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**Interagency
Intelligence
Memorandum**

*Soviet and Cuban Aid to the MPLA in Angola
from March through December 1975*

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January 24, 1976

INTERAGENCY INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM^{1/}

SUBJECT: Soviet and Cuban Aid to the MPLA in Angola from
March through December 1975

Key Points

The intelligence community estimates that:

- The Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and Cuba shipped [] military equipment to the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) from March through December 1975.
- Soviet and East European sea shipments totaled [] and a Soviet airlift added []
- Cuban merchant ships delivered about [] military equipment.
- Cuba also sent to Angola in this period some 7,500 Cuban military personnel, and the USSR sent about 400 military advisers.^{2/}
- Valued in equivalent US prices, this Soviet and Cuban support from March through December 1975 would be on the order of \$200 million. With the evidence available to us, we can calculate an estimate of []

^{1/}This memorandum has been prepared jointly by the Central Intelligence Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the Bureau of Intelligence and Research of the Department of State, and the National Security Agency.

^{2/}A Soviet-Cuban airlift has continued to move Cuban troops into Angola since the end of 1975, and [] January 1976 a total of about 11,000 Cuban military personnel had been sent to Angola. [] this troop airlift came to an end, at least temporarily, although additional Cuban troops may still be moving into Angola by ship.

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[] Since this figure has been deliberately based on conservative judgments, however, and taking into account some evidence which cannot yet be quantified, we believe that this may understate the total

[] ^{1/}

1/ Since 1 January 1976, the Soviet and Cuban sealift/airlift in support of the MPLA has continued. []

2/ Some reports indicate that the MPLA may have MIG-type jets. []
[] If the Soviets have sent MIGs to Angola, however, they would probably be either MIG-17s or MIG-21s. []

In addition, we believe that the MPLA possesses surface-to-air missiles [] []

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-- With this Soviet and Cuban assistance -- both materiel and trained manpower -- the MPLA side has become by far the best equipped and militarily the strongest of the contending factions in Angola. The equipment provided to the MPLA has included:

- T-34 medium tanks and PT-76 light tanks.
- BRDM armored cars and armored personnel carriers.
- 122-mm long-range rockets and truck-mounted rocket launchers.
- Antiaircraft guns.
- Sagger antitank missiles.
- Recoilless rifles.

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The Details

NOTE: *The figures contained in this memorandum present the US intelligence community's best estimate of the amounts and value of communist military assistance to Angola from March through December 1975. The estimate is based on information collected and collated from a variety of intelligence sources, and some reports are more reliable and complete than others. In a number of cases, the data are incomplete and imprecise. The accuracy of our estimates will improve as additional information becomes available.* [

1. Moscow has backed the MPLA since it was founded in 1956 with the aid of the small, clandestine Angolan Communist Party. During the early years of the MPLA's existence, the Soviets gave it a steady though moderate supply of military and financial aid, much of it channeled through Congo, Zambia and Tanzania. In the early 1970s the level of Moscow's aid diminished, as the MPLA's prospects for control of Angola appeared to deteriorate, in large part because it was weakened by internal factional strife.

2. In the months following the overthrow of the Caetano regime in Portugal in April 1974, the USSR reassessed its policy toward Angola and decided to expand its support to the MPLA. In March 1975 Soviet aid increased markedly. Cuba, which had been providing very small scale support to the MPLA since the early 1960s, apparently sent a contingent of military advisers last spring and markedly expanded its aid beginning in September 1975.

Equipment Deliveries

3. Most of the military equipment and supplies sent to the MPLA during the period under review were by sea on Soviet, East European, and Cuban ships. The USSR has also employed aircraft to deliver high priority weapons, ammunition, and other items, and the Cubans have used both merchant ships and aircraft to move equipment and troops into Angola.

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4. Overall, the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and Cuba shipped [] military equipment and supplies between March 1975 and year's end. Included in the Soviet deliveries have been T-34 medium and PT-76 light tanks, armored personnel carriers (APCs), BRDM armored cars, 122-mm truck-mounted rocket launchers, recoilless rifles, anti-aircraft guns, and probably SA-7 surface-to-air missiles.* Most of the Cuban deliveries have been small arms and ammunition, but Cuba has also provided some trucks, APCs, and T-34 tanks.

5. Soviet and East European Sea Shipments: From March through December 1975, [] Soviet, [] East German, [] Yugoslav ships offloaded [] arms and military equipment, mostly in Pointe Noire, Congo and Luanda, Angola [] The Soviet ships [] operated both out of the Black Sea -- the USSR's traditional staging point for military deliveries -- and the Baltic. A small amount of communist arms for the MPLA, was delivered to Dar es Salaam [] A small amount of military supplies, transshipped from other African ports, was probably carried on East German and Yugoslav ships.

6. Soviet Airlift: The Soviets began to deliver arms by air in March 1975. Intermittent flights were reported for the next six months with most planes landing in Congo. The major Soviet airlift for the Angolan fighting began [] October [] 1975

[] The flights delivered [] military equipment, including ammunition, tanks, and other heavy equipment. In addition, small arms were carried [] by Soviet aircraft between Congo and Angola.

7. There have been numerous reports that the Soviets have supplied MIG-type aircraft to the MPLA. []

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[] indicated that [] MIG aircraft have been provided and that some of these were being assembled at Luanda airport in late December or early January. []

[] reports that Cuban pilots and ground support personnel are in Angola. Nevertheless, we have as yet no conclusive information on the presence of MIGs in Angola (the only jet aircraft known to be in the MPLA inventory are a few older jets left by the Portuguese). []

8. In addition, the MPLA has employed helicopters in Angola. Some helicopters were left in Angola when the Portuguese departed, but there is a possibility that the Soviets may have sent others. []

[] If the Soviets have sent helicopters, the most likely would be the MI-8, []

9. Cuban Deliveries by Sea: Cuban merchant ships made [] voyages between Cuba and West African ports between early September and the end of the year. They delivered [] military equipment and some 4,000 armed forces personnel to Angola by sea [] Some of the ships are believed to have carried only personnel, others mostly military equipment, and the remainder a mix of the two. Most of the ships offloaded at the ports of Pointe Noire, Congo and/or Porto Amboim and Luanda, Angola. []

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10. Ships involved in the Cuban sealift operation at any one time account for about 10 percent of Cuba's merchant fleet and are drawn primarily from Cuba's trade with Western Europe. Most of the ships are believed to have loaded in Mariel, Cuba's tightly controlled military port 40 miles west of Havana.

11. Cuban Airlift: From late September through the end of 1975, Cuba employed [] civil aircraft []

[] to transport 3,500 Cuban military personnel and very small amounts of arms and ammunition to West African airports for ultimate deployment in Angola. Until mid-December [] flights operated via Barbados, a regional refueling point. Thereafter -- precluded from using Barbados by US pressure on the island -- subsequent flights to Africa have operated via the Azores, Guyana, Gander, and the Cape Verde Islands.*

Estimated Cost of Communist Military Aid

12. The monetary value assigned to Soviet, East European and Cuban assistance to the MPLA from March through December 1975 depends on whether Soviet trade prices are used or US prices for comparable goods and services are used. The latter are, on the average, significantly higher, but they give a more accurate representation of how much an equivalent amount of aid would cost in American terms. (Communist costs tend to be lower, because wage and price structures are vastly different from those

* Since the beginning of 1976 -- beyond the time-frame covered by this memorandum -- the Cuban airlift potential has been augmented by the introduction of Soviet-piloted long-range IL-62s. []

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in the US.) [

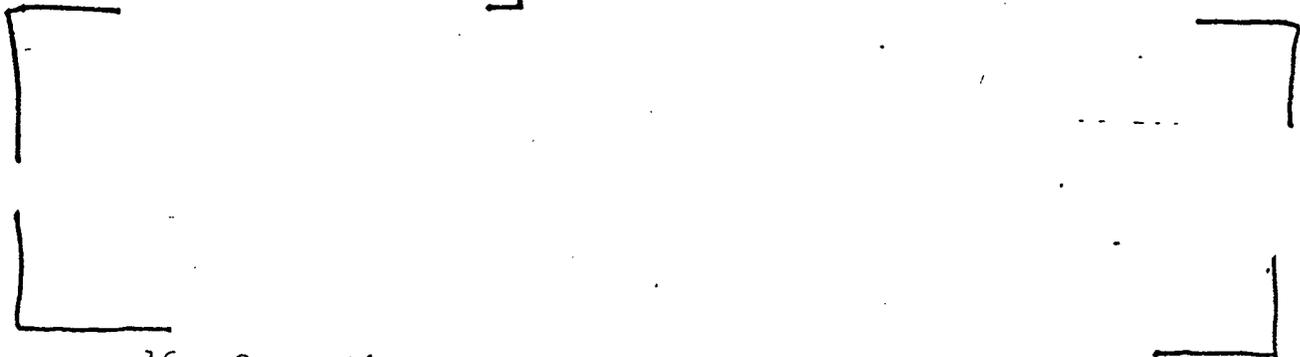
13. Equipment Costs: Table 2 lists in more detail the Soviet and East European equipment delivered to the MPLA [

confidence in the reliability of our estimates [We have more of equipment than on the list of small arms and other infantry weapons. Much of the larger equipment has been sighted in combat by trained military observers [

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14. Though much of the small arms and other infantry weapons were seen in combat situations, the amount received is hard to quantify. Large quantities of small arms were noted while being unloaded from ships or aircraft [] Sightings were made by a wide range of sources []



16. Our estimates of military deliveries from Cuba -- which for the most part have remained in the hands of Cuban troops but are still a form of aid to the MPLA -- are based on far less precise evidence. []

17. Manpower Costs: In 1975, the Soviet military advisors supporting the MPLA in Angola and Congo cost the USSR an estimated \$1.7 million in US prices []

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Table 2

Estimated Amounts and Types of Soviet Equipment Delivered to MPLA
March through December 1975

Total

Major Equipment

T-34 tanks
PT-76 light tanks
Armored personnel-carriers;
BTR 40, BTR 50, BTR 60
Various light armored vehicles
including BRDMs^{3/}
ZPU 4 AA machine guns
30 mm and 37 mm AA guns
10-ton trucks
7-ton trucks
GAZ-63 trucks
Converted landing craft
122 mm truck mounted rocket
launchers
122 mm howitzers
85 mm field guns
76 mm divisional guns
Tank transporters
Communications vans

Small Arms and Other Infantry Weapons

122 mm rockets
120 mm mortars
82 mm B-10 recoilless rifles
82 mm mortars
RPG-2 grenade launchers
RPG-7 grenade launchers
SA-7 SAM
Sagger anti-tank missiles (including
launchers with control systems)
12.7 mm heavy machine guns
7.62 mm light machine guns
7.62 mm carbines SKS
7.62 mm submachine guns
7.62 mm pistols
AK-47 rifles
Anti-tank and anti-personnel mines
Hand grenades
Electric generators
Ammunition
Tactical communication (man pack
and vehicle mounted)

^{3/} Most are unidentified, but the majority are probably scout-type vehicles.

^{4/} No comparable US equipment.

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The equivalent costs in Soviet prices for this period are slightly higher than in US prices.* Based on the limited information available, the following tabulation gives our best estimate of the number of Soviet advisors supporting the MPLA since January 1975 and associated costs:**

Table 3

<u>Time Period</u>	<u>No. of Personnel</u>	<u>Million US \$</u>	
		<u>To USSR</u>	<u>US Equivalent Force</u>
Jan-June	5	.03	.03
July	76	.09	.08
Aug	114	.13	.11
Sept	142	.16	.14
Oct	342	.39	.34
Nov-Dec	406	.91	.81
Total for 1975		1.71	1.51

* We estimate that the total cost of employing one Soviet military technician for one year in Angola to be about \$13,500. [

] The cost figure considers both foreign exchange expenditures, including salary, round trip fare from Moscow with luggage, insurance, leave, and transfer allowance of 30 percent of salary if employed for over a year, and local currency outlays such as quarters and medical care. Our estimate of \$12,000 for employing one US military technician in a nation like Angola for one year is based on average US pay and allowances, and does not include transport and other support costs that could increase the figure by at least 25 percent. It should be noted that the average rank of US military technicians serving in LDCs is well below that of Soviet technicians, which tends to offset the higher US pay scale and makes US costs comparable. []

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18. In addition, several hundred MPLA officers received military training in the USSR and Cuba during the March-December period. The cost of this training is estimated at more than one million dollars in US equivalent costs.

19. The number of Cuban military personnel sent to Angola rose from about 300 in the fall of 1975 to around 7,500 by the end of 1975. The total cost of supporting such a contingent -- which may be shared or picked up entirely by the USSR -- is estimated at \$4 million in Cuban prices, based on an average monthly salary for Cuban military personnel of \$75 per man plus \$225 a month per man for field support. Equivalent US costs would be \$20 million (see the following table).

Table 4

<u>Time Period</u>	<u>No. of Personnel</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Million US \$</u>	
			<u>Cost of an Equivalent US Force Operating in West Africa*</u>	
Sept	300	.1	.5	
Oct	1,800	.5	2.6	
Nov	4,300	1.3	6.3	
Dec	7,500	2.3	11.0	
Total Sept-Dec 1975		<u>4.2</u> (rounded to 4.0)	<u>20.4</u> (rounded to 20.0)	

* A cost of about \$17,600 per man per year was derived on the basis of the annual recurring cost of a US infantry brigade base with four infantry battalions and one armored battalion. The figures represent personnel operation, maintenance and recurring procurement costs.

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21. Soviet Funding of Cuban Assistance. Soviet and Cuban efforts in Angola appear to be closely integrated. In addition to sending troops and associated equipment to Angola, the Cubans are also supplying personnel to operate most of the more sophisticated Soviet equipment. Not only does this provide the needed manpower to man the Soviet weapons, but it also has allowed the Soviets to maintain a lower profile in their support to the MPLA.

22. A persuasive case can be made that the Soviets are picking up most of the Cuban costs. The stock of arms which the Cubans had prior to their increased involvement in Angola was not in excess of what they appeared to need internally, and the [] military equipment which the Cubans delivered to Angola from March through December 1975 would have depleted their stocks. We believe that this is the reason the Soviets increased their military shipments to Cuba in 1975 []

[] Much, if not all, of the [] increase probably represents reimbursement to the Cubans for the materiel they have shipped to Angola.

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