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ANGOLA WORKING
GROUP PAPER No. 89

10 NOV 1975

REPORT: WORKING GROUP ON ANGOLA

At a meeting of the Working Group on 7 November 1975, the following topics were covered:

1. Military Briefing

a. The UNITA-FNLA forces have captured Benguela and Lobito and are north of Lobito.

b. The FNLA attack on Luanda has been handicapped by the failure of the two North Korean-supplied 130mm guns which the attackers were relying on to counter the expected MPLA 122mm rockets. One gun exploded and the other had a less serious malfunction. (Late information was reported that the FNLA-FAZ attack on Quifangondo had been repulsed.)

c. Reports of the buildup of Soviet-provided arms and armor within Angola and Cabinda, the further introduction of Cuban combat troops and the most recent report of the delivery of MIG-21 aircraft to Brazzaville were discussed.

[redacted] Some anxiety was expressed about the reportedly large quantities of weapons which had not yet been seen in battle.

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2. Debriefing of Consul-General Killoran

In reply to questions, Mr. Killoran made these points:

a. The MPLA military forces were stretched thin and falling back. The FNLA was attacking at Quifangondo and wasting much ammunition in the process.

DOS Review Completed.

[redacted]

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b. Recent casualties were relatively light, unlike the July fighting within the cities in which many civilians were killed.

c. In Luanda, most of the whites have gone. The United States evacuation airlift took out 31,000. The Portuguese flew out over 100,000. Enough white technicians remained to maintain water, electricity and such services.

d. The foreign press remains, as do consulates of Belgium, West Germany, France, Italy and Brazil. Brazil's representative is the highest ranking diplomat in Luanda. He appears to favor recognition of the MPLA. (The Brazilian Ambassador in Washington has indicated that Brazilian recognition of the MPLA may not be that certain.)

e. The Portuguese military were leaving behind little in the way of significant munitions. The Portuguese civilians were fleeing out of fear. Many felt guilty about their previous treatment of blacks.

f. The MPLA seemed dedicated to their cause, as did the FNLA. Most of Angola's civil servants and technicians identify with the MPLA. The country could not be governed without the support of these people, who now nearly all back the MPLA.

g. There is dissension within the MPLA along the lines of black versus mulatto and of the military versus the political leadership.

h. Hatreds among the three liberation groups would make a political accommodation difficult. But a military stalemate could force a political solution. Support of the FNLA and UNITA might be set at a level needed to achieve such a balance. Other possible solutions are partition or federation.

3. Political Issues

a. The State Department representatives distributed a draft circular message to United States diplomatic posts which outlines the arguments against an early recognition of the MPLA regime.

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b. Requests have been made by a Zairois official (Bisengimana) and by Jonas Savimbi that the United States Government use its influence to encourage the South Africans to keep their combat units and training teams in Angola.

c. It was agreed that the removal of these units could result in a loss of momentum by the UNITA-FNLA forces and a drastic shift in the course of the fighting. On the other hand, it was also noted that:

(1) The South African military presence in Angola could have political repercussions which would be difficult to handle.

(2) The United States has a 13-year old policy of restricting military contacts with the South Africans.

(3) The South Africans might expect some military or political rewards if they complied with our request. This could lead to serious demands on the United States, especially if the fighting escalated and a confrontation with Communist forces became more intense.

(4) A favorable solution from the point of view of UNITA might be for the South Africans to maintain a limited and discreet presence in Angola--without being encouraged to do so by the United States. This would enable the South Africans to maintain their training teams with UNITA as well as the capability to intervene decisively and quickly as the need arises. They would presumably also continue their materiel support to the FNLA and UNITA.

(5) The State representatives will present the issue to their superior.

d. The consequences in Zaire of the appearance of MIG aircraft in the area were discussed. Among the likely reactions to be expected from President Mobutu are:

(1) A preemptive strike by FAZ aircraft before the MIG aircraft are fully operational.

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(2) Urgent requests for anti-aircraft weapons to defend Zaire, to include fighter aircraft, radar, fire control and anti-aircraft guns.

(3) Requests for missiles including REDEYE.

(4) Requests for contract pilots to fly Mirage aircraft.

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