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Cuban Internationalism: The Angola Experience, 1975-1988

WILLIAM A. DePALO, JR.

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In November 1975, Cuba deployed 12,000 combat troops to Angola in a determined effort to preserve in power the nascent regime of the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, or MPLA). Under siege from the combined forces of South Africa and two competing insurgent groups, the Marxist government of Eduardo dos Santos was in serious danger of collapsing. Cuban forces, operating with MPLA troops, successfully repelled the invaders on the outskirts of Luanda and ensured, at least for the time being, the survival of a regime with which they shared ideological compatibility.

This was not the first instance of Cuban involvement in Africa; Fidel Castro had been dispatching military contingents to selected African countries since the early 1960s in an attempt to exploit opportunities to further socialist movements in the Third World. But the Angola intervention was the first instance of tactical formations being deployed overseas en masse for a specific combat mission. Moreover, despite accomplishment of the intended task, Cuban forces remained in Angola for the ensuing 13 years. They departed only after the negotiation of a diplomatic settlement in 1988, one which created a political arrangement little different from that extant in 1975. In light of the outcome, one is compelled to question the rationale that drove Cuba to intervene in the first place and to scrutinize the possible benefits derived from such a prolonged venture. It is the purpose of this article to examine the motives behind Cuba's intervention in what was fundamentally a civil war; to evaluate the effect of the Cuban presence in determining the outcome of the conflict; to assess the costs

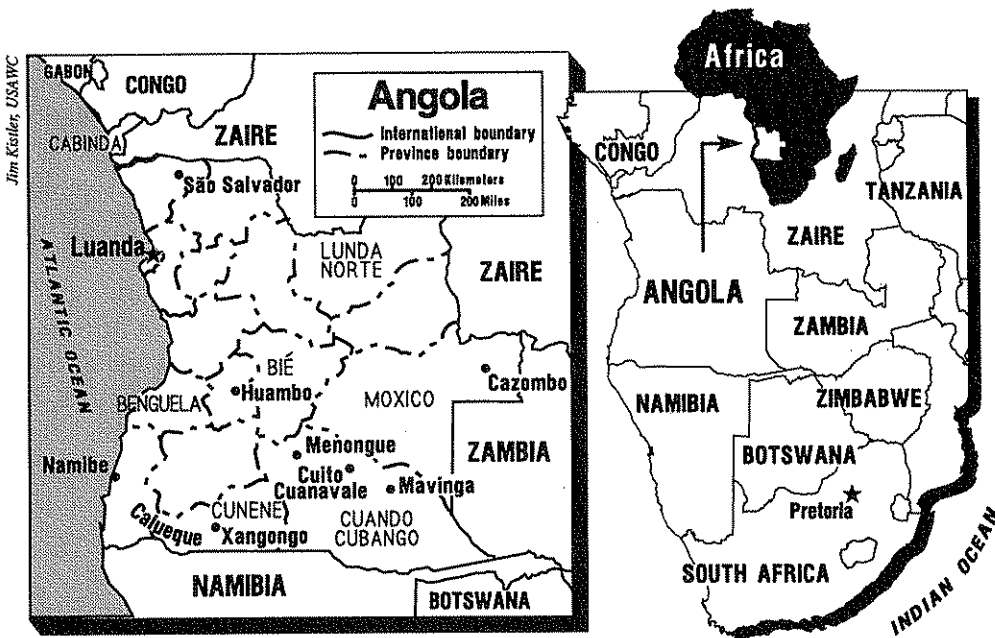
and benefits of Cuba's participation; and finally to ascertain the influence of Soviet foreign policy upon Cuban internationalism.

Antecedents

The Portuguese decision to end its colonial rule of Angola in 1975 left the country at the mercy of three ideologically distinct and mutually hostile factions. The MPLA, a Marxist organization founded in 1956 by Dr. Agostinho Neto, was opposed by Holden Roberto's Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola (the National Front for the Liberation of Angola, or FNLA), a pro-Western group. A third faction, the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola, or UNITA), was led by Jonas Savimbi, a Swiss-educated political scientist professing a vaguely socialist philosophy, who had become disaffected with the FNLA.¹ Anxious to be rid of Angola at any cost, the Portuguese leadership was willing to transfer power to whichever one of the contending anti-colonial movements happened to control the capital on the day of independence.² In accordance with the 1974 Alvor Agreements, a tripartite transitional government comprising the three contending factions was formed to exercise authority until elections could be held on 11 November 1975. But the coalition quickly disintegrated and full-scale civil war ensued between the MPLA and FNLA, with UNITA temporarily on the sidelines espousing its preference for peace. Realizing that its decolonization plan had collapsed, Portugal abandoned Angola, leaving the MPLA in control.³

South Africa, which viewed MPLA ascendancy as a threat to its occupation of Namibia and the long-term prospects for white minority rule, intervened on the side of UNITA with a major offensive on 23 October 1975, aimed at seizing the capital, Luanda, and dislodging the MPLA. Operation Zulu, as the incursion was called, progressed so rapidly up the coast that the MPLA was compelled to appeal for Cuban intervention.⁴ Fidel Castro, who had been providing advisory assistance to the MPLA since 1974, responded with 12,000 combat troops, while the Soviet Union furnished \$200 million in small arms, aircraft, artillery, and combat vehicles.⁵ Designated Operación Carlota, this external reinforcement enabled the MPLA to halt the South

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African onslaught and mount a counteroffensive which recaptured Huambo and São Salvador, badly mauling UNITA and permanently eliminating the FNLA from contention.⁶ In mid-December, however, Cuban forces sustained heavy casualties in the Battle of Bridge 14, and for several years thereafter they confined their activities principally to static protection of key installations in and around Luanda.⁷ While active hostilities had been brought to an end by April 1976, the conflict was far from resolved. Cuban and Soviet intervention on behalf of the MPLA, and South African backing of UNITA, simply moved the contest into the international arena, where the superpowers and their surrogates would take up the struggle for hegemony in Angola.⁸

Internationalism and Strategy

Cuba's pursuit of an internationalist foreign policy was inspired primarily by ideological factors; Cuba had little to gain economically or strategically by promoting revolution in Angola. Cuban activism was stimulated less by a desire for tangible rewards than it was by an aspiration to advance the cause of socialism and promote the principle of proletarian internationalism as a key foreign policy determinant.⁹ Additionally, Cuba had a history of involvement in African conflicts dating from Castro's consolidation of power. As early as 1965, Cuba was supplying arms and advisors to the MPLA in an effort to overthrow the Portuguese colonial regime, and this commitment had remained constant. Castro wanted Cuba to be perceived as occupying a vanguard position in the struggle for world socialist revolution, and the ability to project military power

onto distant continents served to advance this image. Ideologically, Castro believed that "progressive states" had an obligation to come to the aid of all national liberation movements.¹⁰ Soviet policy, on the other hand, clearly revolved around geopolitical considerations, a position which put it increasingly at odds with Cuba, especially after the 1962 US missile crisis. The arrival via Zaire of clandestine US support for the rebels, however, altered the correlation of forces and brought Cuban and Soviet policy in Angola back into harmony, at least for the time being.¹¹

Angola also provided Cuba with a staging ground for military activities in the entire cape region of Africa.¹² About the size of Peru or South Africa, Angola shares a common border with Zaire, Zambia, and Namibia. Its 1000 miles of coastline offer extensive outlets to the South Atlantic for its abundant natural resources, and rail lines to the interior constitute a potential link between the Atlantic and Indian oceans, bypassing the existing South Africa transit system.¹³ Extensive petroleum reserves, an abundance of diamond mines and coffee plantations, and virtually untapped deposits of gold, uranium, copper, and bauxite endow the country with economic significance out of proportion to its size.¹⁴ Angola has been unable to realize its economic potential, however, as the incipient civil war caused the country's Gross Domestic Product to fall by 40 percent between 1974 and 1975, where it has remained ever since. Moreover, Angola has been obliged to divert much-needed hard currency from economic development to offset the high cost of Cuban military assistance. At the height of the conflict, two-thirds to three-quarters of the annual Angolan budget was consumed in prosecuting the war.¹⁵

The Cuban leadership surmised correctly that the United States, weakened by its involvement in the Vietnam conflict, would be disinclined to contest the intervention of Cuban forces in Angola. Congress reinforced this impression with legislation banning covert aid to insurgents opposing the MPLA.¹⁶ The United States was further constrained by the stigma of being associated with the racist regime in Pretoria. In the view of most African states, South African intervention legitimized the presence of Cuban forces by casting the latter as protectors of a newly independent state.¹⁷ Moreover, the proximity of Cuban combat troops forced South Africa to reconsider its policy objectives in the Angolan war. Fearing increased support for the Southwest Africa Peoples Organization (SWAPO), South Africa implemented a "total strategy" initiative, reorganizing and expanding its armed forces and accelerating weapons development programs. South Africa was especially anxious to obviate any cooperation between the African National Congress (ANC) and the Cubans; in the absence of economic incentives with which to compel Angolan compliance, South Africa elected to pursue a military option.¹⁸ The MPLA countered that Cuban military presence was essential until the South African threat and external support for UNITA disappeared, a

position which served as the linchpin of Angolan foreign policy for the ensuing decade.¹⁹

Stalemate and Reassessment

The ten years that followed saw heightened tension and growing external involvement. Despite \$4 billion in Soviet military aid, the recurrent MPLA/Cuban offensives failed to destroy UNITA or to dislodge the South African Defense Forces (SADF) from their bases in southern Angola. Clearly, Castro had underestimated the resilience and strength of Savimbi's Chinese-trained guerrilla army.²⁰ After his defeat in 1976, the enigmatic UNITA leader retreated to the remote southeastern corner of Angola where he rebuilt his forces and progressively expanded operations to the west and north. The MPLA countered with periodic campaigns intended to keep open the principal road networks and regain control of the countryside.²¹ These combined-arms sweeps were ill-suited to both the terrain and the elusive nature of UNITA's skillful light infantry. As a result, each time the government offensive ended and the MPLA forces withdrew to their bases in the north, the guerrillas simply reoccupied the void. There was never any effort to maintain a permanent government presence in these remote areas, effectively relinquishing them to UNITA by default. By 1983 UNITA had consolidated its hold on extensive portions of Cuando Cubango and Moxico provinces, operating with nearly unrestricted freedom of action throughout the central region of Angola.²²

Besides UNITA, the MPLA and Cubans also had to contend with the SADF, which by 1981 had established a 50,000-square-mile lodgement in Angola's Cunene province in order to secure the Namibian border. MPLA support of SWAPO, which included allowing sanctuaries in southern Angola, provided a convenient pretext for Pretoria to justify its military presence in Angola.²³ The US foreign policy position in this matter had been to distance itself from South Africa and to support UN Resolution 435 (which established conditions for resolving the Namibian question), while assiduously refusing to recognize the Luanda regime as long as Cuban forces remained in country.²⁴ When the Reagan Administration came to power, however, US policy toward South Africa changed to one of "constructive engagement," in which the independence of Namibia was linked to the complete withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola.²⁵ Yet with the SADF firmly entrenched in Angolan territory, the MPLA insisted on retaining the Cuban military presence and steadfastly refused to support initiatives to resolve the conflict diplomatically. Cuban troops were considered indispensable to the nation's security; in addition to protecting vital installations, they released units of the Angolan armed forces, the *Forças Armadas Populares (FAP)*, to fight UNITA and the SADF.²⁶

From 1980 on, Cuba attempted to minimize its casualties by limiting the participation of its units in major operations and confining its activities to

“Cuba’s policy was inspired by ideological factors. Cuba had little to gain economically or strategically by promoting revolution in Angola.”

the protection of principal cities in the north and installations critical to the country’s economy.²⁷ The 25,000-man Cuban expeditionary force also directed its attention to training the FAP and, over time, gradually transformed the shabby guerrilla force into a relatively proficient army of 100,000, equipped with sophisticated hardware from the Soviet Union. In December 1983 the FAP demonstrated its newly acquired competence by repulsing a major South African initiative to expand its Angolan lodgement.²⁸ The defeat kindled Pretoria’s interest in discussing a peaceful settlement to the conflict, and in the resulting Lusaka Accord, South Africa agreed to withdraw all but 1000 of its troops from Cunene province in return for assurances that this area would not be subsequently infiltrated by SWAPO guerrillas. But the interlocking nature of the Cuban and South African presence in the region created an intractable predicament in which neither side could tolerate being the first to leave.²⁹

In an attempt to break the stalemate, the MPLA launched a two-pronged attack during the summer of 1985 aimed at driving UNITA out of its bases at Cazombo, near the Zairean border, and Mavinga, in the southern part of the country. The operation was successful in dislodging the guerrillas from their Cazombo strongholds, but renewed SADF intervention helped repulse the offensive’s southern prong. The Cubans attributed this failure to the poor concept of operation developed by Soviet advisors, to whom the Cubans were subordinate at the time.³⁰ Additionally, the Angolan setback was compounded when the US Congress voted to repeal the Clark Amendment, freeing up some \$15 million in military aid for Savimbi’s rebels.³¹ The combined effects of these events and the fiscal consequences of recent oil shocks upon Angola’s debilitated oil-dependent economy forced the MPLA to resume its participation in peace negotiations. The loss of revenue hit especially hard at payments for Soviet equipment and the per capita cost of maintaining the Cuban Expeditionary Force, which by this time had reached 37,000 troops.³² Despite economic reforms, diplomatic initiatives, and the ongoing professionalization of the FAP, both Cuba and South Africa remained obdurate in the pursuit of their strategic objectives. Only the consequences of renewed hostilities would be sufficient to compel their return to the bargaining table.³³

On the heels of yet another failed MPLA offensive in 1986, Castro decided to exercise more personal control of the war. This decision was prompted in part by the economic reforms being introduced in the Soviet Union by Mikhail Gorbachev, to which Castro was diametrically opposed.³⁴ In early 1987, Cuban combat units began replacing Angolan formations along the defensive Namibe-Menongue line, and the Cuban military command structure was reorganized.³⁵ Complete responsibility for planning, directing, and executing Angolan military strategy was transferred from the Soviet advisors to the new Cuban leadership. At this point, the Soviets seemed convinced that a political settlement was the only feasible means of ending the war. Their experience in Afghanistan had taught them the same lesson learned by the United States in Vietnam: that insurgencies fought by dedicated, competent guerrillas with external support and protected sanctuaries were exceedingly difficult to extinguish.³⁶

End Game: The Battle of Cuito Cuanavale

The August 1987 offensive, the intent of which was to capture the town of Mavinga for use as a springboard to the UNITA base at Jamba, achieved a measure of success until a 6000-man SADF task force came to the rescue of UNITA.³⁷ Pressured by the specter of annihilation, Angolan troops fell back in disarray to the central Angolan town of Cuito Cuanavale, where they established a defensive position. Rapid pursuit by the SADF and Savimbi's 35,000-man guerrilla army placed the FAP in such a precarious position that President Dos Santos requested additional Cuban military forces.³⁸ Visualizing the likely defeat of a good part of the MPLA army, Castro directed the deployment of 15,000 more Cuban troops to Angola, bringing the total in country to about 50,000, and reassigned Division General Arnaldo Ochoa Sanchez from his post as Senior Military Advisor to the Sandinistas in Nicaragua to command all Cuban forces in Angola.³⁹ Additionally, Castro ordered a Cuban-led offensive which would, for the first time since their occupation of the Namibe-Menongue defensive line, thrust Cuban combat forces into direct engagement with the SADF.⁴⁰

A self-made warrior, Arnaldo Ochoa had only a sixth-grade education when he joined Castro's rebel army in the Sierra Maestra in 1958. He participated in nearly all of the significant battles preceding the overthrow of Batista on 1 January 1959, becoming a captain in the new Revolutionary Army, and taking part in the fight against both the Playa Girón invaders and the counterrevolutionary guerrillas in the Sierra de Escambray. Thereafter, he embarked upon a series of internationalist assignments that would make him the most experienced field officer in the Cuban armed forces.⁴¹ Upon taking command of the Cuban Expeditionary Force in November 1987, Ochoa immediately turned his full attention to the escalating crisis in Cuito Cuanavale.

Castro's constant intrusion into events ongoing in this remote town, however, engendered resentment and induced Ochoa to ignore orders he considered to be particularly absurd. As the battle developed, relations between Castro and Ochoa deteriorated markedly, ultimately reaching a point that would affect the latter's fate.⁴²

Cuito Cuanavale occupies the nexus of a strategic road junction in remote Cuando Cubango province. The heavily fortified position was defended by 18,000 Angolan and 15,000 Cuban troops and protected by a sophisticated air defense system, which in combination with the enhanced proficiency of the MPLA pilots helped nullify the air superiority advantage previously enjoyed by South Africa. By seizing the town, South Africa hoped to expand UNITA influence in central Angola and possibly proclaim a Savimbi-led provisional government.⁴³ In December, 9000 SADF regulars and 35,000 UNITA insurgents, backed by AML-90 armored vehicles and long-range 155mm artillery, began hammering the town. Angolan and Cuban MiG-23 pilots engaged South African Mirage fighters in air-to-air battles which helped deplete SADF airpower and curtail the damage to which the town was being subjected.⁴⁴ An offensive launched by the SADF on 23 January 1988 reached the center of town, finally being driven back only after prolonged close-quarters combat in which both sides sustained heavy casualties. Supported by South African artillery and air, UNITA forces renewed the attack on 14 February 1988 and quickly penetrated the first line of defense, routing three FAP brigades in the process. Within a few days, however, it became apparent that UNITA lacked the strength to penetrate further into Cuito's defense, and Cuban airpower was wreaking havoc upon the SADF armored columns.⁴⁵

To relieve the pressure on Cuito, Ochoa counterattacked with two armored brigades in a flanking maneuver that obliged the UNITA rebels to split their forces in order to counter the new threat. By April 1988, the Cubans had seized a 280-mile front stretching from Xangongo in the west to Cuito Cuanavale in the east, and extending 125 miles to the south.⁴⁶ In mid-May, the SADF made one final, unsuccessful attempt to seize Cuito. Ochoa responded by pushing Cuban formations even farther south and attacking the SADF stronghold at Calueque, inflicting numerous casualties among the defenders. Confronted with a possible Cuban incursion into Namibia, South Africa reinforced its defensive positions there with 50,000 additional troops. At this point, however, both sides reached an impasse: the Cuban counteroffensive had forced the South Africans out of Angola, but the formidable SADF positions in Namibia deterred further Cuban progress.⁴⁷ The high number of casualties suffered, growing discontent at home, the abysmal performance of their UNITA allies, and a cost analysis of any renewed effort persuaded the Pretoria government that resumption of diplomatic initiatives was the most prudent course of action.⁴⁸ Despite the Cuban success, Ochoa too had become convinced that the war in

Angola could not be won militarily, and he adopted a strategy designed to permit Cuba to negotiate a peaceful settlement from a position of strength.⁴⁹

Negotiation and Disengagement

A series of meetings held in July 1988 involving the United States, Cuba, Angola, and South Africa developed a protocol mandating a cease-fire and disengagement of forces to take effect on 8 August. Thereafter, the SADF withdrew its remaining forces from southern Angola, and a joint monitoring team was deployed along the Namibian border.⁵⁰ The protocol, however, had little more effect than the failed 1984 Lusaka Accord; the far more important issues of Namibian independence and removal of Cuban forces from Angola remained to be negotiated. Numerous bargaining sessions finally produced the Brazzaville Protocol, containing the following provisions: (1) after a token withdrawal of 3000 Cuban soldiers, the remaining 47,000 would be phased-out over a 27-month period; (2) elections to determine the independence of Namibia would be held in seven months; (3) the dual timetables would begin on 1 April 1989, coincident with the imposition of a UN mandate over Namibia, which included sequestration of all SADF and SWAPO combatants present in UN-designated areas; and (4) verification was to be accomplished by a joint South Africa-Angolan commission functioning under UN supervision.⁵¹ The final agreement was signed by all parties in New York on 22 December 1988. Significantly, Ochoa was not among the Cuban generals present for the ceremony, and on 9 January 1989 he was replaced as commander of Angolan-Cuban forces by Raul Castro's protégé, Division General Leopoldo Cintra Frías.⁵²

The Brazzaville agreement was implemented without incident, and Namibia gained its independence on 21 March 1990, with SWAPO receiving a mandate to govern the country. Coincidentally, Angola and UNITA entered into peace negotiations which, following a cease-fire arrangement, culminated on 25 January 1992 in an agreement to hold multi-party elections the following September.⁵³ Under this Estoril Accord, the forces of both the MPLA and UNITA would be demobilized, and a new 52,000-man national armed force, to be trained by France, Britain, and Portugal, would be established in their stead. A Joint Political-Military Commission composed of the representatives of the United States, Russia, Portugal, the MPLA, and UNITA, was formed to oversee creation of the new military, with concomitant responsibility for supervision of the cease-fire.⁵⁴

In the balloting which followed, the MPLA emerged with a plurality in both the presidential and parliamentary elections, an outcome precipitating allegations of fraud from Savimbi. Refusing to accept the results, Savimbi initiated a series of attacks which left 1000 people dead, including three of his top aides. Driven from the city, Savimbi retreated to his stronghold in

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is not an unlikely possibility.”***

Huambo, where he took advantage of the political stalemate to extend his military control from the populous coastal province of Benguela to Bié province in the *planalta* of Angola.⁵⁵ Since neither Dos Santos nor Savimbi has exhibited the capacity to lose gracefully or share power unselfishly, and since both have access to weapons and years of battle experience, a resumption of full-scale civil war is not an unlikely possibility. In the next round, however, it is improbable that the external variables which so influenced the earlier contest would again come into play.⁵⁶

Conclusion

The Cuban decision to intervene in the Angola civil war was fundamentally an independent one. Castro's action was consistent with Cuba's well-established policy of assisting African liberation movements, and Angola fit the basic criteria used to justify such involvements elsewhere on the continent. Angola also provided Castro with an ideal opportunity to be perceived as a leader of the nonaligned movement at a time when his initiatives in Central America were being thwarted.⁵⁷ The MPLA was a friendly Marxist government threatened by imperialist intervention, while South Africa embodied everything despised by the emerging African nations. Cuba remained in Angola for the ensuing 13 years because of the continued threats posed by both the UNITA rebels and South Africa; to have abandoned the MPLA after the initial intervention would have negated all that had been accomplished.⁵⁸ Although the Soviets provided advisors to the FAP, the Soviet role in Angola remained primarily one of arms-supplier. Soviet and Cuban policy objectives, while not identical, tended to converge as the intensified war clarified the compatibility of Cuban and Soviet regional interests, at least in the near term.⁵⁹

Cuba's inclination to equal or surpass every South African escalation was the single most decisive factor in bringing the war to a conclusion.⁶⁰ In consonance with South Africa's nearly total estrangement from the world community, the Cuban success at Cuito Cuanavale brought the negotiating advantage to the MPLA. The progressive escalation of Cuban armed intervention forced South Africa to reassess its military strategy; reassessment, in turn, led to concessions at the bargaining table that would otherwise not have been

made. The unanticipated thaw in East-West relations deprived Cuba of the logistical support upon which it had become dependent to prosecute the war, and convinced Castro that a continuation of hostilities was not in Cuba's best interest. But Castro required a military victory of some kind to enable his troops to be perceived as withdrawing with honor, and his commitment of Cuban combat forces to the defense of Cuito Cuanavale provided a means by which the requisite success could be claimed.⁶¹

Cuban military assistance enabled the MPLA to cling to power, forced the independence of Namibia, enhanced Cuban prestige among Third World nations, and prevented South Africa from having its way in the southern reaches of the continent. But at what cost? Estimates of casualties sustained by the Cuban military during its 13-year involvement range from 10,000 killed, wounded, and missing by 1987 to 12,000 killed in the entire war.⁶² The domestic effect of these casualties is difficult to assess. The Cuban public was not exposed to the daily litany of casualty statistics which permeated the evening news in the United States during the Vietnam War. The Castro regime was quite successful in suppressing developments in Angola; news coverage of the war was sporadic and heavily censored, and it rarely mentioned details of Cuban losses. Firsthand accounts from returning veterans, however, have filled in some of the gaps and created an increasingly vocal contingent demanding government programs to facilitate their economic and social reintegration.⁶³

Domestically, the costs of the Angola intervention are still being assessed. For the first time in Cuba's history, Cuban youth were drafted into the military not to defend national territory but to pursue international strategic objectives. This caused little concern while Cuban casualties were low, but draft evasion escalated significantly as an increasing number of Cuban soldiers were repatriated in body bags.⁶⁴ Dissent within the military itself has increased over unpopular foreign policy decisions and the inability of the government to address the needs of returning veterans. The military also was shaken by the arrest and execution of Ochoa in 1989 on charges of drug-trafficking and corruption; many uniformed Cubans regarded him as a genuine military hero. Additionally, many of the Soviet-trained Cuban officers embrace the reforms initiated by Gorbachev and resent the pointless sacrifice required by Castro's insistence upon harder work for greater moral incentives. Castro's fear of internal opposition from his Revolutionary Army has been reflected in a militarization of political institutions. Loyal generals have been appointed to head the Interior Ministry and the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution and the National Assembly of People's Power. By such militarization, Castro "may be able to avoid calling on the military to engage in the kind of repression that would trigger a coup."⁶⁵

Meanwhile, in Angola, the political situation continues to deteriorate. The renewal of hostilities in the wake of Savimbi's electoral defeat has

once again plunged the nation into full-scale civil war. UNITA forces recently ousted all remaining MPLA troops from the rebel stronghold of Huambo and may now control as much as 70 percent of the countryside, including the diamond-mining areas of Lunda Norte.⁶⁶ As a result of these not-unexpected developments, the outlook for peace and stability is not optimistic. The same factors that triggered the civil war in the first place remain unresolved. The peace accords brokered by the external participants addressed primarily their own political goals and not the causes underlying this long-standing factional conflict. Moreover, the premature attempt to hold elections without first achieving some form of national reconciliation was doomed to failure.

While the demise of superpower regional rivalry makes renewal of foreign intervention, especially Cuban, improbable, it is likely that internal strife will persist until one of the contending factions can no longer muster the strength to continue. The United States has endeavored to influence the situation by extending diplomatic recognition to the MPLA, which, in the aftermath of the Cold War, has shed most of its Marxist proclivities. In the near term, however, it appears that a resumption of the peace negotiations in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, offers the most pragmatic means of reaching some form of mutually satisfactory accord.

NOTES

1. Anthony G. Pazzanita, "The Conflict Resolution Process in Angola," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 29 (March 1991), 84. The overthrow of the dictatorship of Marcello Caetano on 25 April 1974, by disaffected young officers who viewed the war as unwinnable, set in motion irreversible plans for the decolonization of Angola.

2. Owen Ellison Kahn, "Cuba's Impact in Southern Africa," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, 29 (Fall 1987), 33.

3. Pazzanita, p. 85.

4. William M. Leogrande, "Cuba's Policy in Africa," in *The Cuba Reader: The Making of a Revolutionary Society*, ed. Phillip Brenner et al. (New York: Grove Press, 1989), p. 380. The South African offensive is reported to have covered 500 km in one week.

5. John A. Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution, Vol II: Exile Politics and Guerrilla Warfare (1962-1976)* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1978), p. 273. Cuba airlifted a special forces battalion to hold Luanda until additional reinforcements could be dispatched by sea. Wayne S. Smith contends that this deployment was executed without the use of Soviet aircraft. While the Soviets chose not to accept the risks inherent in such direct intervention, they did not oppose the Cubans doing so themselves, and provided significant logistical support for the expeditionary force. Wayne S. Smith, "The Cuban Role in Angola," in *Regional Conflict and U.S. Policy in Angola and Mozambique*, ed. Richard J. Bloomfield (Algonas, Mich.: Reference Publications Inc., 1988), p. 127.

6. Pazzanita, p. 86.

7. Pamela S. Falk, "Cuba in Africa," *Foreign Affairs*, 65 (Summer 1987), 1083.

8. Smith, p. 125. The author argues that US and Chinese support for the FNLA provoked increased Cuban and Soviet assistance to the MPLA and served as the catalyst that merged their policies and objectives.

9. Leogrande, pp. 376-77. The theme of proletarian internationalism is by no means universally accepted as an explanation for Cuba's intervention. William Ratliff adds the Cuban-African common heritage and the estimated \$700 million in hard currency Cuba received annually for stationing its troops in Angola as other incentives for this venture. William Ratliff, "Cuban Military Policy in Sub-Saharan Africa," in *Cuban Internationalism in Sub-Saharan Africa*, ed. Sergio Díaz-Briquets (Pittsburgh: Duquesne Univ. Press, 1989), p. 31.

10. Smith, pp. 122-23. William Leogrande argues that Cuba's preference for the MPLA was predicated upon that faction's staunchly anti-imperialist, multiracial, and pro-socialist ideological position, which drew its support from the *mestiço* and black urban working population of Luanda. The two other factions were fundamentally tribalist organizations with anti-Marxist proclivities. Leogrande, p. 378.
11. Leogrande, pp. 377-79. Considerable debate has transpired in the literature over whether or not Cuba was a Soviet surrogate in Africa. Jorge I. Domínguez's review of recent scholarship on that subject concludes that Cuban foreign policy has stood on its own. He cautions, however, that "non-Cuban authors sometimes cite each other so much that they seem to lose sight of the need to find out for themselves what Cuba's role in the world actually is." Jorge I. Domínguez, "Cuba in the International Arena," *Latin American Research Review*, 23 (November 1988), 201.
12. Falk, p. 1079.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 1080.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 1081. Angola earned over \$2 billion in oil export revenues in 1986, but the full potential of the economy has been severely retarded by 14 years of constant warfare.
15. Kahn, pp. 47-48.
16. Olga Nazario, "Cuba's Angola Operation," in Díaz-Briquets, p. 104.
17. *Ibid.*
18. Kahn, pp. 41-45. South Africa was already engaged against SWAPO, whose efforts to secure the independence of Namibia simply fed Pretoria's fears of ANC attacks against its government.
19. Pazzanita, p. 87.
20. Nazario, p. 106.
21. Bernard Expedit, "Jonas Savimbi, Military Disciple of Mao?" *African Defence Journal*, 18 (April 1986), 61.
22. Nazario, p. 108. UNITA enjoys strong support in the central plateau region because the Ovimbundi people who reside there are attracted to the movement's tribalist appeal. Andrew Meldrum, "At War with South Africa," *Africa Reports*, 32 (January-February 1987), 30.
23. Pazzanita, p. 87. SADF occupation of Cunene province included the Calueque hydro-electric power station, which the South Africans restored to operational condition to provide power to Namibia (Pazzanita, p. 90).
24. *Ibid.*, p. 88.
25. Gerald J. Bender, "American Policy Toward Angola: A History of Linkage," in *African Crisis Areas and U.S. Foreign Policy*, ed. Gerald J. Bender, et al. (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1985), pp. 11-12.
26. Pazzanita, p. 91.
27. Nazario, p. 108.
28. Pazzanita, p. 92.
29. I. William Zartman, *Ripe for Revolution: Conflict and Intervention in Angola* (Oxford, Eng.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1989), p. 151. This agreement provided the framework for the subsequent Luanda-Washington-Pretoria discussions but failed to address the Namibia question and the status of UNITA (Zartman, p. 225).
30. Nazario, p. 109. Apparently, in return for their logistical support, the Soviets insisted upon exercising control of military operations.
31. Falk, p. 1091. The resumption of covert aid to UNITA seriously undermined US credibility as an impartial negotiator of regional peace.
32. Michael McFaul, "Rethinking the Reagan Doctrine," *International Security*, 14 (Winter 1989-90), 113. The country's economic plight even prompted President Dos Santos to introduce a series of reforms which included a market-based pricing and wage system and other capitalist incentives. Pazzanita, p. 97.
33. Zartman, pp. 225-26. Cuba opposed a negotiated settlement on any terms that would reduce its influence in Africa in general, and in Angola in particular. The MPLA, on the other hand, had a strong incentive to return to the bargaining table: materiel losses of \$12 billion, displacement of ten percent of the population, and casualties in excess of 500,000 were just some of the social and economic consequences of the war. Falk, pp. 1093-94.
34. Nazario, p. 110. Apparently Castro could sense the effect that impending changes in the Soviet Union would have upon its waning enthusiasm for this interminable war.
35. Falk, p. 1092.
36. Nazario, p. 111.
37. McFaul, pp. 122-23.
38. Andres Oppenheimer, *Castro's Final Hour: The Secret Story Behind the Coming Downfall of Communist Cuba* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), p. 83.
39. Castro committed the elite, 8500-man 50th Division, which included 400 tanks and sophisticated air defense systems, and 24 Cuban-piloted fighters and attack helicopters. These reinforcements entered

through the ports of Lobito and Namibe and advanced rapidly into Cunene province, previously the sole preserve of the SADF. Pazzanita, p. 105.

40. Nazario, p. 112. Castro needed a military victory before withdrawing Cuban forces from Angola, and in Castro's assessment, the most propitious way to achieve this was by means of a direct battlefield confrontation between the principal antagonists. While Castro opposed withdrawal in the absence of complete military victory, he was sufficiently pragmatic to recognize that Cuba could not sustain this venture without Soviet logistical backing. Nazario, p. 117.

41. Oppenheimer, p. 71. During the ensuing 30 years, Ochoa commanded Cuban troops in Venezuela, Congo Brazzaville, Sierra Leone, Zaire, Ethiopia, and Angola (Oppenheimer, p. 72).

42. *Ibid.*, p. 84. In November, Castro instructed Ochoa to reinforce Cuito with an additional Cuban infantry brigade. Ochoa opted instead to rely upon mine fields emplaced along major avenues of approach and tactical air support from his MiG-23s to breakup any SADF armored thrusts. Ochoa was summoned to Havana and personally reprimanded by Castro for "consistently underestimating" the enemy (Oppenheimer, p. 85).

43. Pazzanita, pp. 101-02. South Africa's air advantage was further degraded by its inability to acquire replacements for those aircraft lost in battle due to the ongoing embargo.

44. Karl Maier, "The Military Stalemate [The Battle of Cuito Cuanavale]," *Africa Report*, 33 (May-June 1988), 34.

45. Oppenheimer, p. 85.

46. Pazzanita, p. 105.

47. Gerald J. Bender, "Peace Making in Southern Africa: The Luanda-Pretoria Tug-of-War," *Third World Quarterly*, 11 (2 April 1989), 29.

48. Zartman, p. 227. Casualties, especially among its white soldiers, were the one thing to which South Africa was exceedingly sensitive. In the campaign against Cuito, the SADF sustained 300 white and 2000 black casualties, a level far higher than it was willing to accept.

49. Oppenheimer, p. 86.

50. Charles A. Freeman, Jr., "The Angola/Namibia Accords," *Foreign Affairs*, 68 (Summer 1989), 135.

51. Zartman, pp. 232-34. Cuba's principal negotiator was Carlos Aldana, who was subsequently ousted on 26 September 1992 from his powerful position as Ideology Secretary.

52. Oppenheimer, p. 87. Castro, who blamed Ochoa for failing to achieve a clear-cut military victory, nevertheless designated him to take over the Western Army in Cuba, in essence a promotion. However, before Ochoa could assume his new post, allegations of drug-trafficking and corruption led to his arrest, trial, and execution on 13 July 1989. For a detailed account of his peculiar trial see Julia Preston, "The Trial that Shook Cuba," *The New York Review of Books*, 7 December 1989, pp. 24-31.

53. Prexy Nesbitt, "U.S. Foreign Policy: Lessons from the Angola Conflict," *Africa Today*, 39 (Numbers 1 & 2, 1992), 61.

54. Lisa Alfred, "U.S. Foreign Policy and the Angolan Peace," *Africa Today*, 39 (Numbers 1 & 2, 1992), 74.

55. Joseph Contreras, "Angola Is in a State of War," *Newsweek*, 16 November 1992, p. 54. In the Angolan presidential election, none of the candidates received the requisite majority, thereby forcing a runoff between Dos Santos and Savimbi, the top two contenders.

56. Nesbitt, p. 70.

57. Raymond W. Copson, "Peace in Africa?" in *Conflict Resolution in Africa*, ed. Francis M. Deng and I. William Zartman (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1991), p. 28.

58. Smith, p. 128-30. The author argues that the conflict was prolonged by South Africa's intransigence on the question of Namibia's independence and its desire to keep the MPLA off-balance with attacks by UNITA rebels (p. 131).

59. Leogrande, pp. 381-83. Despite the political costs vis-à-vis the United States, Castro considered the Angolan venture to have been sufficiently remunerative to bear repeating in Ethiopia in 1977 (Leogrande, p. 384).

60. Pazzanita, pp. 113-14.

61. *Ibid.*, p. 114.

62. Ratliff, p. 35. UNITA claims 300 Cubans were killed each month during the late 1980s.

63. Jean Stubbs, *Cuba: The Test of Time* (London: Latin America Bureau, 1989), p. 103. Ratliff argues that one of the factors prompting Castro to end Cuban involvement was growing domestic dissent over the war (Ratliff, p. 44).

64. Nazario, p. 122.

65. Susan Kaufman Purcell, "Cuba's Cloudy Future," *Foreign Affairs*, 69 (Summer 1990), 125.

66. Paul Taylor, "Failed Peace Talks, U.S. Recognition Pose Puzzles for Angola," *The Washington Post*, 23 May 1993, p. A31.