

The President's Daily Brief

January 28, 1976

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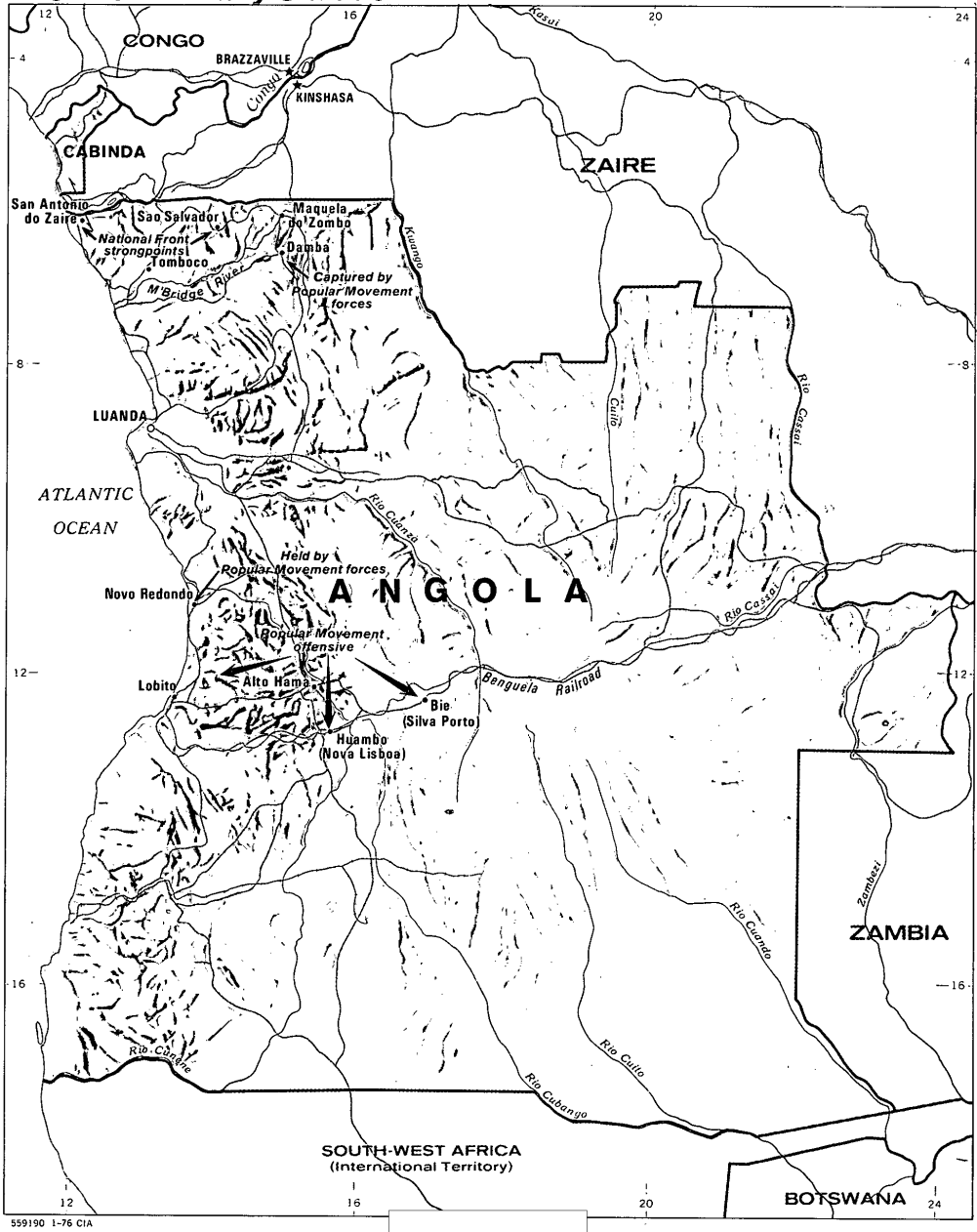
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Current Military Situation



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ANGOLA

Popular Movement and Cuban forces have resumed their advance against the National Front's remaining positions in northern Angola.

Late last week they drove Front troops out of Damba and occupied it. Popular Movement forces are now expected to move against the Front's last two major strongpoints in the north--Sao Salvador and Santo Antonio do Zaire.

The Popular Movement is also pressing ahead in central Angola, where it is advancing on Huambo (Nova Lisboa), Bie (Silva Porto), and Lobito. The Movement probably will try to take Huambo before making a serious move on Bie. Forces targeted against Lobito already have advanced as far as Novo Redondo.

National Union President Savimbi reportedly sees this week and next as "critical" for his group. In anticipation of heavy fighting for Huambo, he is moving his political headquarters from there to Bie, the Union's major military base. Huambo also has served as the seat of the nominal joint government proclaimed last November by the National Front and National Union.

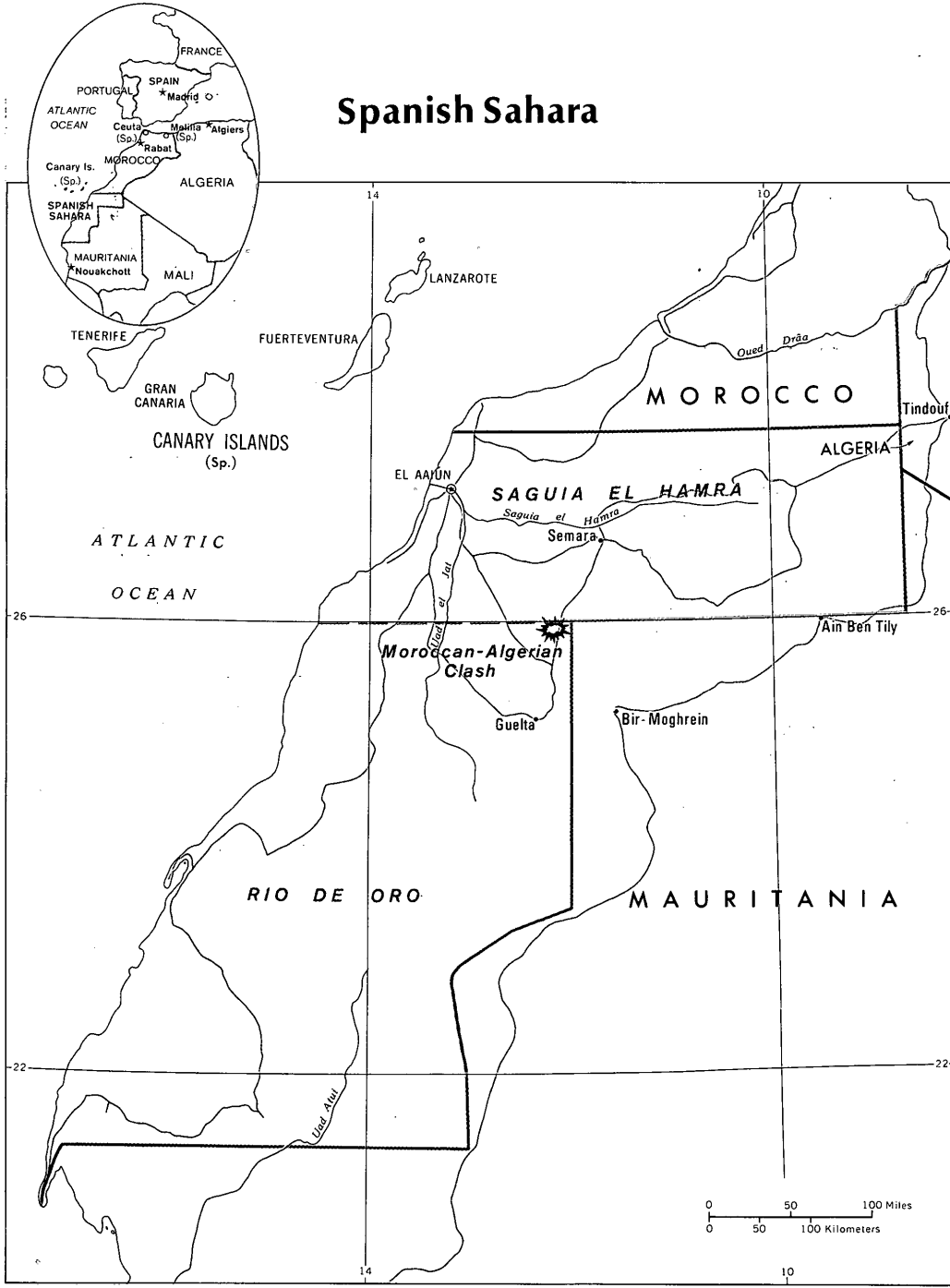
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The Soviet military airlift to Angola continues unabated.

Since January 21, eight AN-22 heavy transports have flown to Luanda, and two more aircraft arrived in Conakry from Moscow yesterday. They are expected to fly on to Luanda sometime today. The Soviet Kresta II cruiser that left Conakry last Saturday is in the Gulf of Guinea and should rendezvous with the landing ship there today. The LST has been operating some 300 to 500 miles west of Pointe Noire for over two weeks. The Kotlin destroyer and three naval oilers remain at Conakry.

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Spanish Sahara



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MOROCCO-ALGERIA

Tension between Morocco and Algeria sharply increased yesterday after Algerian media accused the Moroccans of attacking Algerian army troops assigned to transport food and medicine to Saharans north of the town of Guelta in Spanish Sahara.

This is the first confirmed encounter between troops of the two countries since the trouble over Spanish Sahara started; it is also the first open acknowledgment by Algiers that its forces are inside the territory.

President Boumediene yesterday convened an emergency joint session of the Revolutionary Council and the Council of Ministers to discuss the incident. A communiqué issued afterward charged that the Moroccan attack was "extremely serious" and warned that the situation could get out of hand if such incidents continued. The communiqué said further that the government has decided to take measures. According to an intercepted message, all Algerian army combat veterans have been ordered to report to the nearest gendarmerie station today.

Algeria quickly contacted other Arab states about the incident.

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Further agitation of the incident by the Algerians--especially if they repeat the charge that Algerian troops were attacked--could presage a strong response. If Algiers has reached such a decision, it might opt for an attack by aircraft based at Tindouf, rather than a ground operation. Such action could, nevertheless, lead to additional clashes with Moroccan forces.

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Rabat is continuing to strengthen its forces in the Sahara and in southeastern Morocco. [redacted]

[redacted] three infantry battalions, totaling over 2,500 men, are to be moved into those areas this week. Two of the battalions will be stationed at Semara and the third will be positioned near the Algerian border. Rabat also has ordered a "maximum number" of F-5 fighter aircraft to move to El Aaiun as soon as possible.

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The additional Moroccan forces going to the Sahara may have been assigned a role in a reported joint Moroccan-Mauritanian offensive aimed at sweeping the guerrillas from the Sahara. Algeria probably has learned of the planned drive and may have sent in a supply column to aid the Polisario forces. Any such drive against the guerrillas is likely to have only limited success at best.

SPAIN

When Prime Minister Arias presents his program to the Cortes (parliament) today, he is expected to confront the establishment with some hard choices on the extent of changes to be introduced into the Spanish political system.

Arias is expected to propose measures that will permit political parties, with the exception of the Communists and various extremist groups, to participate legally in the electoral process.

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Arias is also expected to call for the establishment of a commission to find ways to provide greater autonomy for the Basque and Catalan minorities, and to announce economic measures designed to improve the lot of the middle class. He wants to schedule a constitutional referendum later this year to cover a number of the reforms he is proposing.

Most members of parliament and the conservative 17-man Council of the Realm will regard the government's program as a direct attack on the stability of the Franco era and the privileged position they have enjoyed. The current constitution is vague as to whether these two bodies can prevent the cabinet from redistributing political power. Whatever the case, the present cabinet would prefer to have their cooperation and will work for a compromise solution.

Rightist Challenge

The government has already faced one rightist challenge. Last Friday the Council of the Realm voted against postponing parliamentary elections (now scheduled for March) for one year. The government wants the additional time to implement reforms that will make the new parliament more representative. The Council later reversed its vote but in effect served notice that the far right would oppose the government's liberalization plan.

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The far right is strongly represented in the security forces, and there still is strong conservative sentiment in the upper ranks of the military. By all accounts, however, the military is determined to keep out of politics unless liberalization seems to be proceeding at an unhealthy pace or there is a general breakdown of public order. The government's success in quelling recent demonstrations and strikes will have reassured the military on these points.

Rightist extremists have apparently been lying low since police in Barcelona arrested ten of their number--a move unprecedented under Franco. They may attempt to spark a confrontation at future leftist demonstrations, or they could opt for mass rallies of their own. So far there has been no sign of this, and it may be that they fear poor turnouts from a population that, on the whole, seems to desire change.

View from the Left

The left, already highly vocal under the new government, will not be satisfied by Arias' program either. It will continue to clamor for complete amnesty for all political prisoners, legalization of all political parties including the Communists, free trade unions, and unlimited rights of assembly, speech, petition, and strike.

The left is split over how fast certain changes should be implemented and how much pressure should be exerted on the government. The most radical groups, led by the Communists, want an immediate "rupture" with the Franco system and are willing to exert whatever pressure is necessary--including a general strike that would cripple the country economically--to achieve it. The more moderate elements, mainly Christian Democrats, are inclined to try to work through the system to speed up the pace of change.

Tension within the left will probably increase if the government follows through with its intention to legalize the non-Communist parties. To prevent the government from isolating their party from the rest of the leftist opposition, the Communists have sought to strengthen ties with other leftists. But there still is enough residual distrust of the Communists among Socialists and Christian Democrats to make a united opposition unlikely.

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The Socialist Workers' Party appears to be the only viable alternative to the Communists with potential appeal to the workers. Reaching an agreement with them could, therefore, be the government's key to coming to terms with the workers and the left in general.

In sum, Arias' program is likely to draw flak from the right and the left. Both sides are aware of the other's capacity to create trouble, however, and the spirit of compromise that has prevailed since Franco's death should continue. The Council of the Realm's last minute approval of the election postponement was one sign of this. Arias probably won that round, however, at the cost of toning down the reform package he unveils today.

LEBANON

The cease-fire is now in effect in almost all areas of Beirut. Christian and Muslim militiamen withdrew from their positions in the hotel district late Monday, and the Christians lifted their blockade of Palestinian refugee camps yesterday.

Opposing militia forces have not yet withdrawn from one troublespot in the southern part of the city; isolated clashes continue outside the capital in eastern Lebanon. These are not likely to upset the cease-fire as long as the political talks continue to progress.

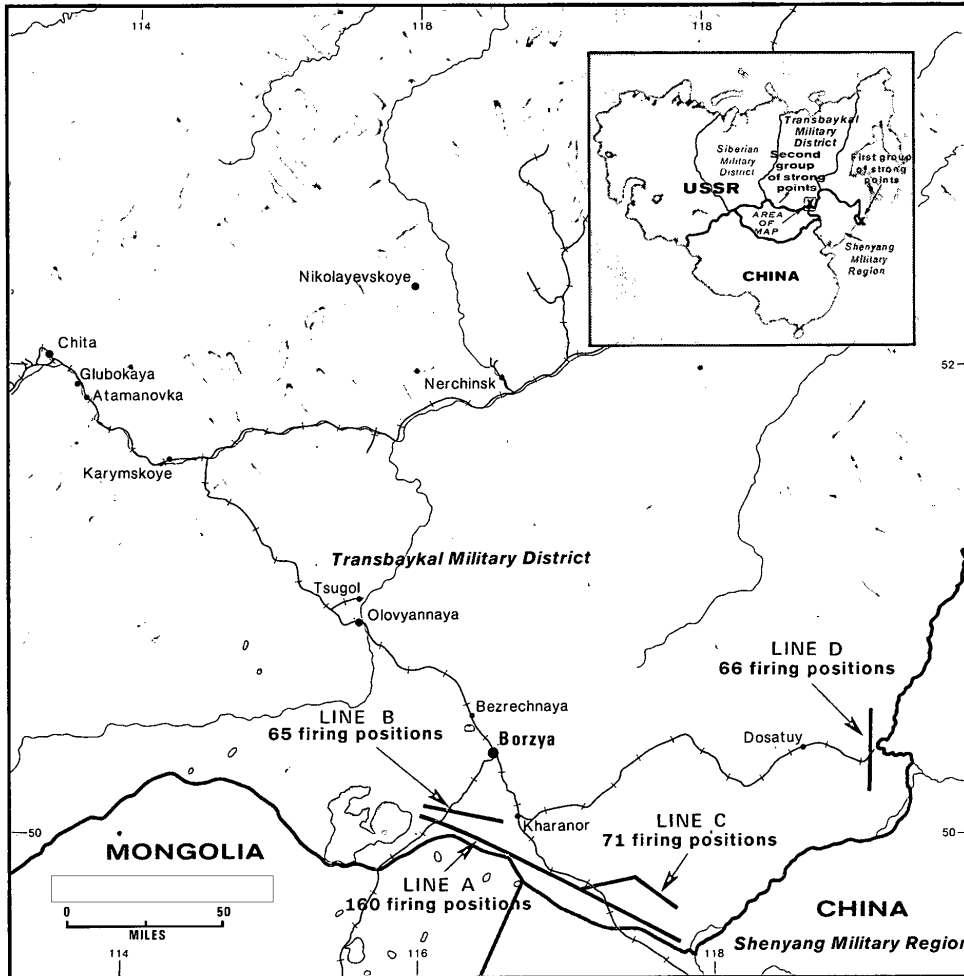
Limited commercial activity has resumed in Beirut. Basic foodstuffs and heating oil have been distributed to most areas of the city, and shortages are no longer acute.

Representatives of the various Lebanese factions reportedly are near agreement on concrete political reforms. The cabinet is scheduled to meet today, presumably to approve the tentative agreement so that it can be presented to parliament. Neither group is likely to delay endorsement of any compromise already approved by leaders of the principal Christian and Muslim factions.

The politicians reportedly are negotiating now more for form than substance. Their commitment to the projected accord is still so tenuous that either the Christians or Muslims might raise objections serious enough to derail the talks. Ultra-conservative Christians are resisting concessions by their leadership. Elements within both the Christian and conservative Muslim communities are complaining about the Syrian and Palestinian "occupation" of Lebanon.

Syrian Foreign Minister Khaddam returned to Damascus yesterday, telling reporters he would be back in Beirut today. He is expected to make arrangements for President Franjyah's long-awaited trip to Syria for consultations with President Asad.

Sino-Soviet Border: New Defensive Strong Points



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NOTE

Recent satellite photography shows that the Soviets are constructing another series of defensive strong points along their border with China.

This is the second static defense area we have seen opposite northeastern China, which has been a target of a fairly intensive Soviet reconnaissance program over the past year. To increase their capability to respond to developments in the eastern USSR, the Soviets also recently moved a heavy-lift regiment from Moscow to the Siberian Military District. This regiment, with some 250 transporters, will substantially improve the mobility of Soviet armored forces in the area, enabling them to deploy their armored vehicles quickly.

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PROSPECTS FOR ANGOLA

Once the conventional military battles in Angola have come to an end, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola--which holds a clear superiority of power--is likely as time passes to change its no-compromise posture and attempt at least a token reconciliation with its two rivals, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola and the National Front for the Liberation of Angola. Neither FNLA President Holden Roberto nor UNITA President Jonas Savimbi, however, is likely to be offered a role in any such reconciliation.

Such an approach is the only practical one from the MPLA's standpoint. The Movement professes to be multi-racial and multi-tribal, but it is basically urban-based and relies heavily on mulattos and the Kimbundu tribe for support. Its links to the Bakongo and Ovimbundu, who provide the basic support for the FNLA and UNITA respectively, are virtually non-existent.

Angola's economic prospects are heavily dependent upon the interrelationship of the territory's three major tribal areas. Angola's once-thriving coffee plantations, in the Bakongo north, have traditionally been cultivated by Ovimbundu from the south. The major port capable of handling coffee shipments is Lobito, which is in Ovimbundu territory.

Exploitation of Cabinda's oil production should present no major problems for the MPLA, although technical difficulties would delay full-scale resumption of production for several months. The MPLA has gained effective military control over the enclave, and opposition from the miniscule Front for the Liberation of Cabinda will become less significant as time passes. Continued oil production will require foreign technical assistance, but that can be obtained from the Soviet Union or other Communist states.

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Implications for Angola's Neighbors

Zaire. The MPLA is likely to be in a strong position to curtail extensive external support to any FNLA or UNITA guerrilla operations. Now that the FNLA has collapsed, there are indications that Zairian President Mobutu, who has supported the Front for a decade, is having serious doubts about continuing his backing. Any effort by Mobutu to underwrite guerrilla operations by either the FNLA or UNITA would draw immediate retaliation in kind from the Popular Movement against Zaire's copper-producing Shaba (formerly Katanga) region. In addition, Zaire has pressing economic problems. Reviving the economy rests in considerable part on regaining access to the Benguela railroad and the port of Lobito as the most economically efficient means of moving Zaire's exports and imports.

Mobutu probably will give no more than small-scale assistance to the National Front--enough to keep it alive as an exile organization.

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Mobutu's immediate chances of improving his relations with the MPLA are not good, but if he cuts his support of the Front, the Popular Movement probably will allow him access to the Benguela railroad, and thereby to the sea.

Zambia. Zambian President Kaunda will also be forced by economic necessity and his need to get the Benguela railroad reopened to seek an accommodation with the Popular Movement. Kaunda is on much firmer ground than Mobutu. Despite his personal dislike for Neto, Kaunda has not publicly attacked either the man or his organization directly. He has openly criticized the Soviet and Cuban presence in Angola, but his remarks have been moderate, emphasizing the need for withdrawal of all foreign forces from Angola and an African solution to the Angolan problem--a position that is not likely to be held against him. Zambia's support for the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola was modest.

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South Africa. A decisive MPLA victory is not likely to cause South African leaders to reverse their decision to withdraw the South African forces that had been supporting FNLA/UNITA operations in northern and central Angola. Pretoria decided to keep troops in southern Angola along the Angola-Namibia border and to protect the major Cunene hydroelectric complex--originally a joint Portuguese - South African project--that is already providing power and water for Namibia.

Pretoria's future moves in Angola presumably will be shaped by debates in Parliament during the next few weeks, by the unfolding of the MPLA's strategy toward Namibia as its forces approach the border, and by international reactions to South Africa's strengthened but defensive military posture along the Angola-Namibia border.

Whatever South Africa decides, an MPLA victory in Angola will give new heart to the various insurgent movements targeted against South Africa. We believe that the MPLA, as well as Cuba, will find it expedient to encourage such groups and to provide them both sanctuary and support. The South West African Peoples Organization, the Namibian nationalist organization that has maintained a small guerrilla force in Zambia, is apparently in contact with the MPLA.

Increased insurgent activity, most likely in Namibia, could provoke Pretoria to launch preemptive strikes beyond the presently contemplated defensive perimeter. This is a course of action Prime Minister Vorster hopes to avoid. Any military venture outside South Africa is a politically sensitive matter for Vorster because the South African Defense Force is comprised largely of youthful white conscripts. The Angolan intervention has already necessitated an extension of the one-year terms for those who were sent to Angola and a call-up of at least 8,000 white reservists.

Implications for Cuba

A substantial Cuban presence in Angola is likely even after an MPLA military victory. The size of this presence will largely be determined by:

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--the MPLA's ability to secure and administer the country;

--the MPLA's need for technical assistance in the political, administrative, and economic fields;

--the cost to Havana of maintaining a large contingent there.

The Cubans have been unfavorably impressed with the MPLA's organizational weaknesses and its questionable behavior in combat. They are therefore aware of the impact an abrupt withdrawal would have. Thus, the Cuban military force that remains will be strong enough to enable the MPLA to overcome any military threat that might arise either internally or externally; it will also be large enough to assist the MPLA in policing the entire country and in organizing, training, and developing Angola's national security forces.

In addition to combat troops, the remaining Cuban military contingent will probably include military advisers for organizing and training air, naval, and ground forces; militia training teams; Interior Ministry advisers for the creation of a national police force and a secret political police force; and technical personnel to maintain--and train Angolans to maintain--weapons and materiel. The Cubans must also maintain their own supply system until the MPLA can carry out this function satisfactorily.

The Cubans will almost certainly try to fill at least part of the economic vacuum created by the departure of the managerial, supervisory, and technical personnel of the colonial era. For this, Havana may send to Angola Cuban technical experts and economic advisers now in other African countries.

To help the MPLA broaden its political base, the Cubans will probably send political cadre and experts in the formation of mass organizations. Havana will probably also send technicians and advisers to create a system of mass communications.

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Cuban resources are limited, and Havana will look to Moscow for relief from a large part of the bill for Angolan assistance.

In Africa, Havana will continue to support politically, militarily, and technically those governments and those movements it believes to have adequate revolutionary potential. The Cuban presence in Angola will almost certainly include elements responsible for liaison with the South West African Peoples Organization (SWAPO) and other such organizations. It is difficult to imagine Havana's passing up the opportunity to channel aid to SWAPO or other rebel groups across Angola's borders. The Cubans may also conduct subversive operations against the governments of South Africa and Zaire.

The Cubans will be quick to make political capital out of an MPLA victory. Cuban media will be full of claims of a US defeat and, although the Cuban role may be downplayed somewhat out of respect for Cuban domestic sensitivities, will describe the MPLA victory as further evidence that the balance of forces in the world has shifted in favor of the socialist countries. Havana will attempt to link the US with South Africa in an effort to drive a wedge between the US and the rest of black Africa. Cuba will also cite its participation in the Angolan civil war as proof of its continued commitment to revolutionary principles and may use it to demand a greater voice in a leadership role among the countries of the third world.

Implications for the Soviet Union

Moscow's investment in Angola has grown considerably over the past six months. Because of the great international attention and concern and because of Moscow's substantial and undeniable role in bringing the MPLA to power, Angola is likely to be seen in Africa and the third world as a test of the USSR's effectiveness as a patron--particularly when it faced pressures from the US to desist in the name of detente.

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The Soviets almost certainly have mixed feelings about the Angolan venture. There would be disgruntlement in Moscow about this use of the Soviet Union's resources. The Soviets are also well aware that ventures in the third world have a way of not paying off: how can they be certain that Neto will stay in power, or even if he does, that he will not prove to be an ingrate?

Such reservations are likely to be subordinated to other calculations. The Soviets will congratulate themselves on having pushed the MPLA over the top to the instruction of other struggling "liberation" movements in southern Africa and elsewhere. Leaders in the third world are likely to be more respectful of the Soviet Union's power and less concerned at being sacrificed at some point to the USSR's larger interests.

The Soviets will probably come quickly to the aid of the Angolan economy and almost certainly will try to get the oil flowing again from Cabinda. If a market is needed, the Soviets will provide it. The Soviets will provide technical assistance and the wherewithal to get the Benguela railroad operating, and to repair the damage that has been done to important roads, bridges, and factories. The Soviets, or perhaps the Cubans, will help out with the coffee plantations.

On the administrative side, the Soviets will help out with training funds, and advice. Programs that are already underway to strengthen the technical capability of the MPLA's armed forces and security service will go forward.

There is, of course, a potential for competition between the Soviets and the Cubans. Our guess is that Neto will try to play the two socialist allies against each other and, to some degree, he may succeed. The Cubans will have the advantage of having shed blood on behalf of the socialist cause; the Soviets have controlled the resources and paid the bills. The essential coincidence of view between Havana and Moscow seems likely to continue in Angola, at least for the near future. The Soviets will send greater numbers of their own technical personnel, but will see no compelling reason to displace the Cubans.

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Moscow's advice to Neto is likely to emphasize the need to fashion an organization that can bring all of Angola firmly under the MPLA's control.

the Soviets are likely to advise Neto to co-opt as many former adversaries as he can in the interest of extending his writ over the badly fragmented country. The Soviets are also likely to believe benefits are to be gained both for Neto and themselves by a non-belligerent attitude toward Zaire and Zambia. If Neto proves unwilling or unable to go this course, Moscow would back a less conciliatory policy.

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The Soviets would like to use their position in Angola to gain new influence in Zaire, Zambia, and Mozambique. The Soviets will present themselves to Mobutu and Kaunda as the potential friend in Neto's court. But this cannot work if Neto proves intransigent in dealing with his neighbors. The connection is somewhat different in Mozambique. The Moscow hope that its support for Neto, in contrast to China's opposition to him, and Neto's own good words to his long-time ally Machel will move Mozambique away from China and toward the USSR.

Moscow will also attempt to use its MPLA connection to strengthen contacts with such African revolutionary movements as SWAPO, and with such nationalist figures as Nkomo and Sithole in Rhodesia. The latter, who heretofore has been associated with the Chinese, evidently will soon go to the Soviet Union. Although Moscow will turn a benign face to Mobutu and Kaunda, the Soviets will also make use of their position in Angola, and their new prestige, to support leftist elements working against both men.

As for the US, Moscow will expect that Washington will gradually accustom itself to the consolidation of the MPLA's position in Angola, and that, in the process, Angola will recede as an irritant to bilateral relations.

Implications for African Attitudes Toward US

In addition to encouraging nations like Zaire and Zambia toward accommodation with the MPLA, the collapse of the UNITA/FNLA position could encourage

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anti-American sentiments in these and other black African states. In Africa as elsewhere there is truth to the adage that nothing succeeds like success. Both Mobutu and Kaunda will feel that they have been let down by the US, and as a result they will feel it increasingly necessary to demonstrate their "African" loyalties. The attitudes of other black African governments toward the US will be affected in varying degrees. In general, there will be increased skepticism over US resolve and reliability. The Nigerian military government, for example, which has tended to blow hot and cold in its relations with the US, will undoubtedly be pushed a few more degrees toward the cold end of the spectrum. Ethiopia's basically neutral attitude toward the US is likely to veer toward the negative.

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