

Angola

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FM LUANDA 031325Z JUN 81

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 215 OF 3 JUNE

INFO PRIORITY LISBON, WASHINGTON, UKMIS NEW YORK

FULLER (CAFD) LETTER OF 8 MAY TO SHAKESPEARE (JUST RECEIVED):
PORTUGUESE VIEWS ON ANGOLA

1. WHILE I AGREE WITH PORTUGUESE VIEW THAT ONE CANNOT JUST ACCEPT AT FACE VALUE ANGOLAN STATEMENTS THAT CUBAN TROOPS WILL GO FOLLOWING A NAMIBIAN SETTLEMENT, I HAVE RESERVATIONS ABOUT REMAINDER OF PORTUGUESE ARGUMENT.

2. I HAVE NO EVIDENCE WHATSOEVER TO SUGGEST CUBAN CIVILIAN ADVISERS ARE ESSENTIAL TO ANY PART OF THE ANGOLAN ECONOMY. IT IS FOUNDED ON OIL, DIAMONDS AND COFFEE, IN NONE OF THESE IS CUBAN INVOLVEMENT EVIDENT, NOR IS CUBA LIKELY TO BE IN A POSITION TO OFFER USEFUL HELP. CUBANS DO MAKE A POSITIVE AND IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TO CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY AND, TO A LESSER EXTENT, MEDICINE AND EDUCATION. BUT EVEN HERE CUBAN DEPARTURE WOULD NOT PROVE FATAL. MY CONTACTS AT WORKING LEVEL WITHIN MINISTRIES CERTAINLY DO NOT SUPPORT VAZ PEREIRA'S ASSERTION THAT CUBANS QUOTE-RUN-UNQUOTE THE ANGOLAN ADMINISTRATION.

3. CUBAN WITHDRAWAL OF FIGHTING TROOPS MAY CREATE MORE PROBLEMS. APART FROM POSSIBLE USE (REPORTED BY OVERLEY OF STATE DEPARTMENT DURING CROCKER VISIT) OF CUBAN TROOPS IN OFFENSIVE AGAINST UNITA EARLIER THIS YEAR, MY UNDERSTANDING REMAINS THAT MILITARY ACTIVITY AGAINST BOTH UNITA AND SOUTH AFRICA IS UNDERTAKEN BY ANGOLAN FORCES, ALBEIT WITH LOGISTIC SUPPORT FROM CUBANS, SOVIETS AND EAST GERMANS. NEVERTHELESS IT IS ARGUABLE THAT SIMPLE PRESENCE OF CUBANS IS ENOUGH TO DAMP DOWN WOULD BE INTERNAL CONVULSIONS. THE MEMORY REMAINS OF CUBAN SUPPORT FOR THE GOVERNMENT DURING ATTEMPTED COUP IN 1977.

4. HOWEVER MY READING OF ANGOLAN THINKING SUGGESTS THAT GOVERNMENT BELIEVES THAT IT CAN CONTAIN THIS THREAT WITHOUT AID OF CUBAN COMBAT FORCES. IF IT DID NOT IT IS UNLIKELY PAULO JORGE WOULD HAVE

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PUBLICLY REPEATED HIS REMARKS ABOUT WITHDRAWAL. THE ANGOLANS HAVE CONSISTENTLY BEEN SLOW TO MAKE PUBLIC STATEMENTS BUT HAVE, EQUALLY CONSISTENTLY, SATISFIED THEIR OWN SENSE OF WHAT IS RIGHT BY STANDING BY THOSE STATEMENTS.

5. PERHAPS THE GREATER DANGER IS THAT THE CUBANS, OF THEIR OWN VOLITION OR AT SOVIET INSTIGATION, REFUSE TO COMPLY WITH ANGOLAN REQUESTS TO WITHDRAW. ANGOLA COULD NOT USE FORCE TO MAKE THEM DO SO BUT DOES HAVE A FINANCIAL WEAPON. ALTHOUGH ESTIMATES OF COST VARY, IT IS GENERALLY AGREED THAT CUBAN PRESENCE IS PAID FOR BY ANGOLA. EVEN TAKING A LOW ESTIMATE OF THE PER CAPITA COST THE TOTAL IS A SIGNIFICANT OUTLAY OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE, WHICH I DOUBT CUBA COULD FIND FROM ITS OWN RESOURCES. THE QUESTIONS, SHOULD THIS SITUATION ARISE, ARE WHETHER THE SOVIET UNION WOULD SEE THE EXTRA FOREIGN EXCHANGE BURDEN FALLING ON IT AS A GOOD INVESTMENT AND WHERE ANGOLA WOULD TURN.

FCO PASS

THOMPSON

[COPIES SENT TO NO 10 DOWNING STREET]
[THIS TELEGRAM WAS NOT ADVANCED]
[REPEATED AS REQUESTED]

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