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MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

VIA: Deputy Director for Intelligence
Director of African and Latin American Analysis
Chief, Africa Division, DDOFROM: [REDACTED]
Regional Issues Branch, ALA/AF

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SUBJECT: Prospects for UNITA in a Package Namibia Settlement

1. [REDACTED] passed on to us in ALA your interest in some of the details of where southern African negotiations stand and the prospects for UNITA if there is a settlement.

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2. As we understand it, the package the Angolans have offered South Africa through Frank Wisner [REDACTED] allows for a phased withdrawal over three years of some 20,000 Cuban troops below the Benguela rail line in exchange for a South African cut off of aid to Savimbi and implementation of UN Resolution 435. We believe Pretoria will not find Angola's package acceptable because it does not pull out enough Cubans fast enough. The package may nevertheless be used as the basis for further negotiations.

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3. While we do not foresee Luanda and Pretoria reaching an accord in the near future, we believe that a settlement could eventually emerge with the following features:

- A withdrawal of the bulk of Cuban forces from Angola--mostly from below the Benguela rail line--over a period of nine months to a year and the pullout of most of the balance over another six months to a year.
- Implementation of UN Resolution 435--but possibly modified to allow South African forces to stay in Namibia longer than currently allowed (435 now mandates a drawdown of South African forces to 1,500 in a six week period).
- The issue of South African aid to Savimbi finessed with the understanding on Luanda's part--perhaps reinforced by a vague declaration by Pretoria--that South African withdrawal from Namibia would end its aid to UNITA.

We believe that under these circumstances, UNITA has a good chance of surviving as a major political and military force throughout large areas of Angola and stands a fair chance of triumphing eventually over the MPLA.

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4. Current Military Balance Luanda's military situation continues to be one of slow decline. Its August-September offensive failed to deal the devastating blow to UNITA the regime had hoped for and UNITA, with ample supplies from South Africa, continues to press farther north into once uncontested territory. The overall strength of the Angolan military is on the order of 100,000 men, of which 35,000 to 45,000 are regular army troops. We estimate that UNITA's military strength includes some 15,000 regular troops and 20,000 guerrillas. In addition, Savimbi may have 30,000 generally unarmed and untrained supporters in UNITA-controlled territory.

5. MPLA Deteriorates. Any agreement to withdraw Cuban forces would have potentially devastating political consequences for the MPLA. The regime is riven with factions that cut across lines of tribe, race, politics, military rank, and generation. Most of these groups are to some degree unhappy with dos Santos' ruling circle. Outside the MPLA's Kimbundu base (25% of the population) the general population is largely hostile to the regime. Cuban forces (and Soviet advisors and hardware) have kept the factions from each other's throats. Cuban and Soviet bloc troops and advisors have also given the Angolan military a small measure of confidence that it can stand up to UNITA and South Africa and have helped keep the provincial governors loyal to Luanda.

6. We believe that most Angolans are acutely aware that Cuban troops put the regime in power in 1975, saved it from a coup in 1977, and keep it in power in 1984. When the Cubans begin to go, many elites and other Angolans are likely to judge that the regime's ability to govern will be significantly diminished. The potential for instability within the regime will thus grow, with possible consequences ranging from the defection of large military units in the field to a military coup.

7. UNITA Presses Ahead. Savimbi, in our view, will vigorously press any military advantage resulting from a Cuban pullback. Although the MPLA may attempt to diminish his drive through negotiations--resulting possibly in a brief UNITA stand down--we doubt Savimbi will pause long before pressing his military advantage. If the two sides do reach a modus vivendi, we expect it to be brief. UNITA, like the MPLA, is likely to cheat and the civil war probably will resume after a brief pause.

8. Despite any tacit understanding on Luanda's part, Pretoria probably will give Savimbi a "golden handshake" and even then continue to provide him with aid through such various supply routes as Namibia, Botswana, Zambia, Zaire, and the sea. France, moreover, appears more committed than ever to providing aid to UNITA, although on a smaller scale than South Africa.

9. One wild card that could alter the fortunes of UNITA would be Savimbi's untimely death. We know Luanda has sent assassination teams to kill him and will be likely to redouble its efforts as he moves about Angola during a truce. Even with his death, however, we would expect UNITA to remain a potent force--with continued South African backing--at least throughout central and southern Angola. The organization has a well defined political and military structure and a locally well known second echelon of leaders that would provide a replacement for Savimbi.

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10. Possible US Role. Following an agreement on Cuban troop withdrawal and parallel implementation of UN resolution 435, we believe the Angolans will have certain expectations of the US, including the establishment of diplomatic recognition and the provision of economic assistance to resuscitate the economy. There also may be an expectation that the US will use its influence to compel Pretoria to cease aiding UNITA.

11. If the US were to open diplomatic relations with Luanda as well as grant limited economic assistance, it would represent a setback to UNITA-- unless there is an already agreed upon political reconciliation between UNITA and the MPLA. However, since South Africa--and Washington for that matter-- are unlikely to agree to any settlement that does not take into consideration the interests of UNITA, Savimbi probably will have received sufficient assurances of continued international support that he would be willing to trade a Cuban troop withdrawal for a temporary setback on the diplomatic front.

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