



22 September 1986

TALKING POINTS FOR THE ADDI

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ANGOLA

RECENT MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

Current Fighting

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[redacted] fighting in progress near the forward government bases at Cuito Cuanavale and Lucusse. [redacted]

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- At Cuito Cuanavale, several new artillery impact craters were seen at a government garrison and a vehicle was on fire. Additional government forces have recently arrived at the garrison and reinforcements with armor support are moving towards the area. This fighting suggests that UNITA may have struck for the second time in five weeks to disrupt government forces at Cuito Cuanavale, which is a jumping-off point for any push into UNITA-held territory. [redacted]

Cuito (UNITA)

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- Twenty miles south of Lucusse, government forces were shelling the UNITA-controlled south bank of the Lungue-Bungo river. Additional government troops have recently moved into positions along the north bank of the river. [redacted]

Lucusse (Gov't.)

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- UNITA claimed that it had rebuffed a government effort to cross the Lungue-Bungo river earlier this month. The current shelling may be an attempt to soften up UNITA positions before another attempt. No river crossing equipment has been seen on the north bank, however, and Luanda is probably waiting for additional reinforcements before making a determined push. [redacted]

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Government Logistics and Air Defense Developments.

The fighting at Lucusse and Cuito Cuanavale follows Angolan military preparations and buildup of unprecedented scale. Luanda will probably challenge UNITA before the rains begin in late-November, which would restrict movement by the government's heavily mechanized forces. [redacted]

Unprecedented buildup

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- There are now two government brigades at Lucusse and four at Cuito Cuanavale, more than double the number in August. A continuing build-up at staging bases in Luena and Menongue indicate that more units may be moved forward later. [redacted]

double forces since August

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- Two 200-vehicle government convoys including air defense, artillery, and armor elements reached Cuito Cuanavale and Lucusse earlier this month and have increased supply stockpiles at the forward bases. [redacted]

200 vehicle convoys

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted] Luanda has established new air-warning ~~(radar) sites in Caiundo and Lucusse in~~ southeastern Angola. These sites will provide additional coverage south of major government staging bases, affording more protection for troops advancing into UNITA territory against South African air attacks and will complicate South African attempts to resupply UNITA forces in northern Angola by air. [Redacted]

*New
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radars*

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*go to
Cuba
restoration*

[Redacted]

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CUBA-ANGOLA:

Increased Flight Activity

new flights

The Cubans have initiated unusual flights into Angola; although Havana's intentions are not fully clear, the flights may signal an increased Cuban military commitment to Luanda.

normal 2/wk

According to US Embassy reporting, Cubana Airlines this month is augmenting its two or three flights a week to Angola via Cape Verde with eight nonscheduled IL-76 flights. The IL-76s normally carry cargo, but these flights are occurring at night and reportedly carry as many as 250 male passengers.

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*IL76
wk.*

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[Redacted]

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Comment:

[Redacted] Havana's decision to use its two IL-76 heavy-lift transports may be an effort to improve support for its 36,000-man military contingent in Angola.

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36,000 men

Problems with troop rotation could account for some of the unusual flight activity. None of the Soviet passenger liners normally used to supplement Cubana and Aeroflot flights carrying out the semiannual Cuban troop rotation have been seen between Angola and Cuba. Still, unless the capacity of the IL-76s has been increased to handle more than 140 combat troops, Havana probably would not use the aircraft simply for troop rotations because of the high cost.

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Top Secret

20 September 1988

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