

CUBA: DOMESTIC COSTS OF INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICA

*Maintain P.R.  
effort against  
Cuba in  
Africa, esp.  
radio → Cuba  
J*

The political, military, and social costs of Cuba's expanding role in Africa thus far are well within manageable limits and are not a significant constraint on Cuban policymakers. Whether these costs become serious will depend largely on the extent of fighting in Angola and Ethiopia. Heavy Cuban casualties could present the Castro regime with difficult political problems.

Political-Social Costs

Party activists, mass organizations, and the military all support the government's African policy, but much of the public is convinced that the country's austerity--which actually stems largely from low world sugar prices--is caused by Cuban involvement in Africa. No organized opposition exists, however, and dissatisfaction apparently has been limited to grumbling among friends and family.

Castro has spent considerable time since mid-1977 traveling through the countryside trying to bolster morale. The numerous speeches and heavy media treatment are in effect pre-emptive moves to head off mounting disaffection. We believe Castro knows that the current level of discontent is well within tolerable limits and that by careful persuasion he can keep it far short of the point where actual repression might be required.

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For The President Only

... speaking for attribution, [redacted]  
[redacted] that the USSR would not be permitted  
to build bunkering facilities for its merchant fleet at  
the southern port of Algeciras. [redacted]  
[redacted]

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(C)

~~TOP SECRET~~