

Current listing of: T553:2  
 Slug:AM-ANGOLA 1STLD (WRITETHROUGH)  
 Category:REURI

08/11/86 19:21 Page: 1  
 Date: 08/11/86 19:16:09  
 Story:rl54

**ANGOLA SAYS SOUTH AFRICAN TROOPS ATTACKED SOUTH EASTERN TOWN**

(Eds: updates throughout)

LISBON, Aug 11, Reuter - Angola's defense ministry said today that South African troops attacked the strategic town of Cuito Cuanavale some 185 miles inside southeast Angola yesterday.

A ministry statement quoted today by the official Angolan news agency ANGOP said the South African 32 'Buffalo' battalion backed by heavy artillery attacked Angolan forces and shelled Cuito Cuanavale in Cuando Cubango province.

There were no details of casualties.

Angola's UNITA rebels said earlier that their forces had attacked Cuito Cuanavale last Saturday night, destroying radar equipment, anti-aircraft weapons and artillery.

South-African backed UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) has said Angolan government forces are preparing to launch a major drive against its southeast bases.

In Pretoria, a South African military spokesman said the defense force saw no point in commenting on these latest allegations, 'adding that it had been the target of Angolan claims for many months.

A short statement said the South African defense force operated against 'terrorists wherever they may be' and accused the Luanda government of aiding guerrillas.

Pretoria has often declined comment on Angolan reports of South Africa incursions but has acknowledged several raids in pursuit of guerrillas.

The Angolan ministry statement in the ANGOP report, which was monitored in Lisbon, said South African air and land reconnaissance patrols had also been detected in southern Cunene province over the last five days moving toward the towns of Cahama, Mupa and Mulondo.

It added that South African planes and helicopters had also moved troops and equipment to north of Chiede in Cunene province and motorized units were concentrated along the border of neighboring South African-administered Namibia (South West Africa).

Angola's Marxist government has in the past accused South Africa of maintaining troops inside its southern provinces and of attacking Angolan troops and positions in support of UNITA.

Luanda has also alleged that UNITA guerrillas and South African troops have fought side by side against Angolan forces.

The ministry statement said the increase in South African military activity inside Angola was an attempt by Pretoria to heighten tension in the region ahead of a forthcoming summit of non-aligned countries to be held in Zimbabwe.

Cuito Cuanavale, scene of the latest fighting, is a strategic jumping-off point for Angolan government troop operations in the largely UNITA-controlled southeast.

UNITA said Friday that Angolan troops backed by strong air support and Cuban regiments were preparing for a major push

Current listing of: T553:2

08/11/86 19:21 Page: 2

19:21 Mavinga, a UNITA stronghold 90 miles southeast of Cuito Cuanavale.

It was at Mavinga that UNITA last year halted a big government offensive after heavy fighting.

The Angolan statement also denied allegations by South African-backed security forces in Namibia last month that the Angolan army and Namibian nationalist guerrillas were planning a joint military operation in northern Namibia.

It said the allegations were an attempt to distract public opinion from operations by South Africa's own forces.

UNITA, which earlier this year received a pledge of military aid from the United States, has fought the government of Angolan President Jose Eduardo dos Santos since the country became independent from Portugal in 1975.

REUTER 1917