

ANGOLA-SOUTH AFRICA: Military Developments

Luanda charges that South African forces recently attacked its positions in the south and has rejected Pretoria's conditional offer to withdraw its troops from Angola temporarily.

Angola claims that since last Wednesday South African ground forces have moved from Xangongo toward the Angolan garrison at Mulondo. It also alleges that over the weekend South African aircraft bombed government forces at Mulondo and Caiundo.

Pretoria announced on Friday that its forces are engaged only in "hot pursuit" operations against SWAPO insurgents.

Luanda rejected Pretoria's offer last week to withdraw its troops from southern Angola on 31 January for one month in exchange for assurances that Cuban, Angolan, and SWAPO forces would not exploit the move. A SWAPO spokesman also rejected the offer because it would require the insurgents to declare a cease-fire.

South Africa sent forces to Xangongo last week, reportedly to attack SWAPO guerrillas in the Cahama area.

Luanda's summary rejection of Pretoria's offer reflects its continuing effort to stop the latter from sidetracking the UN debate on the South African presence in Angola. It also is a sign of the strength of the hardliners in Luanda, who oppose a withdrawal of Cuban troops.