

FOREIGN POLICY

NUMBER 31 SUMMER 1978

ANGOLA, THE CUBANS, AND AMERICAN ANXIETIES

by Gerald J. Bender

Pava Cda.
Lucio Lara

Com abraços do,

Jerry Bender

31
REPRINT

PROQUEST VOL. L. LAB

[Faint, illegible handwriting, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side of the page]

ANGOLA, THE CUBANS, AND AMERICAN ANXIETIES

by Gerald J. Bender

Strategically located between Zaire and Namibia on the west coast of Africa, Angola is a nation of approximately six-and-a-half million people spread over an area larger than the states of New York, Texas, and California combined. The world's fourth largest coffee producer before independence in 1975, and rich in oil, diamonds, iron, silver, manganese, copper, and phosphates, Angola has the potential to become one of the wealthiest countries on the African continent. Yet most Americans, if asked today what they associate with Angola, would undoubtedly respond, "Cuban troops."

Since achieving independence in November 1975, the government of the People's Republic of Angola (RPA), led by Agostinho Neto, has relied heavily on Cuban troops to repel numerous military challenges to its regime—by foreign powers such as South Africa and Zaire; by an extremist faction within the ruling party, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA); and by the forces of two factions that fought and lost a civil war with the MPLA in 1975, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) and the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA). The Cuban military presence has generally dominated media attention to Angola for the past few years, because both the Ford and the Carter administrations have maintained that the presence of the Cubans in Angola

GERALD J. BENDER, *visiting assistant professor of political science at the University of California, San Diego, has visited Angola three times, two of them under a Rockefeller Foundation grant since independence. During the 1975 crisis in that country, he was on the staff of then Senator John V. Tunney (D.-California), who sponsored legislation halting U.S. participation in the Angolan war.*

must be reduced or eliminated before any diplomatic relations can be established between Washington and either Luanda or Havana.

Most Americans assume that the Cubans in Angola and elsewhere in Africa are little more than proxies for the Soviet Union.¹ Rarely is any distinction made between Soviet and Cuban interests, goals, and actions in Africa. As a result, the Cuban presence in any part of the continent is generally perceived as a setback for the United States in its global competition with the Soviet Union. So much national attention has been focused on a perceived Soviet-Cuban threat in Africa that many have forgotten some larger, more important questions plaguing U.S.-Soviet relations. Even if it could be established that the Cubans are nothing more than Soviet proxies, for example, the problem of how to act toward Soviet-backed regimes or movements in the Third World would remain.

The Lessons of Vietnam

American foreign policy toward Third World conflicts in which the Soviets are involved has been shaped by two competing perspectives—that of the global strategists and that of the area specialists. Generally, the globalists look first (and at times exclusively) at the ramifications of the conflicts for overall East-West relations. If the Soviets are thought to be acting badly, the globalists argue that the United States should back a competing side or withhold U.S. cooperation in some other area of special interest to the Soviet Union. The area specialists, on the other hand, focus (also at times exclusively) on the local causes of conflict—the ethnic, religious, racial, or national factors behind them. They counsel against U.S. involvement in a struggle simply as a reaction to Soviet participation.

¹ For an assessment of Cuba's decision to intervene in Angola from the perspective of Cuban interests, see Abraham F. Lowenthal, "Cuba's African Adventure," *International Security*, Vol. 2, No. 1, Summer 1977, pp. 3-10.

American specialists on Southeast Asia, for example, continually warned against grafting a global construct onto local conflicts fired by historical ethnic, political, and economic realities. They argued that it was a mistake to lump the Chinese, the Khmer Rouge, and the Vietnamese into the same category—an argument whose truth is quite evident today. One of the presumed lessons of Vietnam was that the United States should not become entangled in Third World disputes, even if the Soviets are involved, so long as the major issues at stake are local in nature and not fundamental to the basic interests of the United States.

“The very style that [once] earned U.S. citizens the reputation of ‘Ugly Americans’ . . . appears to characterize the Soviets in the 1970s.”

Apparently not all American policy-makers understood that lesson, for at the same time the United States was making its final withdrawal from Vietnam in early 1975, the globalists within the Ford administration, led by then Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, began clandestine intervention in another local conflict—in Angola. Although the Senate halted U.S. participation in the Angolan war in December 1975, thus handing a victory to the area specialists, that hardly ended the debate.

In 1976, Jimmy Carter campaigned against the Ford administration’s globalist posture in Angola. Shortly before the election he asserted:

I think that the United States’ position in Angola should be one which admits that we missed the opportunity to be a positive and creative force for good in Angola during the years we supported Portuguese colonization. We should also realize that the Russian and Cuban presence in Angola, while regrettable and counterproductive of peace, need not constitute a threat to United States’ interests, nor does

that presence mean the existence of a Communist satellite on the continent.

Once elected, Carter chose Congressman Andrew Young as his ambassador to the United Nations. Less than two months before the election, Young had testified before the Senate African Affairs Subcommittee that "the United States should begin revising its southern Africa policy by recognizing the MPLA government in Angola." In his new post, Young urged the United States not to withhold recognition of the RPA on the basis of the Cuban presence. The Cubans, he asserted, were helping to provide order and stability in the newly independent country.

The new Secretary of State, Cyrus R. Vance, appeared to join Carter and Young in rejecting the globalist attitude toward Africa. In mid-1977, Vance asserted that:

The most effective policies toward Africa are affirmative policies. . . . A negative, reactive American policy that seeks only to oppose Soviet or Cuban involvement in Africa would be futile. Our best course is to help resolve the problems which create opportunities for external intervention.

During the early stages of the Carter administration, the antiglobalist character of U.S. policy on Africa was apparent in the American posture toward the negotiations for a settlement in Rhodesia. It was also reflected in the administration's relatively calm reaction to the invasion of Zaire's Shaba province, its support of participation by the Southwest Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) in the Namibian negotiations, its pressure on the government of South Africa, and its wait-and-see attitude toward the fighting in the Horn.

Today, it is apparent that the globalist perspective has come back to life in Washington, thanks largely to the growing influence of Carter's national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski. Whereas Carter appeared to share Young's keep-cool approach to Soviet and Cuban activities in Africa throughout most of his first year in office, the president clearly took up Brzezinski's re-

frain after the Soviet-Cuban military presence in Ethiopia increased dramatically in early 1978. By March, in a speech at Wake Forest University, Carter was suggesting that Soviet military and diplomatic activities in Africa were poisoning East-West relations, a message repeated by administration spokesmen at every available opportunity.

The president has made a grave error in adopting Brzezinski's globalist attitude toward the presence of Soviets and Cubans in Angola. This attitude overlooks basic Angolan realities and is detrimental to overall U.S. global interests. It undermines American credibility in Africa and elsewhere in the Third World, and it will continue to do so until the United States demonstrates that it understands the local realities of individual developing countries as something more than minor acts in the great superpower drama. A clarification of the background to and effects of the Cuban presence in Angola should help lay to rest the fear that it represents a major Soviet victory in southern Africa.

A Helping Hand

Portuguese colonialism left a grim reality for Angola's new government. Until the 1960s, Portugal showed little interest in educating Africans; as a result, when independence came in late 1975, over 90 per cent of the population was illiterate. The Portuguese community had monopolized virtually all skilled jobs and many of the unskilled ones, too—including those of taxi drivers, doormen, elevator operators, and even lottery-ticket hawkers. Few Africans had the educational, occupational, or linguistic skills requisite for running a modern, independent nation.²

Americans have some understanding of the legacy of Portuguese colonialism in Angola and of the devastating effects on the

² For further information on Portuguese domination in colonial Angola, see Gerald J. Bender, *Angola Under the Portuguese* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

Angolan people first of the long war for independence and then of the civil war. But they have heard little about the incredible sack of Angola by the approximately 300,000 Portuguese who fled the country during the 1975-1976 civil war. The departing colonialists essentially stripped Angola clean of such basic things as pharmaceutical products, office equipment, and all forms of public and private transport. Only 2,000 heavy-duty trucks remained of the 30,000 that had served as the backbone of the internal distribution system, and this became a basic cause of food shortages in several parts of the country. What the Portuguese could not take with them—in large crates, shipped without charge by the Lisbon government—they destroyed. That included public and private records. Most of those who fled seemed determined to guarantee their own long-standing forecast: that Africans would never be able to govern Angola.

“Neto has staked his political career on a stubborn commitment to the policies of nonalignment, multiracialism, and socialism.”

Admittedly, until many more Angolans have been trained to administer the country's economic, educational, health, and technical services, foreign civilian assistance will be vital to the nation's economy. For the moment, the bulk of this assistance is provided by the Cubans, a circumstance that will probably continue to be a fact of life in Angola for some years. Pointing to the Cubans' technical skills, multiracial background, minimal ethnocentrism, linguistic similarities, dedication to hard work, and tolerance for less than optimal living conditions, most Angolans seem to welcome their presence, despite American and other Western complaints.

Angolans who defend the Cuban role often note the large number of Cuban doctors, nurses, and medical aides (expected to reach 900 this year) who help sustain An-

gola's health services. Yet it is perhaps in the area of civil construction that Cuban assistance has been most impressive. Approximately 1,300 Cubans, including 82 engineers, worked on construction projects in Angola during 1977, and the Angolan minister of construction and housing, Manuel Resende de Oliveira, expects that number to rise to 2,500 by the end of 1978. (While the Angolan government only paid room and board for the Cuban assistants in 1977, this year it is expected to cover all their expenses including salaries.)

Resende says that the Cubans are helping Angola to become self-sufficient in construction. In January 1977, the ministry employed only 3,500 Angolans at all levels and only seven of the 407 construction companies in operation before independence were functioning. By December 1977, the number of Angolan construction workers had risen to 41,034, and 178 construction companies were open. Moreover, most construction materials are now being made locally; imports are limited to window glass, door locks, paint pigments, and some electrical and plumbing supplies.

The Angolan government is in the midst of its first effort to improve Luanda's slums, where almost half a million people live. A large housing project is being built on what was once a golf course for the Portuguese and foreign diplomatic and business communities. When completed, "Project Golf" will provide housing for some 20,000 individuals from the adjoining slum. The Cubans have introduced a semiprefabrication process, developed in slum clearance programs around Havana, which is being used for housing as well as in the construction of four primary schools, a hospital, and a compact shopping and commercial center. Except for a dozen Cuban technicians, all of the 1,500 workers on Project Golf are Angolans.

Cuban technical assistance extends to agriculture, the transportation sector, and education. One recent example of educational assistance involves the arrival in An-

gola last spring of more than 700 young Cubans to teach in primary schools and the first levels of secondary schools throughout the country.

Foreign technical aid is not coming only from Cuba. Luanda's hotels are filled with Soviets, Yugoslavs, Bulgarians, Rumanians, Czechoslovaks, Poles, East Germans, Brazilians, and some British and Scandinavians. Even Americans are represented—by technicians from Boeing, National Cash Register (NCR), Mobil, Cities Service, Texaco, and Gulf Oil—although their presence in the capital is less visible.

“Kissinger’s globalist approach actually contributed to an increase in the number of Cuban troops in southern Africa.”

Many of Angola's foreign visitors are having difficulty adapting to the day-to-day inconveniences of life in Luanda. The electricity is occasionally shut off between midnight and 7 AM for repairs, elevators routinely stall, and the phones and switchboards often do not work. Soviets and East Europeans also complain about the dullness of Luanda's night life. Angolans, however, maintain their own lively social life, in which Cubans—but few, if any, of the other foreigners—occasionally participate.

The difference between Cuban-Angolan social relations and those of Angolans with advisers and technicians from other Socialist countries is quite dramatic. The Cubans work directly with Angolans, whatever the task. They seem immensely popular in the country, perhaps because they do not manifest the cultural and racial arrogance of many other foreigners. The Cubans, whose own lifestyle closely approximates that of Angolans, make relatively few demands on the government. According to one Angolan official, “When the Soviets arrive here, they usually demand rooms in the best hotels or well-furnished houses with air condi-

remarkable saga of these unfortunate but well-trained soldiers, who have fought for no fewer than five causes in the last 16 years. Contrary to reports by the Carter administration and others, Cuban and Angolan involvement in last year's Shaba invasion seems to have been surprisingly restrained. The Cubans did not fight in Shaba, and the Angolans say they did little more than give the go-ahead to the Katangese. Zaire, on the other hand, received troops and pilots from France, Morocco, and Egypt to repel the invasion. Many Angolans feared at the time that these foreign troops would pursue the Katangese into Angola.

One ramification of the Shaba invasion was a substantial reduction in the border incursions from Zaire in late 1977. In early 1978, relations began to thaw between Angola and Zaire. Each country has much to gain by normalizing relations, of course. But the Angolans insist that Mobutu must first curb the activities of the FNLA and FLEC; in exchange, they offer passage for Zairian copper exports along the Benguela railway, which has been closed to Zairian goods since the 1975 civil war. Now capable of operating again from one end of Angola to the other, the railway once served as a vital conduit for Zairian and Zambian copper and commerce. Given that Zaire's financial situation is desperate and that between 200,000 and 250,000 Katangese retreated into Angola after the 1977 Shaba war, the Angolan government was counting on a new attitude from Mobutu. Angolan and Zairian delegations met at least once in Brazzaville, and Neto tried to explain to Angolans at public rallies why good relations should be established with their northern neighbor despite years of hostility.

Attacks on Angola from Zaire intensified again, however, beginning in late March 1978 with an attack on the border town of Kaianda, 100 miles south of the important Shaba mining town of Kolwezi. Angolan Foreign Minister Paulo Jorge cabled U.N. Secretary General Kurt Waldheim in early

April about "the dangers of unforeseen consequences of the repeated hostilities coming from Zaire as well as the concentration of troops along the common border between the two countries." A week later, the Angolan defense ministry claimed that Mirage jets from Zaire had bombed and strafed Angolan villages along the border. These events appeared to be a carbon copy of the circumstances that preceded the Shaba invasion in March 1977. Thus, the second invasion, on March 14, 1978, was predictable. After their defeat in 1977, the question was not whether, but when, the former gendarmes would attack again.

During the latest crisis in Shaba, Mobutu, following his instincts and playing up to American fears, accused the Cubans in Angola of joining the invaders. However, once again no such Cuban involvement could be immediately documented. And the long-range effect of instability on the Angolan-Zairian border is to prolong the Neto regime's need for Cuban troops.

As part of its overall strategy, the South African government has given high priority to the fall of the MPLA regime in Angola. Last September, the South African Press Agency featured prominently an address to a symposium in Pretoria by Alberto Marini, an Argentine military expert, urging South Africa to launch a preventive war against Angola: "Angola is the ideal place for the free world to develop . . . full-scale war to put an end to Communist rule in the region. The best way to attain this is to take advantage of the existing structure of the UNITA movement."

At times that seems to be precisely what South Africa is attempting. According to Savimbi and other UNITA leaders, the movement still receives arms, training, and logistical support from South Africa. In addition, South Africa has also mounted its own operations in Angola numerous times during the past two years. South Africa's stated motive for these incursions is to eliminate supporters of SWAPO (South-West African Peo-

ple's Organization), the guerrilla movement that launches military raids against South African troops in Namibia from Angolan sanctuaries. Last November, South Africa publicly claimed the right of "hot pursuit" of guerrillas into Angola. South Africa also claims the right to occupy portions of Angolan territory in order to protect its interests in the large Cunene River Basin hydroelectric project.

Angolan officials, however, present voluminous evidence to show that the South African attacks are aimed more at destabilizing Angola than at crippling SWAPO. The assault launched against a SWAPO base in Cassinga (about 160 miles north of the Angolan-Namibian border) in early May would appear to substantiate this claim. Cassinga is also the site of a large iron-ore mine that has been idle since 1975. In early January of this year about 20 Yugoslav engineers began exploring the possibility of reopening the mine, vital to Angola's economic recovery, while a Japanese company attempted to negotiate the contract for purchasing the ore.

Beyond these ground incursions, South African aircraft frequently violated Angolan airspace last year. Just prior to the opening of the MPLA congress last December, a South African plane overflying Angola was forced to land in Luanda. When asked if the pilots who forced the plane down were Cuban, a top official in the defense ministry replied, "Your government wants us to get rid of our Cuban helpers, but who do they think will protect our airspace against these incursions until we can complete the training of our own pilots?"

No serious observer of events in southern Africa denies the existence of frequent South African military activity in Angola, whose government and people are firmly convinced that South Africa would launch another major invasion if the Cubans were withdrawn. It is precisely in this context that one must evaluate the RPA's perception of its need for Cuban military support. (*The*

New York Times editorialized last May that the latest South African attack on Angola "has merely provided one more justification for the presence in Angola of Cuban troops.") The widely held belief that the Neto regime would fall at the hands of UNITA, were Havana to withdraw its help, overlooks the South African and Zairian dimensions of Angola's circumstances. The important series of articles about UNITA by Leon Dash of *The Washington Post*⁵ established that Savimbi's movement is far more formidable than the MPLA or Cuba ever imagined, but also that it is clearly not capable of winning a military victory without foreign materiel and physical support.

Hearts and Minds

UNITA forces appear to have established mobility in central and southeastern Angola, with support from the civilian population. They regularly attack MPLA and Cuban troops, as well as villages in these regions that cooperate with the government, and they are able to sabotage the Benguela railway and lay ambushes along major roads almost at will.

Angola is so large and sparsely populated that there is virtually no way the MPLA and Cubans can secure thousands of miles of frontier, the 840-mile-long railroad line, and the several thousand miles of roads throughout the central highlands and the east. The Portuguese, with more than 60,000 regular troops and perhaps another 40,000 in the militia and defense corps, were unable to prevent such attacks during the colonial period, when UNITA was merely a fledgling organization with little military might.

It therefore seems clear that UNITA will be able to maintain, or even intensify, its present level of military operations for a considerable time. Members of the Angolan cabinet and the defense ministry anticipate the fighting against UNITA will last for years, not months. Savimbi is the first to admit the

⁵ Leon Dash, "A Long March in Angola," *The Washington Post*, August 7-13, 1977.

The Fractionalists

The most serious threat to the Neto regime has come not from South Africa, Zaire, UNITA, or anyone else mentioned above, but from an extremist faction within the MPLA itself. Ironically, the extremists received some support from the Soviet Union.

In May 1977, this faction was responsible for the third serious attack on Neto's leadership from within the MPLA in the 16 years that he has been its leader. At various times since 1962, Neto has been criticized by his more radical colleagues for political and economic policies that were considered too moderate, for alleged overdependence on *mestiços* and whites, and for generally ineffective leadership. Neto has staked his political career on a stubborn commitment to the policies of nonalignment, multiracialism, and socialism. His detractors within the MPLA have generally portrayed themselves as truer Socialists and the true choice of the black masses.

"The U.S. refusal to recognize the Neto regime... undermines Washington's efforts to play the role of an honest broker."

The origins of the most recent attempt to unseat Neto go back to the period of the Portuguese coup in April 1974. One month before that event, the Soviets withdrew their support from Neto. At the time, the MPLA was divided into three factions, and the Soviets flirted with Neto's principal rival, Daniel Chipenda. Neto eventually prevailed after a six-month power struggle, thanks in part to the support he received from Nito Alves, Jacob Caetano, and several others who would later be involved in the 1977 coup attempt. The Soviets resumed their support of Neto once he re-established his undisputed control over the MPLA in the fall of 1974.

The Soviets, Neto, Alves, and others buried their differences during the 1975 civil

war, but the problems surfaced again even before the withdrawal of South African troops in March 1976. In February 1976, Neto publicly criticized dissident groups within the MPLA, arguing that "some people in Luanda seem to want to organize a parallel political movement to the MPLA." The prime force behind this parallel movement—known as "fractionalism"—was Alves.

Alves had been the brash and successful commander of the MPLA's tough First Division in the area of northwest Angola populated by the Dembos people. A dynamic public speaker, he employed a populist style that contrasted dramatically with Neto's more didactic and measured oratory. As Neto's powerful minister of the interior, Alves interjected veiled, racist attacks on whites and *mestiços* into his many public addresses, and he called for the Angolan economy to be put into the hands of the people. He appealed mainly to the hundreds of thousands of slum dwellers in Luanda, who generally had very little political consciousness and were therefore susceptible to demagogic leaders.

In his quest to replace Neto, Alves was supported by his fellow Dembos, a subgroup of the Kimbundu. In addition to Caetano, who is also a Dembo and the deputy commander-in-chief of the MPLA army (and is said to have saved Neto's life twice), Alves forged an alliance with Jose van Dunem, the political commissar of the army in southern Angola. The common denominator binding the various fractionalists together was their antipathy toward Neto's multiracialism. Whether out of a genuine personal hatred for whites and *mestiços* or opportunism and a desire to advance rapidly, a number of Africans in the MPLA have perennially attacked the dominance, or even the very presence, of whites and *mestiços* in the party. Ideologically, those who supported the fractionalists ranged from the far right to the extreme left—in a sense, a coalition not unlike the MPLA itself. The public posture of the fractionalists, however, was distinctly ultraleftist. un-

der the careful guidance of a group of Portuguese who had come to Angola in late 1975 to escape reprisal for their role in the Communist takeover attempt in Lisbon in 1975, and to carry out in Angola the revolution that had failed at home. Most had once been members of the strongly pro-Moscow Portuguese Communist party.

Throughout 1976, the plotters found highly placed support in key ministries, party organizations, and a variety of neighborhood groups that paraded under the banner of "people's power." They planned to take control through a gradual process of infiltrating the party and government, discrediting and sabotaging the state and party apparatus, and finally going public. When Alves and David Aires Machado were dropped from the cabinet in November 1976, the plotters changed their strategy and began to prepare for a military takeover. Six months before the attempted coup, whites and *mestiços* openly expressed their fears of Alves, and some said they would leave the country if he ever came to power. When asked why they did not check this dangerous threat, Neto and Lucio Lara, the MPLA secretary general and Neto's right-hand man, said that they feared splitting the party by a purge and were also convinced that with time and further political education, the dissidents would come around to accept Neto's policies.

On May 27, 1977, the fractionalists carried out their abortive coup, killing seven of the 33 members of the MPLA Central Committee and many other party officials. But they failed to gain power, essentially because they could not mobilize the very inhabitants of Luanda's sprawling slums whose interests they claimed to represent. They also seriously miscalculated that the Cubans would refuse to intervene on Neto's side. It is not clear whether Alves and van Dunem assumed that the Soviets would aid them openly, but Alves clearly believed that he had the Soviets' blessings for the coup. According to René Lefort of *Le Monde*, Soviet backing for Alves had become so obvious by the sum-

mer of 1976 that the Angolan government expelled a Soviet diplomat.

If the alliance between foreign white ultraleftists and black power extremists at the core of the fractionalist movement seems contradictory and inherently unstable, that does not appear to have been perceived by the whites and *mestiços* who joined the plot. Certainly, white and *mestiço* fractionalists would have been among the victims of Alves' black-power policies. That foreign whites did not understand this can be attributed partially to the ethnocentric and paternalistic attitudes that still exist in Angola, including among leftist Portuguese and other sympathetic foreign nationalists. The Soviet Union was not the only Communist country to provide encouragement or support for Alves and his followers. Some of those countries also suffer from the ability of globalist theoreticians to influence foreign policy at the expense of area specialists.

The immediate recall and replacement of the Cuban ambassador to Angola after the coup attempt has sometimes been cited as evidence of Cuban complicity in the fractionalist plot, but there is no information to confirm this. On the contrary, Angolan officials maintain privately that some Cuban troops even assisted in putting down the coup. The close personal ties between Neto and Castro have also endured the crisis. Unlike the Soviets, who have the reputation of being fair-weather friends to Neto in 1974 and again in 1976-1977, the Cubans have apparently not wavered in their support for him during the more than 12 years they have assisted the MPLA. That helps explain their presence in Angola today.

Redefining U. S. Anxieties

The presence of Cubans in Africa has stymied both the Ford and the Carter administrations. Under Ford, Kissinger's globalist approach actually contributed to an increase in the number of Cuban troops in southern Africa, Brzezinski's similar influence on Carter's policy would have the same

effect. Obviously it is time for the United States to rethink its entire approach to the issue of Cubans in Africa.

This reappraisal should begin by differentiating the Cuban presence in one African country from another, just as the United States commonly does when considering the presence of the Soviets, Chinese, French, or British in various African countries. For example, the United States generally does not view the Soviet presence in Ethiopia in the same way that it views any Soviet involvement in Nigeria. It follows that a distinction should be made between Cuban activities in Ethiopia, on the one hand, and in Sierra Leone, Tanzania, or even Angola on the other. The issue should not be the mere presence of Cubans in Africa, but where and when do the Cubans represent a threat to American or African interests or security.

The key to making this distinction is the clarification and articulation of precisely what Americans find objectionable about the Cuban involvement in Africa. For example, does the United States object to the presence of all Cubans, including doctors and engineers, or only soldiers? Does it object to all Cuban soldiers, including non-combatant instructors (U.S. intelligence classifies as "troops" those Cubans from the regular army or reserves who perform civilian functions in Angola), or only those who fight? Should the United States protest when Cuban soldiers fight in any part of Africa (such as against South Africans in Angola), or only when they help crush self-determination movements, as in Eritrea? Finally, do the more than 1,000 Cuban teachers scattered throughout nearly every province of Angola represent a genuine threat to American goals and interests?

Does the United States oppose the presence of several thousand Cuban soldiers in Cabinda, who help to protect the vulnerable Gulf Oil installations? Is it agitated about other Cubans who help provide security for the teams of Boeing technicians installing radar in seven Angolan airports?

Are U.S. interests threatened when Cuba assists the MPLA regime in thwarting a bloody coup attempt by extreme leftists and black racists?

The United States should be wary of increased Cuban and Soviet influence on the African continent; yet a global approach is not necessarily the best framework for such legitimate concerns. Instead of looking to Moscow or Havana to discover why there was an increase of some 5,000-7,000 Cubans in Angola last year after an initial troop reduction in the spring, the Carter administration could have found the answer in Angola itself. Viewed in the light of Angolan domestic realities, that increase has clearly not raised the level of either a Cuban or a Soviet threat to U.S. interests in Angola or in Africa in general.

“Some American corporate representatives . . . privately hope that the Cubans remain. . . .”

Thus far Carter and Brzezinski have raised blanket objections to the Cubans in Angola, with no public recognition of their multifaceted and often constructive role in the country. The administration must spell out precisely what it finds objectionable about the Cuban-Angolan relationship. A coherent, practical policy on this issue is especially important today, since it also affects the normalization of U.S. relations with the Angolan and Cuban governments, its ties with many other African nations, and, most importantly, U.S. relations with the Soviet Union.

To most African nations, the American attitude toward the Cubans in Angola smacks of hypocrisy and of an arrogance that Carter pledged to eliminate from U.S. foreign policy. This is generally the attitude of the Nigerian leaders whom Carter recently visited (and with whom, ironically, both the United States and Angola closely coordinate their African policies). During a re-

cent conversation, Paulo Jorge, the Angolan foreign minister, verbalized many of the questions that Africans have raised about American policy:

How does the United States distinguish between the type of foreign aid Cuba is providing Angola and that provided by the United States to other Third World countries? You have more military instructors in Saudi Arabia and Iran than we have Cubans and Soviets combined. We don't criticize Iran's or Saudi Arabia's right to choose their helpers, nor do we criticize your country's right to provide that assistance.

We frankly have a hard time understanding the standards of international diplomacy the United States applies to judge us. Perhaps this is because, as a young nation, we are inexperienced in these matters; but it appears to us that your country is being extremely hypocritical, if not punitive, in its attitude toward us.

Carter claimed that his trip to Africa last spring was intended in part to assist in the transition to majority rule in the southern part of the continent. Yet, his administration has refused to recognize the Angolan government, one of the key front-line states designated by the Organization for African Unity to assist in that transition in Namibia and Rhodesia (and whose cooperative attitude has been cited privately by one of the American negotiators as having greatly facilitated the Namibian discussions). The United States faces an enormous task in breaking down African suspicions and distrust, given the legacy of past American policy in southern Africa. The U.S. refusal to recognize the Neto regime only serves to nourish these suspicions further and thus undermines Washington's efforts to play the role of an honest broker.

Carter has argued that "the establishment of relations does not involve approval or disapproval [of a government], but merely demonstrates a willingness on our part to conduct our affairs with other governments directly." Every close American ally has rec-

4112

AC-06 - ea 14

ognized the Luanda government, confident that there is something to gain from conducting face-to-face relations. Every major American corporation presently operating in Angola—including Gulf, Mobil, Texaco, NCR, Boeing, Cities Service, and others—favors immediate recognition. Some corporate representatives complain that it is difficult to find American technicians who are willing to work in a country where they have no diplomatic protection. Moreover, most of these businessmen do not support the administration's position on the withdrawal of the Cubans. In fact, they privately hope that the Cubans remain, to provide security and to continue their vital role in keeping the country's modern sector functioning (from fixing elevators in the cities to repairing bridges in the hinterland).

The State Department sponsored a symposium on Angola last February that was attended by academics, representatives from major American corporations, journalists, congressional staff, and a cross section of officials from the department itself. At the end of a day and a half of discussions, all agreed to the proposition that it is in the best interests of the United States to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of Angola as soon as possible. Noticeably absent from the symposium was a representative from the National Security Council, which holds a contrary view that it has apparently been able to impose on the president.

If Carter continues to view Angola through Brzezinski's narrow globalist perspective, then the president may be the one to undermine his own 1976 campaign hope that the United States "be a positive and creative force for good in Angola." If the United States misses that opportunity in Angola, its prospects may also suffer in the rest of southern Africa.

FOREIGN POLICY is the young magazine that is making headlines across the country. It was launched in 1970 with the conviction that the nation's foreign policy needed new life, and that the right magazine could provide the dynamic criticism, penetrating analysis, and rigorous debate that America deserves. FOREIGN POLICY examines issues from myriad political viewpoints, and that is why it is considered required reading for American government officials, world leaders, and students of international affairs.

FOREIGN POLICY's editorial board includes: Thomas L. Hughes, Edward R. Downe, Jr., Richard A. Falk, Albert Fishlow, David Halberstam, Morton H. Halperin, Stanley Hoffmann, John E. Rielly, Tad Szulc, James C. Thomson, Jr., Richard H. Ullman, and Marina v.N. Whitman.

Editor: Warren D. Manshel

Managing Editor: Sanford J. Ungar

Associate Managing Editor: Pamela Gilfond

Subscriptions are available from:

FOREIGN POLICY

155 Allen Blvd.

Farmingdale, N.Y. 11737

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____

COUNTRY _____

1 Year \$12 2 Years \$21 3 Years \$30

Please bill me

Check enclosed

Foreign Subscriptions: Add \$2 per year for surface mail, \$10 per year for air mail.

4112
AC

FOREIGN POLICY

NUMBER 31 SUMMER 1978 \$3.00

- 3 Angola, The Cubans,
And American Anxieties
Gerald J. Bender
- 31 Comment: *Chester A. Crocker*
-
- 34 Carter And The Management
Of Contradictions
Thomas L. Hughes
- 56 Arms And The Shah
Leslie M. Pryor
-
- 72 NATO Standardization:
The Perils Of Common Sense
Eliot Cohen
- 91 Comment: *John C. Culver*
-
- 95 Slow Fuse
On The Neutron Bomb
Alton Frye
- 104 Did Human Rights
Survive Belgrade?
Dante B. Fascell
- 119 The Puzzles Of
Chinese Pragmatism
Lucian W. Pye
- 137 Finding Jamaica's Way
J. Daniel O'Flaherty
-
- Dateline Eastern Europe:
- 159 COMECON Blues
Nora Beloff
- 180 Living With Dissent
Tad Szulc

31

AC-08
4112