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WORKING GROUP PAPER #75

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22 OCT 1975

REPORT: WORKING GROUP ON ANGOLA

NSA review completed

SUBJECT: Cuban Involvement in Angola

1. Based on current available intelligence information, it is estimated that there are between 1,200 and 1,900 Cuban military personnel in Angola. The majority of these Cubans have been introduced in late September and early October 1975--greatly augmenting Cuban long-standing involvement. The public rationale for this significantly increased intervention was provided by the Cuban Ambassador to the United Nations in a speech at the U.N. on 8 October 1975--quoted in part in paragraph 6 below.

2. Cuban assistance to the MPLA has stretched over the past ten years. Begun in part as support for an "anti-colonial struggle," it has been intensified since the Portuguese announced their intention to leave Angola. Over this period, several hundred MPLA cadre are estimated to have been trained by the Cubans, mainly in the rear MPLA bases in the Congo, but more recently in MPLA bases in Angola itself. Cuban technical advisors, probably numbering several dozen, have been assisting the MPLA both in the Congo and more recently in Angola. Some Cubans are reportedly working with Soviet advisors at the Massangano MPLA training base in Angola.

3. Two Cuban ships were reported to have called at Porto Amboim (south of Luanda) during the first week in October 1975: The "Isla Coral" and the "Viet Nam Heroica." One is a combined passenger/freighter, equipped to carry 240 passengers, and the other is a freighter. It is reliably reported that as many as 700 Cubans arrived on these ships, claiming to be volunteers for service with the MPLA. We have confirmed that these ships were in African waters at the time.

4. At about the same time, Cuban troops and equipment were reported arriving in Pointe Noire, Congo. According to these reports, three Cuban ships arrived there between 25 September and mid-October 1975 and offloaded equipment which included tanks, armored vehicles, military trucks and

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several cases of unidentified materiel. Most of the equipment delivered by these ships is already enroute to Angola, being transported in MPLA-owned ships. In addition, the Cuban ships were reported to have carried at least 900 Cuban troops, about half of whom subsequently departed for Angola proper while the remainder were sent to the Cabinda border area.

5. The Cubans have provided professional leadership to the MPLA in fighting against UNITA at Norton De Matos, in South Central Angola, where at least one Cuban military advisor was reportedly killed in early October 1975.

6. Ricardo Alarcon DeQuesada, Cuban Ambassador to the U.N., recently provided the basis and explanation for a much more active intervention, not only on the part of Cuba, but also of other Communist nations. He said on 8 October 1975 in his speech to the UNGA:

a. "In Angola the conspiracy of imperialism, its allies and lackeys, has found concrete expression in the brazen interference designed to frustrate true decolonization while threatening its territorial integrity; snatching away from the people's liberation movement of Angola* the fruits of its dauntless struggle against colonialism, while condemning the future state to control by transnational corporations. Cuba renews the expression of its full solidarity with the people's liberation movement in Angola--yesterday heroic in its struggle against the European colonizer; today firm in its defence of true independence.

b. "In the face of the scandalous interference of imperialists, colonialists and racists (in Angola), it is an elementary duty (for Cuba) to offer its (the Angolan) people the effective assistance that may be required for that country to ensure its true independence and full sovereignty. In order to spur the decolonization process, a coherent strategy must be implemented with the participation of all progressive forces. This strategy is essential in order to face up to colonialist and racist machinations against the peoples of Namibia and Zimbabwe and must oppose colonialism in all its forms and manifestations in every corner of the earth."

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*This is taken from the Provisional Verbatim Record of the 13th Session of the UNGA. A later time limit for corrections was set. We believe the Cubans may have caught their error for this title, which in all probability should have been "Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola," that is the MPLA.

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