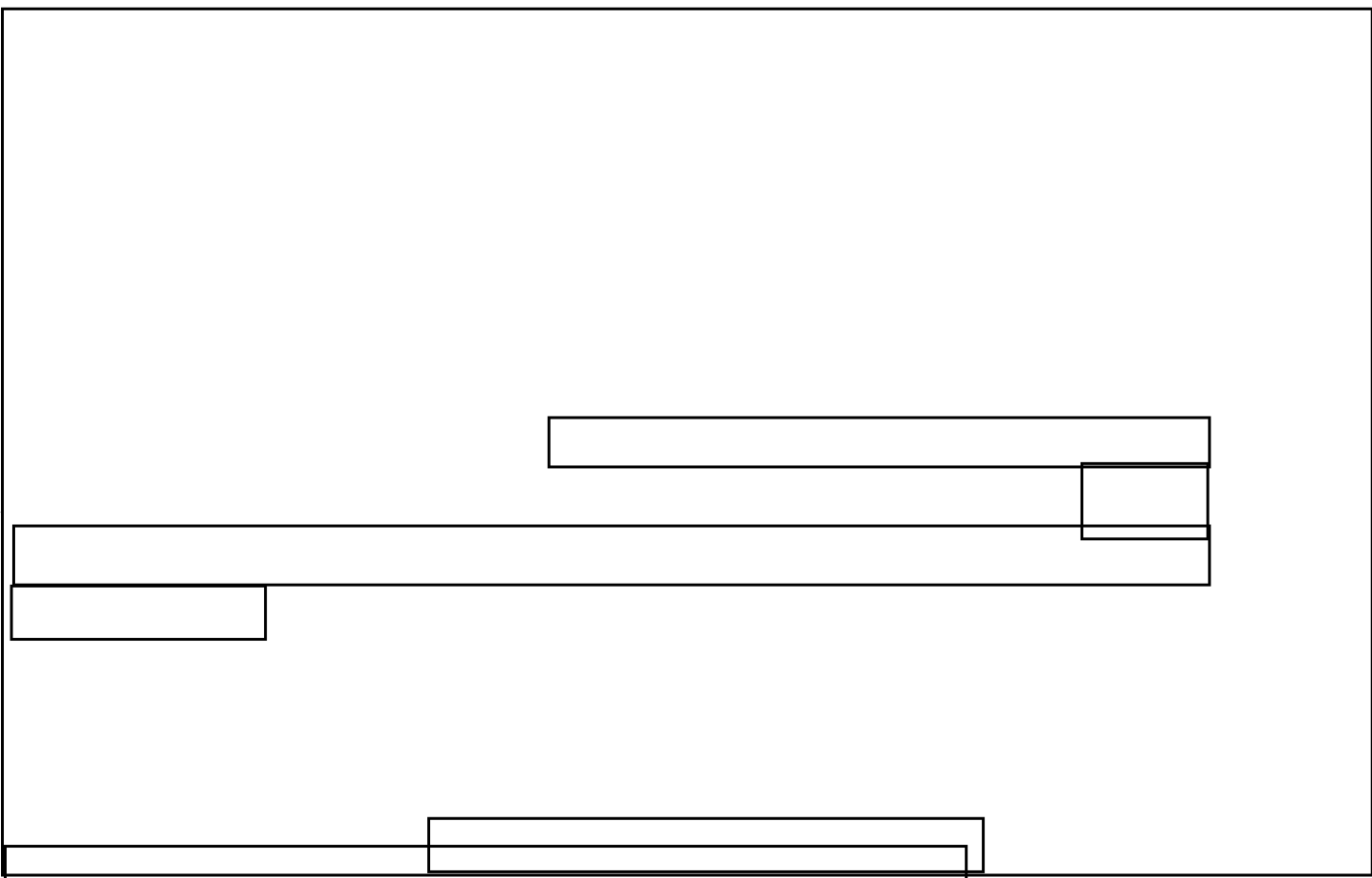
of the Cubans now fulfilling civilian functions in Angola are troops who have been demobilized in place because they have special skills to offer.

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Neto, as an ardent nationalist, probably wants to lessen the Cuban presence in his country as rapidly as possible, consistent with national stability.

The present pace of withdrawal, which appears to be roughly consonant with Castro's pledges, is by no means dramatic, particularly in view of the rapid buildup, but it apparently satisfies

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Neto personally and can be defended by him politically. The present regime does not seem anxious to accelerate the withdrawal and, unless conditions in Cuba force a change, the pace is not likely to quicken until significant progress has been shown in reviving the Angolan economy and improving Angola's own defense capabilities.

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