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The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

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25 August 1988

National Intelligence Council

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence  
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

THROUGH: National Intelligence Officer for Warning

FROM:   
Assistant National Intelligence Officer for Africa

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SUBJECT: Warning and Forecast Report: Sub-Saharan Africa (U)

1. Intelligence Community representatives at the monthly warning meeting on 23 August reached consensus on the following issues.

2. Warning Notes.

- The Angolan and South African Governments are unified over their respective positions in the negotiations for Cuban troop withdrawal (CTW) and independence for Namibia. Luanda, however, will probably defer to Havana's lead on key issues. The current UNITA offensive is not likely to affect the MPLA position on CTW because Luanda perceives an agreement that ends South African aid to the insurgents as a net benefit. There is surprising unanimity among South African military and diplomatic officials, supported by President Botha, about negotiating seriously, but Pretoria's position is likely to harden in remaining talks over issues such as simultaneity on Cuban and South African troop withdrawals, the status of SWATF, and financial support to Namibia.
- Barring national reconciliation in Angola, another FAPLA offensive against UNITA is almost certain. An offensive planned for September has been deferred, however, pending the outcome of negotiations on CTW. Time and place for the next offensive will be influenced by whether CTW is achieved and how it is implemented. With a CTW agreement, a final Cuban effort against UNITA is unlikely. Without a CTW agreement, Cuba probably will support another FAPLA offensive, but rather than lead the fighting is more likely to maintain positions along the Namibian border to inhibit South African intervention. The continuing Cuban military buildup in Angola is expanding Havana's capabilities and options.

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- The South African Government appears prepared to abandon IAEA membership rather than be forced to accede to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty without guarantees--especially from the US, the UK, and the USSR--that it will enjoy free and unfettered access to the nuclear marketplace. Pretoria probably would quit the IAEA rather than allow the General Conference meeting in Vienna next month to vote for suspension.
- Mengistu still seems firmly in control in Ethiopia. The Soviets are unlikely to cut him off despite his commitment to a military rather than political solution to the northern insurgencies. Arms deliveries under existing agreements are continuing at a rapid pace. Mengistu's position could weaken if the next offensive against Eritrean and Tigrean insurgents--likely to be mounted between September and January--falters badly and senior military officers sense that Soviet support for Mengistu is eroding. Ethiopian-Sudanese talks are unlikely to reduce the support each gives to insurgencies against the other.
- South Africa is interested in distancing but not cutting itself off from RENAMO insurgents in Mozambique while pursuing closer cooperation with Maputo. Some aid to RENAMO may be continuing. Maputo probably overestimates the extent of South African assistance and, although skeptical of Pretoria's intentions, may have unrealistic expectations; even a sharp cutback in South African assistance would only affect the insurgency over time. A Chissano-Botha summit probably will be linked to progress in restoring the supply of electricity from Cabora Bassa to South Africa, but increased RENAMO attacks, infiltration of South African insurgents from Mozambique, or Frontline State pressure on Maputo could disrupt Mozambican rapprochement with Pretoria.

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4. South Africa-Angola: Support for Negotiating Positions. Discussion led by CIA/ALA.

- The MPLA regime is in general agreement on CTW but arguments persist over its duration. President Dos Santos reportedly favors a two-year timetable, but the Cubans probably will call the shots and Luanda will follow. The UNITA offensive is unlikely to affect the negotiations on CTW. The Cuban/Angolan calculus is probably that UNITA's fortunes will wane once South Africa is out of Namibia. We have no conclusive evidence on Cuban intentions to leave behind military personnel following CTW. Regular, integrated Cuban combat units are the greatest threat but are the units whose withdrawal will be most easily monitored under a CTW settlement.
- The South African Government is surprisingly unified about negotiating seriously, although President Botha may be concerned about the rapid pace of progress. Pretoria's position is likely to become more hardline as issues critical to South African interests

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must be addressed in the context of CTW and implementation of UNSCR 435, including the status of SWATF, financial support for Namibia, and the ANC presence in Angola. Nonetheless, South African public opinion seems to be that if South Africa is to get out of Namibia, now is the time. President Botha and his Foreign Minister apparently believe that the conservative opposition has overestimated white resistance to Namibian independence, and that the issue would not necessarily be damaging in municipal elections set for late October.

5. Angola: Another Offensive? Introduced by CIA/ALA.

-- The MPLA has been talking about another offensive against UNITA since early this year. The Central Committee gave its approval [redacted] [redacted] for a campaign against Mavinga and Jamba to be launched on 10 September. The plan was recently set aside, however, pending the outcome of negotiations on CTW and Namibian independence. Barring national reconciliation, another offensive is almost certain because of Luanda's fixation with advancing toward Jamba. Meanwhile, Luanda is preoccupied with the current UNITA offensive in central and northern Angola and has redeployed units away from the Cuito Cuanavale front.

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-- Whether a CTW agreement is achieved and how one is implemented will affect a decision on the timing and location (axis of advance) of the next offensive, and the likely Cuban role. With a CTW/Namibian settlement, Cuba probably would not seek a major role in an offensive against UNITA. Without a settlement, however, Cuba would look for ways to pressure Pretoria, such as by backing a FAPLA offensive in the southeast. Rather than lead the fighting, Cuban forces probably would be positioned to inhibit South African intervention. The Cuban military buildup has been continuing, resulting in expanded capabilities and options, but Castro probably is reluctant to commit his forces to a costly counterinsurgency role against UNITA.

6. South Africa-IAEA: Prospects for Suspension. Issue presented by CIA/OGI.

-- There have been no significant developments in the South African nuclear program since September 1987, and no progress toward including the Valindaba enrichment plant under safeguards. After avoiding suspension from the IAEA last year by announcing that it was prepared to discuss accession to the NPT, Pretoria did not initiate talks until early this month in Vienna. It held separate bilateral discussions and a quadrilateral meeting with the NPT depository states, the US, the UK, and the USSR, in which it pressed

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for assurances--which none of the depository states is in a position to grant--of free and unfettered access to the nuclear marketplace in return for accession to the NPT. In probably the clearest and most categoric such statement ever made by a South African official, Foreign Minister Botha announced in Vienna that South Africa has the capability to produce nuclear weapons.

- South Africa wants to remain in the IAEA for technical as well as political reasons, especially access to technology for its two nuclear power plants. In addition, South Africa is the world's third largest producer of uranium. Pretoria nonetheless appears prepared to abandon the IAEA rather than be forced into NPT accession. The South Africans may believe that they can be readmitted later, but the process would be difficult. The opposition Conservative Party opposes the NPT, adding to Pretoria's reluctance to accede to the treaty before important nationwide municipal elections in late October. Even if South Africa acceded to the NPT, it would give up little with respect to its nuclear weapons capability.

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- The Soviet position on suspending South Africa from the IAEA General Conference next month is unclear. Moscow probably will reserve judgment until the last minute, but is unlikely to oppose suspension again this year unless Pretoria signs the NPT. The US and UK oppose suspension on the principal of universality of membership. The Africa Group reportedly wants to propose suspension versus expulsion, but the latter option technically does not exist. Should South Africa be suspended, fallback safeguard agreements exist bilaterally with France and the US outside the IAEA, but Pretoria may find them politically difficult to maintain.

7. Ethiopia: Counterinsurgency and Regime Stability. Discussion led by CIA/ALA.

- The government's position in Eritrea has been relatively unchanged since March, but EPLF activity reportedly is increasing and has included unusual incidents of urban terrorism, such as car bombings. Government forces apparently continue to hold Keren, Asmara, and Mitsiwa. The regime continues to build its forces in preparation for a dry season offensive that is likely to begin no earlier than late September or later than January.
- Insurgent activity in Tigray has increased in recent weeks. The TPLF is harassing units of the Third Revolutionary Army, a poorly trained conscript force that reoccupied garrisons in the region.

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The TPLF tactic apparently is to stretch government forces. Some reports indicate that the EPLF is actively assisting the TPLF with supplies and coordination of military activity. This is a significant development that raises the threat to the government. President Mengistu reportedly is unhappy with the progress of the counterinsurgency effort under the command of Legesse Asfaw.

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- Mengistu still seems firmly in control and there have been no indications of coup plotting. The military supports a renewed offensive. War weariness among troops is a serious factor, however, and should the offensive falter badly--high casualties and few gains--senior officers may reassess their support for Mengistu, especially if they judge that military setbacks are eroding Soviet support.

8. South Africa-Mozambique: Warming Relations. Introduced by State/INR.

- South African policy has long been characterized by two tracks--coercion and cooperation--run by the military and foreign ministry, respectively. An apparent reassessment recently has led Pretoria to emphasize a conciliatory approach toward Maputo, motivated in part by the international focus on abuses by RENAMO and South Africa's fear of continuing to be identified with the group. In addition, RENAMO has made no significant military gains and has had other embarrassing political setbacks such as the assassination of Evo Fernandes. Analysts noted that Pretoria's general disenchantment with the SADF recently probably has also weakened any military argument in support of RENAMO. The South Africans may also genuinely believe that they can work with Chissano.
- Nonetheless, Pretoria probably is interested in distancing itself from but not cutting off RENAMO while it pursues closer cooperation with Maputo. Mozambican containment of the ANC is still Pretoria's primary goal, but it also wants to send the message to the region that cooperation with South Africa yields positive results in economic cooperation and development. CIA analysts noted that Pretoria's tactics are not so profound a shift as to imply abandonment of the coercive option, especially if Pretoria judges

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that Maputo is not doing enough to control the ANC. Moreover, most of the same military players who favor coercion are still in place in Pretoria. It is not clear to what extent the SADF has accepted the roll-back of support for RENAMO. There are still some indications of continuing supplies to the insurgents. Some SADF elements, especially in military intelligence may be maintaining links, perhaps independently.

- Maputo is skeptical that improved relations will result in a complete South African break with RENAMO. Chissano probably is aiming for a reduction in levels of assistance that probably are already lower than he believes to be the case. The Mozambicans are interested in continued South African involvement in improving and using Maputo harbor, increasing the employment of Mozambican migrant workers, and rehabilitating the Cabora Bassa power lines. Chissano appears ready to grant the summit that President Botha has long sought, but will probably link it to progress on Cabora Bassa to minimize the political impact.
- The implications for RENAMO depend on the extent of the reduction in South African assistance. Pretoria's aid, though not large, has been vital and is not easily replaceable. Communications support, for example, has been the key to RENAMO's command and control over large areas. Even a sharp cutback in South African aid, however, would only be felt over time. Chissano is likely to view continued or increased RENAMO attacks as evidence of South African involvement. Analysts were divided over whether RENAMO military activity has already peaked or is merely at a plateau, but concluded that the insurgents are less likely than ever to seize power militarily. Nonetheless, the insurgency is likely to continue at a significant level for a long time, even without South African support. Although RENAMO recently has targeted Zimbabwe, the insurgents may try to reassert themselves in Zambezia Province in the wake of the Tanzanian withdrawal. Attacks on the Cabora Bassa power lines cannot be ruled out unless a deal is struck with the insurgents.

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