

OUTGOING MESSAGE

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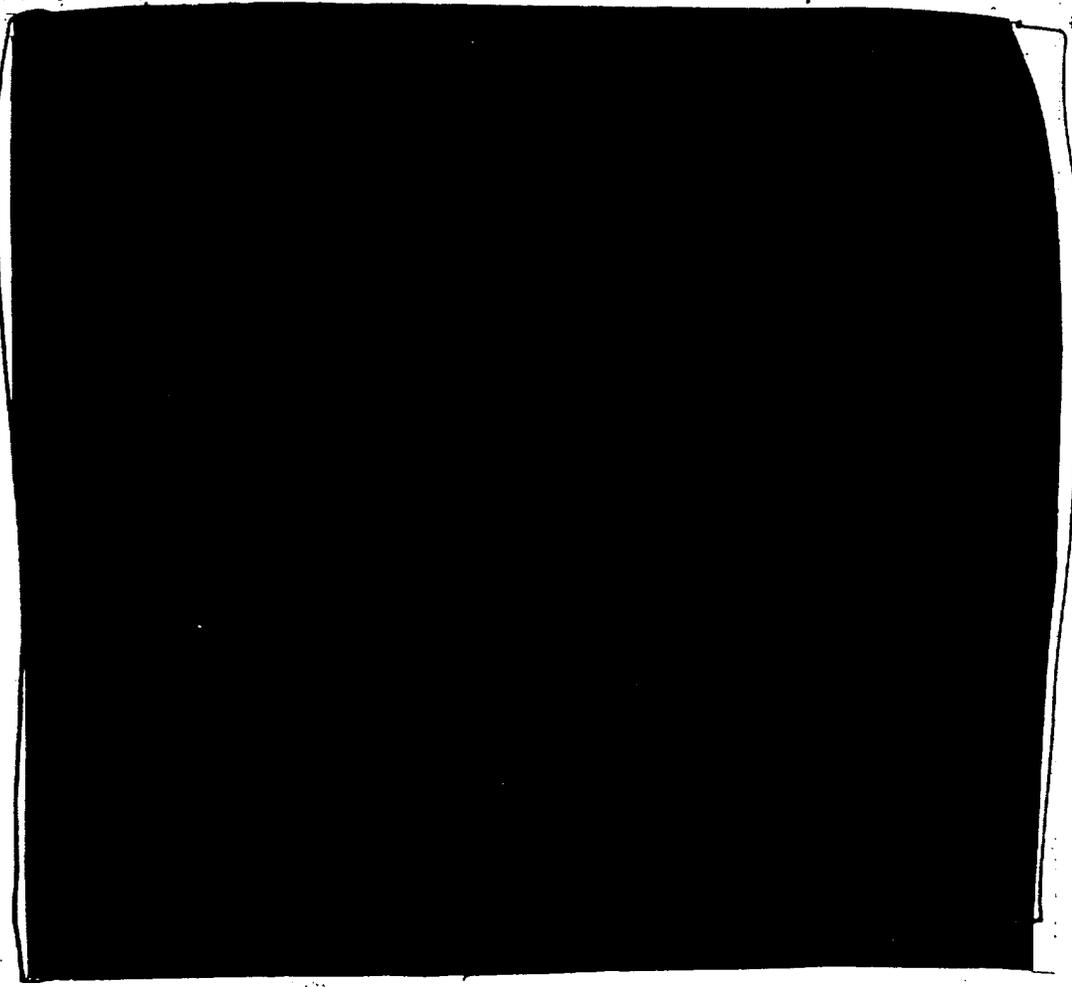
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2. ANGOLA: HOLDEN ROBERTO AND THE NATIONAL FRONT ■■FOR THE

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Approved for Release
Date

OCT 1997

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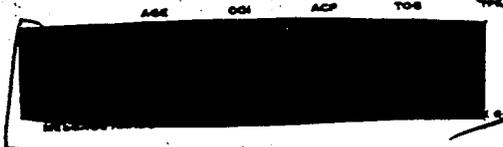
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LIBERATION OF ANGOLA WERE GIVEN A NEW LEASE ON LIFE BY THE COUP IN LISBON LAST APRIL. PRIOR TO THE COUP, THE FRONT'S MILITARY EFFORT HAD BEEN SERIOUSLY STALLED FOR SEVERAL YEARS AND ROBERTO HAD BECOME A VIRTUAL RECLUSE IN KINSHASA, ZAIRE, EXISTING ON HAND-OUTS FROM PRESIDENT MOBUTU. ROBERTO HAS NOT YET APPEARED IN ANGOLA.Y

FOLLOWING THE OUTBREAK OF INSURGENCY IN 1961, THE NATIONAL FRONT QUICKLY BECAME THE FRONT RUNNING ANGOLAN INSURGENT ORGANIZATION. OPERATING IN THE NORTHWESTERN PART OF THE TERRITORY NOT FAR FROM LUANDA, THE CAPITAL, IT BORE THE BRUNT OF PORTUGUESE COUNTERINSURGENCY EFFORTS AND BY THE LATE 1960S HAD LOST MUCH OF ITS MOMENTUM. MEANWHILE, AGOSTINHO NETO'S RIVAL POPULAR MOVEMENT FOR THE LIBERATION OF ANGOLA WAS MAKING SIGNIFICANT GAINS IN EASTERN ANGOLA.Y

THE NATIONAL FRONT HAS BEEN HELD BACK BY ITS PRACTICE OF RECRUITING MAINLY FROM REFUGEES IN ZAIRE

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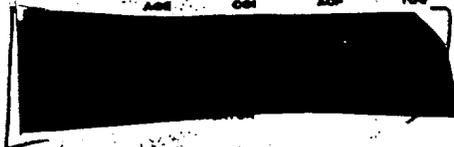
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BELONGING TO THE BAKONGO TRIBAL GROUP OF NORTHERN ANGOLA RATHER THAN FROM WITHIN ANGOLA. ROBERTO'S REFUSAL TO BROADEN HIS SUPPORT BASE PROMPTED HIS FOREIGN MINISTER JONAS SAVIMBI, TO LEAVE THE NATIONAL FRONT IN 1966 AND EVENTUALLY ESTABLISH HIS OWN ORGANIZATION, THE NATIONAL UNION FOR THE TOTAL INDEPENDENCE OF ANGOLA. NOW ROBERTO'S GROUP MUST SHARE THE LEADERSHIP OF THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT WITH THE TWO OTHER NATIONALIST ORGANIZATIONS.

ROBERTO HAS HAD CLOSER TIES WITH ZAIRE OVER THE YEARS THAN WITH ANGOLA AND REPORTEDLY SPEAKS BETTER FRENCH THAN HE DOES PORTUGUESE. HE IS CLOSE TO ZAIRIAN PRESIDENT MOBUTU, BUT MOBUTU'S SUPPORT HAS BEEN LIMITED, INITIALLY BECAUSE OF THE ZAIRIAN LEADER'S PREOCCUPATION WITH SECURING HIS OWN POWER AND LATER BY HIS DESIRE NOT TO PROVOKE THE PORTUGUESE INTO DENYING KINSHASA ACCESS TO TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES THROUGH ANGOLA THAT ARE NECES-

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SARY FOR ZAIRE'S COPPER EXPORTS. NEVERTHELESS, ROBERTO'S RELIANCE ON MOBUTU PUT HIM OUT OF FAVOR WITH THE AFRICAN AND COMMUNIST STATES THAT PROVIDED THE BULK OF ASSISTANCE TO THE INSURGENTS IN PORTUGAL'S AFRICAN TERRITORIES. MOREOVER, IN 1973 THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY WITHDREW ITS MATERIAL SUPPORT, ALTHOUGH THE OAU CONTINUED TO RECOGNIZE ROBERTO'S GROUP AS A LIBERATION MOVEMENT.Y

BY THE TIME OF THE COUP, HOWEVER, THE NATIONAL FRONT'S FORTUNES WERE BEGINNING TO IMPROVE. WITH ENCOURAGEMENT FROM MOBUTU, WHO WAS ATTEMPTING TO IMPROVE HIS CREDENTIALS AS AN AFRICAN NATIONALIST AND DEVELOP ZAIRE'S RELATIONS WITH CHINA, ROBERTO VISITED PEKING IN JANUARY 1974 AND SECURED A PLEDGE OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE. MOBUTU INCREASED HIS ASSISTANCE TO THE FRONT, ESPECIALLY IN LOGISTICAL SUPPORT AND TRAINING.Y

BECAUSE OF THIS SUPPORT, THE NATIONAL FRONT

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WAS ABLE TO MOVE TROOPS QUICKLY INTO ANGOLA, PARTICULARLY LUANDA, FOLLOWING AN AGREEMENT LAST FALL BETWEEN THE INSURGENT GROUPS AND THE PORTUGUESE THAT ALLOWED THE NATIONALISTS TO ESTABLISH OFFICES IN THE TERRITORY IN EXCHANGE FOR A SUSPENSION OF HOSTILITIES. TO DATE, THE FRONT HAS BEEN THE MOST EFFECTIVE OF THE THREE GROUPS IN ESTABLISHING ITS PRESENCE IN NORTHERN ANGOLA, LARGELY BECAUSE OF ITS STRONG TRIBAL TIES THERE.

SINCE ENDING ITS GUERRILLA OPERATIONS, THE NATIONAL FRONT HAS ASSUMED A "LAW AND ORDER" ROLE IN LUANDA AND NORTHERN ANGOLA. IN RECENT MONTHS IT HAS BEEN ABLE TO CAPITALIZE ON THAT IMAGE AND WIN SUPPORT EVEN AMONG SOME WHITES IN RURAL AREAS OF NORTHERN ANGOLA, A REGION LONG PLAGUED BY BANDITRY AND A HIGH CRIME RATE. ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS IT HAS USED ITS "LAW AND ORDER" POSTURE TO HARASS ITS MAJOR OPPONENTS.

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THE POPULAR MOVEMENT. ROBERTO'S ORGANIZATION CONTROLS THE AGRICULTURE, INTERIOR, AND HEALTH AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS PORTFOLIOS IN THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT AND CLEARLY INTENDS TO USE THESE TO ITS ADVANTAGE. THE FRONT HAS AMBITIOUS PLANS FOR REPARTIATING PERHAPS AS MANY AS 750,000 PRO-FRONT REFUGEES CURRENTLY LIVING IN ZAIRE IN TIME FOR THEM TO VOTE IN THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS THAT ARE SCHEDULED TO BE HELD SOMETIME BEFORE INDEPENDENCE NEXT NOVEMBER.Y

MEANWHILE, THE NATIONAL FRONT MAY BE STRENGTHENED BY THE EARLY ADHERENCE OF DANIEL CHIPENDA, THE FORMER VICE PRESIDENT OF THE POPULAR MOVEMENT WHO SPLIT WITH NETO IN 1973. CHIPENDA CONTROLS SOME 2,000-3,000 WELL-TRAINED TROOPS IN EASTERN ANGOLA. SINCE HIS BREAK WITH NETO HE HAS OBTAINED MODEST SUPPORT FROM ROBERTO AND MOBUTU AND HE MAY NOW BE ON THE VERGE OF JOINING THE NATIONAL FRONT.Y

THE NATIONAL FRONT IS OPERATING UNDER CERTAIN

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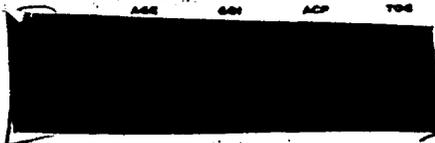
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DISADVANTAGES, HOWEVER. IT HAS LESS SUPPORT IN LUANDA THAN DOES THE POPULAR MOVEMENT OR EVEN THE NATIONAL UNION; IT HAS VIRTUALLY NO FOLLOWING SOUTH OF LUANDA-- AN AREA THAT INCLUDES ABOUT THREE-FOURTHS OF THE COUNTRY. MOREOVER, THE FRONT IS NOT LIKELY TO GAIN SIGNIFICANT NEW SUPPORT FROM WHITES IN THE NEAR FUTURE. UNLIKE ITS RIVALS, THE FRONT HAS NEVER SOUGHT TO ATTRACT A BROAD RACIAL BASE OF SUPPORT. AS A RESULT, IT HAS BEEN TAGGED WITH A RACIST IMAGE THAT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO OVERCOME.4

THE FRONT'S CLOSE RELATIONS WITH MOBUTU ARE A POLITICAL LIABILITY FOR ROBERTO IN COMPETING WITH THE OTHER TWO GROUPS. THE LATTER ACCUSE THE FRONT OF BEING A TOOL OF MOBUTU, WHO, THEY SUGGEST, HAS TERRITORIAL DESIGNS ON ANGOLA, PARTICULARLY THE OIL-PRODUCING EXCLAVE OF CABINDA. THE ROBERTO-MOBUTU CONNECTION IS VIEWED WITH PARTICULAR SUSPICION BY AGOSTINHO

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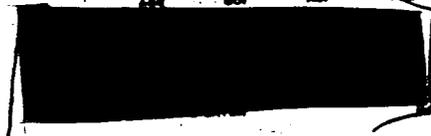
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THE IDEOLOGICAL AND PERSONAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ROBERTO AND NETO APPEAR IRRECONCILABLE AT PRESENT. THEIR ORGANIZATIONS ARE LIKELY TO CLASH MORE THAN ONCE DURING THE POLITICAL CAMPAIGNING AHEAD AS THE FRONT CAMPAIGNS IN URBAN AREAS AND THE POPULAR MOVEMENT SEEKS TO EXPAND INTO THE COUNTRYSIDE. A MAJOR EFFORT ON THE PART OF BOTH MEN WILL BE REQUIRED TO AVERT OPEN WARFARE BETWEEN THE TWO GROUPS.



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