Moscow's Proxy? Cuba and Africa 1975–1988

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Cuba's role in international politics during the Cold War was unique. No other Third World country projected its military power beyond its immediate neighborhood. Extracontinental military interventions during the Cold War were the preserve of the two superpowers, a few West European countries, and Cuba. In the thirty years from the victory of the guerrillas led by Fidel Castro in 1959 to the end of the Cold War in 1989, West European military interventions were much smaller and much less daring than those of Cuba. Even the Soviet Union sent far fewer soldiers beyond its immediate neighborhood than did Cuba. In this regard, Cuba was second only to the United States.

From 1959 onward, Castro defied and humiliated the United States. In the 1960s, fears of a "second Cuba" in Latin America haunted U.S. leaders and gave rise to the Alliance for Progress. From the late 1970s through the late 1980s, the Cuban government supported those who fought to bring revolutionary change to Central America. But Castro's vistas extended well beyond the Western hemisphere. The dispatch of 36,000 Cuban soldiers to Angola from November 1975 to April 1976 stunned the world and ushered in a period of large-scale operations, including 16,000 Cuban soldiers in Ethiopia in late 1977; Cuban military missions in Congo Brazzaville, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, and Benin; and, above all, the continuing presence in Angola that peaked in 1988 with 52,000 soldiers. Cuba's military presence in Africa was accompanied by a massive program of technical assistance. Tens of thousands of Cuban experts, mainly in health care, education, and construction, worked in Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Ethiopia, Sâo Tome and Principe, Tanzania, Congo Brazzaville, Benin, Burkina Faso, and Algeria. More than 40,000 Africans studied in Cuba on full scholarships funded by the Cuban government.[1]

1. See Juan Colina la Rosa et al., "Estudiantes extranjeros en la Isla de la Juventud" (unpub. manuscript, Havana, 2005), esp. table 4.

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Cuba's African journey did not begin in 1975. Angola was a way station along a road that had begun in 1959 and had led to Algeria, Congo Leopoldville (later called Zaïre), Congo Brazzaville, and Guinea-Bissau. Almost two thousand Cuban soldiers and aid workers had gone to Africa before the intervention in Angola.[2] Nor was Angola the end of the journey, although little has been published on Cuba's policy toward Africa after 1976. I will focus in this essay on the two major operations after the dramatic airlift to Angola in late 1975: the 1977–1978 intervention in Ethiopia, and Cuba's continuing presence in Angola. My analysis will rely on documents from the Cuban archives (which are still closed),[3] on U.S. documents, on selected Soviet-bloc documents, and, when appropriate, on the press and the few books that are relevant. I will establish the facts of Cuba's policy toward Ethiopia and Angola before reflecting on Havana's motivations and on the extent to which its policy was a function of Soviet demands. I will also assess the benefits and costs of Cuba's policy in Africa.

At the center of Cuban policymaking stood one man, Fidel Castro. He was surrounded by a group of close aides, one of whom deserves special mention: Jorge Risquet, a member of the Political Bureau of the Cuban Communist Party. A man of intelligence, eloquence, wit, and total commitment to the cause he defended, Risquet was Castro's point man on Africa throughout the 1980s. As General Ulises Rosales del Toro, chief of the general staff of the Cuban armed forces, told a Soviet general in September 1984: "In my country, whenever we discuss strategy, even military strategy, about Angola, Risquet has to be present because for many years he has been at the center of everything relating to Angola."[4]

Victory in Angola, 1975–1976

The basic outline of what happened in Angola in 1975–1976 is well known.[5] When the Portuguese dictatorship collapsed on 25 April 1974, three rival in-

2. See Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959–1976* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

3. The story of how I gained access to these archives is too long to include here. See Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions,* pp. 9–10. I have photocopies of all the Cuban documents cited in this essay. I am writing a book on Cuban and U.S. policy in southern Africa in 1976–1988. Following the publication of that book, all documents cited in this article will be made available to other scholars.

4. "Conversación del general de división Ulises Rosales del Toro con el general de ejército Variennikov V.I.," 5 September 1984, Centro de Información de las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias (CIFAR), Havana. The first volume of what promises to be a fascinating biography of Risquet by Gloria León Rojas, *Jorge Risquet, del solar a la sierra,* will appear in Havana in 2006.

5. My discussion of the events in 1975–1976 is based on Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions,* pp. 230–396. Here I cite only the sources of direct quotations.

dependence movements existed in the country: Agostinho Neto's Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), Holden Roberto's National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA), and Jonas Savimbi's National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). Although Portugal and the three independence movements agreed that a transitional government under a Portuguese High Commissioner would rule the country until independence on 11 November 1975, civil war erupted in the spring of 1975. In July, South Africa and the United States became engaged in parallel covert operations in Angola, first by supplying weapons. Then, in late August, South Africa sent military instructors, and the United States sent advisers from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Cuban military instructors did not arrive in Luanda until the end of August, and Soviet aid to the MPLA was very limited because Moscow distrusted Neto and did not want to jeopardize the strategic arms control negotiations with the United States. Nevertheless, by September, both the United States and South Africa realized that the MPLA was winning the civil war. It was winning not because of Cuban aid (no Cubans were yet fighting in Angola) or because of superior weapons (the rival coalition had a slight edge, thanks to U.S. and South African largesse), but because, as the CIA station chief in Luanda, Robert Hultslander, noted, the MPLA was by far the most disciplined and committed of the three movements. The MPLA leaders, Hultslander wrote, "were more effective, better educated, better trained and better motivated" than those of the FNLA and UNITA. "The rank and file also were better motivated."[6]

South Africa and the United States were not pursuing identical ends in Angola, but both countries agreed that the MPLA had to be defeated. Pretoria wanted to shore up apartheid at home and eliminate any threat to its illegal rule over Namibia, sandwiched between South Africa and Angola. South African officials were well aware of the MPLA's hostility to apartheid and of its commitment to assist the liberation movements of southern Africa. (By contrast, UNITA and FNLA had aligned themselves with South Africa.) Although U.S. officials likely knew that an MPLA victory would not threaten U.S. strategic or economic interests, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger believed that success in Angola could provide a low-cost boost to the prestige of the United States (and to his own prestige), which had been pummeled by the fall of South Vietnam. He cast the struggle in stark Cold War terms: the freedom-loving FNLA and UNITA would crush the Soviet-backed MPLA. The U.S. government urged South Africa, which might otherwise have hesi-

6. Robert Hultslander (CIA station chief, Luanda, 1975), faxed communication to Piero Gleijeses, 22 December 1998, p. 3.

Source: U.S. Government

tated, to act. On 14 October, South African troops invaded Angola, transforming the civil war into an international conflict.[7]

As the South Africans raced toward Luanda, MPLA resistance crumbled. The South Africans would have seized the city if Castro had not decided, on 4 November, to send troops in response to the MPLA's desperate appeals. The Cuban forces, despite their initial inferiority in numbers and weapons, halted

7. In addressing Pretoria's decision to invade, Jorge Dominguez, a distinguished scholar and expert on Cuba, writes that "Cuba, the United States, and South Africa engaged in a classic action-reaction process of escalation. . . . South Africa . . . was unnerved by the deployment of nearly five hundred [Cuban] military instructors and other military personnel, especially in October [1975]." See Dominguez's review of my book *Conflicting Missions,* in the *Journal of Cold War Studies,* Vol. 5, No. 3 (Summer 2003), p. 136. Dominguez overlooks the available evidence and offers none of his own. The issue is important enough, both methodologically and factually, to deserve a little probing. The South Africans have declassified no documents on Operasie Savannah (Pretoria's code name of its 1975–1976 Angolan operation). However, in 1978 the South African defense ministry commissioned a study by F. J. du Toit Spies on South Africa's role in the 1975–1976 Angolan civil war and gave him

the South African invasion. The official South African historian of the war writes: "The Cubans rarely surrendered and, quite simply, fought cheerfully until death."[8]

As the South African operation unraveled and credible evidence surfaced in the Western press that Washington and Pretoria had been working together in Angola, the United States drew back. U.S. officials claimed that they had not been working with the South Africans and condemned South Africa's intervention in Angola. South Africa's defense minister later expressed his dismay to the South African parliament:

> I know of only one occasion in recent years when we crossed a border, and that was in the case of Angola when we did so with the approval and knowledge of the Americans. But they left us in the lurch. We are going to retell the story: the story must be told of how we, with their knowledge, went in there and operated in Angola with their knowledge, how they encouraged us to act and, when we had nearly reached the climax, we were ruthlessly left in the lurch.[9]

Betrayed by the United States, pilloried throughout the world as aggressors, and threatened by growing numbers of Cuban soldiers, the South Africans gave up. On 27 March 1976, the last South African troops withdrew from Angola. The U.S.–South African Angolan gambit had failed.

access to the closed government archives. His report was approved by a supervisory committee led by an army general and including representatives from the ministries of defense and foreign affairs and from academia. The report was later declassified and published as *Operasie Savannah: Angola, 1975–1976* (Pretoria: S. A. Weermag, 1989). A member of Spies's supervisory committee, Commander Sophie du Preez, also published a book based essentially on the same documentation, *Aventuur in Angola: Die Verhaal van Suid-Afrika se soldate in Angola, 1975–1976* (Pretoria: J. L. van Schaink, 1989). To my knowledge, these are the only two published accounts based on South African documents. In discussing why South Africa invaded Angola on 14 October, Spies and du Preez do not mention Cuba as a factor in South Africa's decision to invade. According to their accounts, the Cubans did not figure at all in South Africa's decision-making about Angola until November, more than two weeks after the South African invasion had begun on 14 October. Although Spies and du Preez may not tell the entire story, they would have no reason to hide or minimize South Africa's knowledge of the arrival of the Cuban instructors and the impact that Havana's actions had on the South African government. Aside from the books by Spies and du Preez, the most important accounts of South Africa's policy in Angola in 1975–1976 are the memoirs of Commander Jan Breytenbach, *Forged in Battle* (Cape Town: Saayaman and Weber, 1986) and *They Live by the Sword* (Alberton, South Africa: Lemur, 1990); and the books by Ian Uys, *Bushmen Soldiers: Their Alpha and Omega* (Germiston, South Africa: Fortress Publishers, 1994); Helmoed-Römer Heitman, *South African War Machine* (Novato, CA: Presidio, 1985); Willem Steenkamp, *South Africa's Border War, 1966–1989* (Gibraltar: Ashanti Publishing, 1989). None of these books refers to the Cubans as a motivation for South Africa's decision to invade. Their accounts, though less authoritative, are consistent with those of Spies and du Preez. The evidence thus suggests that the Cuban presence did not "unnerve" (to use Dominguez's term) the South Africans until early November, after their first clash with Cubans southeast of Benguela on 2–3 November. This is not surprising. The Americans, too, did not become alarmed by the Cuban presence until November. See Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions,* p. 328. South African policy toward Angola until November 1975, including the decision to invade on 14 October, was not influenced by any Cuban actions.

8. Spies, Operasie, p. 108.

9. P. W. Botha, 17 April 1978, Republic of South Africa, *House of Assembly Debates,* col. 4852.

It is now clear that, as the former Soviet ambassador to the United States, Anatolii Dobrynin, states in his memoirs, the Cubans sent their troops to Angola "on their own initiative and without consulting us."[10] Even Kissinger, who had dismissed the Cubans as Soviet proxies, later reconsidered. "At the time we thought he [Castro] was operating as a Soviet surrogate," he writes in the final volume of his memoirs. "We could not imagine that he would act so provocatively so far from home unless he was pressured by Moscow to repay the Soviet Union for its military and economic support. Evidence now available suggests that the opposite was the case."[11]

What, then, motivated Castro's bold move in Angola? Not realpolitik. By deciding to send troops, Castro challenged the Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev, who opposed the dispatch of Cuban soldiers to Angola. Moreover, Castro faced a serious military risk: South Africa, encouraged by the United States, might escalate its attack. Castro's soldiers might have been forced to confront the full South African army without any guarantee of Soviet assistance. (Indeed, it took two months for Moscow to provide crucial logistical support to airlift Cuban troops to Angola.) Furthermore, the dispatch of Cuban troops jeopardized relations with the West at a moment when these relations were improving. The United States was contemplating a modus vivendi; the Organization of American States had just lifted its sanctions; and West European governments were offering Havana low-interest loans and development aid. Realpolitik would have demanded that Cuba rebuff Luanda's appeals. If Castro had been a client of the Soviet Union, he would have held back.

Castro sent troops because he was opposed to minority white rule. As he saw it, the victory of the U.S.- and South African-backed forces would have meant the victory of apartheid and the reinforcement of white domination over the black majority in southern Africa. As Kissinger himself now says: Castro "was probably the most genuine revolutionary leader then in power."[12]

Cuba's victory prevented the establishment of a government in Luanda beholden to the South African regime. The psychological and political impact of the Cuban victory in southern Africa was recognized on both sides of the political divide in South Africa. In February 1976, as the Cuban troops were pushing the South African Defense Forces (SADF) toward the Namibian border, a South African military analyst wrote:

> In Angola, Black troops—Cubans and Angolans—have defeated White troops in military exchanges. Whether the bulk of the offensive was by Cubans

10. Anatoly Dobrynin, *In Confidence: Moscow's Ambassador to America's Six Cold War Presidents* (New York: Times Books, 1995), p. 362.

11. Henry Kissinger, *Years of Renewal* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999), p. 816.

12. Ibid., p. 785.

> or Angolans is immaterial in the color-conscious context of this war's battlefield, for the reality is that they won, are winning, and are not White; and that psychological edge, that advantage the White man has enjoyed and exploited over 300 years of colonialism and empire, is slipping away. White elitism has suffered an irreversible blow in Angola, and Whites who have been there know it.[13]

The retreat of the SADF was hailed by blacks in South Africa. "Black Africa is riding the crest of a wave generated by the Cuban success in Angola," noted *The World,* South Africa's major black newspaper. "Black Africa is tasting the heady wine of the possibility of realizing the dream of total liberation."[14] None of this would have been possible if Cuba had not intervened.

The impact was more than psychological. Cuba's victory had clear, tangible consequences throughout southern Africa, forcing Kissinger to turn against the white regime in Rhodesia and spurring Jimmy Carter to work tirelessly for majority rule there.[15] It also marked the real beginning of Namibia's war of independence. The South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) in Namibia had engaged in armed rebellion since 1966, and the International Court of Justice and the United Nations had demanded in the early 1970s that South Africa withdraw from Namibia, which it had ruled under a League of Nations mandate since the end of World War I. But SWAPO's efforts did not gain momentum until after the MPLA victory in Angola. As a South African general noted: "For the first time they [the SWAPO rebels] obtained what is more or less a prerequisite for successful insurgent campaigning, namely a border that provided safe refuge."[16]

Having pushed the SADF out of Angola, the Cubans hoped to withdraw their troops gradually, giving the MPLA time to strengthen its own armed forces (known as FAPLA) so that they could take over the defense of Angola. This was the message that Cuban Defense Minister Raúl Castro brought to Luanda on 20 April 1976. He told Neto that the Cuban government proposed that "gradual steps should be taken to withdraw the troops over the next years—1976, 1977, 1978—until only military instructors remained." Neto accepted the Cuban timetable with only minor changes, including that

13. See the commentary by Roger Sargent in the *Rand Daily Mail* (Johannesburg), 17 February 1976, p. 10.

14. Editorial, *The World* (Johannesburg), 24 February 1976, p. 4.

15. My comment about Carter is based on newly declassified documents from the Jimmy Carter Library in Atlanta. Even though our conclusions differ, I have greatly benefited from Nancy Mitchell's path-breaking manuscript, "Jimmy Carter and Africa: Race and Realpolitik in the Cold War."

16. Jannie Geldenhuys, *A General's Story: From an Era of War and Peace* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1995), p. 59.

"the Cuban military doctors presently in Angola remain and continue to offer their valuable services."[17]

Neto's request was spurred in part by the departure of 90 percent of the 350,000 Portuguese living in Angola in 1974, an exodus that deprived the country of almost its entire skilled labor force. Raúl Castro informed Havana that the Angolan government had requested aid from other Communist countries, "but everyone, from President Neto and the other leaders down to the ordinary people in the most remote corners of the country, is hoping for Cuban assistance. This is natural, given our participation in the war, the fact that our languages are so similar, our ethnic background, and the prestige of our revolution."[18]

In fact, the aid had already begun to flow. The first Cuban doctors had arrived in Angola in late November 1975, a few days after the first troops. Several months later, the newsweekly *Jeune Afrique,* a mainstream publication, reported that

> Huambo [Angola's second largest city] lives in fear that the Cuban doctors may leave. "If they go," a priest said recently, "we'll all die." . . . [When] a Cuban medical team arrived on 7 March, only one Angolan doctor and a Red Cross mission were left [in Huambo]. The latter . . . left at the end of June. The Cuban medical teams play a key role throughout the country.[19]

In May 1977, the Angolan delegate to the World Health Assembly told President Carter's special assistant for health, "[The] most important contribution [in health care] has been from Cuba with no strings attached. We only had fourteen doctors, but now we have more than 200, thanks to Cuba."[20]

By the end of 1976, more than 1,000 Cuban aid workers were in Angola, and more were arriving. "Seventeen years of revolutionary rule under Fidel Castro had made them a tight, disciplined and well groomed lot," a correspondent of the major black South African newspaper reported from Luanda. "Monday through Saturday they can be seen working industriously . . . The impression is indisputable. The Cubans not only won the war for the MPLA, they are now intent on pulling the country back together for them through a dozen different reconstruction programs." Cuba was footing the bill. "We are

17. Risquet to Fidel Castro, 23 April 1976, pp. 2, 6, in Archives of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party (ACC), Havana.

18. Raúl Castro, "Acerca de la necesidad de una masiva ayuda técnica (civil) a RPA," 23 April 1976, pp. 1, 3, in ACC.

19. "Fidel Castro n'a pas envoyé que des soldats," *Jeune Afrique* (Paris), No. 811 (23 July 1976), p. 28.

20. "Discussion with Delegates to the World Health Assembly-Peter G. Bourne, M.D., Geneva, Switzerland, May 1977: Angola," in Box 41, Staff Offices: Special Assistant to President, Jimmy Carter Library (JCL), Atlanta, GA.

paying for the food for our aid workers," Risquet reported, "for their salaries in Cuba, and for the cost of bringing them to Angola."[21]

Castro, Carter, and Africa

Upon assuming the U.S. presidency in January 1977, Jimmy Carter decided "that we should attempt to achieve normalization of our relations with Cuba." A key condition for normalization was the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Africa, but Havana would not budge. "In our first talks with the Cubans in March 1977," the State Department noted, "they showed no give at all on Africa. Their only response to our reference to their military presence in Angola was to say that this was not a subject for negotiation."[22]

Starting in mid-1976, however, the Cubans had been withdrawing their soldiers from Angola, and by March 1977 almost 12,000 had returned home. U.S. officials took note of the pullouts. In the spring and summer of 1977, relations between Cuba and the United States slowly improved. Carter halted reconnaissance flights over the island; a fishery agreement was signed; U.S. travel restrictions were allowed to lapse; Havana released ten U.S. prisoners and permitted them to return to the United States; and in August the two countries opened Interest Sections in each other's capital. But the courtship was already faltering. In March 1977, with the support of the Angolan government and unbeknownst to Cuba, Zaïrean exiles—the Katangans—had invaded the southern Zaïrean province of Shaba. Zaïre's dictator, Mobutu Sese Seko, called on African and Western countries for help. Urged by Paris and Washington, Morocco sent troops to Shaba aboard French military planes. The Katangans retreated to Angola.[23]

The Cubans responded to the French-Moroccan intervention by halting their troop withdrawals from Angola. Fidel Castro explained that this was

21. Quotations from *The World* (Johannesburg), 30 June 1976, p. 8; and Memorandum from Risquet to Fidel Castro, 13 July 1976, p. 3, in ACC. See also Departamento General de Relaciones Exteriores del CC del PCC, "Informe sobre la colaboración civil de Cuba con la República Popular de Angola," (hereinafter cited as "Informe"), 7 November 1979, in ACC.

22. Presidential Directive/NSC 6, 15 March 1977, Vertical File: Presidential Directives, JCL; and U.S. Department of State [DoS], Memorandum [title sanitized], p. 2, attached to Pastor to Aaron, 7 August 1978, Vertical File: Cuba, JCL. The best study of U.S.-Cuban relations in the Carter years is Wayne Smith, *The Closest of Enemies: A Personal and Diplomatic Account of U.S.-Cuban Relations since 1957* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987).

23. On the Shaba crises of 1977 and 1978, see Piero Gleijeses, "Truth or Credibility: Castro, Carter, and the Invasions of Shaba," *International History Review,* Vol. 18, No. 3 (February 1996), pp. 70–103. On the troop withdrawal figure, see the comments of Risquet in "Conversaciones entre representantes del MPLA-PT y el PCC," 28 December 1981, p. 39, in ACC.

"because we saw that a new threat had arisen."[24] The United States was not pleased. The State Department reported that "toward the end of 1977, Cuba's continuing military presence in Angola began to obstruct significantly the measured progress in US-Cuba relations."[25] In December 1977 two U.S. congressmen who favored improving relations with Cuba, Fred Richmond of New York and Richard Nolan of Minnesota, held a lengthy meeting with Castro in Havana. They told him that "though President Carter was 'eager' to normalize relations, some willingness to deescalate Cuban involvement in Angola was needed. They noted this was the biggest irritation to Carter and asked for a statement in this regard." Castro gave no ground. He insisted that Angola was threatened by South Africa and Zaïre: "The Cuban mission in Angola was the defense of the country . . . If Cuba negotiated this presence with the U.S., it would destroy its relations with Angola and possibly destroy the Angolan government itself. No country that respected itself would do that." Richmond and Nolan responded that "they were there [in Havana] to speed improved relations. President Carter simply wanted a statement of Cuba's intention to deescalate." But Castro, according to their account of the meeting, replied that

> this could not be done unilaterally. Only the Angolan government could give such indication. The Angolan government had to decide this, since the Cubans were not there on their own account. . . . If the restoration of relations was presented in the Angolan context, things would not advance. On this basis, no matter how important or convenient, Cuba could not be selfish . . . "Regarding our policy in Africa we cannot negotiate that."[26]

This was the constant refrain. Two points of key importance to Castro were difficult for the Americans to appreciate: first, Cuba would not negotiate its policy in Angola with the United States; and second, it would not let the United States determine its policy in Africa. What this meant would soon be clear.

In Ethiopia, less than two weeks after Carter's inauguration, the military junta that in 1974 had overthrown Emperor Haile Selassie turned further to

24. "Conversación sostenida por el Comandante en Jefe Fidel Castro, primer secretario del comité central del Partido Comunista de Cuba y Presidente de los consejos de estado y de ministros, con José Eduardo dos Santos, presidente del MPLA-Partido del Trabajo y de la República Popular de Angola, en el comité central del PCC el día 17 de marzo de 1984," 17 March 1984, p. 23, in ACC (hereinafter referred to as "Castro-dos Santos," with appropriate date).

25. DoS, "Cuban Presence in Africa," 28 December 1978, p. 14, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

26. "Representatives Fred Richmond and Richard Nolan, Discussions with Cuban President Fidel Castro," pp. 7, 8, 10–12, enclosed in Memorandum from Richmond to Carter, 16 December 1977, in Box CO-20, White House Central File, JCL.

the left, quashing any lingering U.S. hope of retaining influence in Ethiopia. In July 1977 the junta was rocked by Somalia's invasion of the Ogaden, a region in eastern Ethiopia inhabited by ethnic Somalis. On 25 November 1977, at the urgent request of the junta's chairman, Mengistu Haile Mariam, Castro decided to send troops to Ethiopia to help repel the attacks.

This dispatch of 16,000 Cuban soldiers to Ethiopia has generated controversy. Critics charge that the Cubans intervened at the behest of the Soviet Union to save the regime of Mengistu, a bloody and inept military dictator. They charge that by defeating the Somalis the Cubans made it possible for Mengistu to concentrate his forces against the Eritrean independence movements, which had been fighting for many years against Addis Ababa.

Unfortunately, only a limited number of documents on the Horn of Africa in the Cuban archives are thus far accessible.[27] Therefore, my analysis of Cuban policy in this instance relies mainly on the rich trove of U.S. documents in the Carter Library and on the few Soviet and East European documents that are available.

Any fair assessment of Cuba's policy must take into account the backdrop against which it unfolded: Somalia's invasion of Ethiopia had violated one of the most sacred principles of the Organization of African Unity—respect for the borders inherited at the time of independence. Without this principle, there could be no peace in Africa. Paul Henze, the U.S. National Security Council (NSC) specialist on the Horn of Africa, told National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski in March 1978 that "the Soviets and Cubans have legality and African sentiment on their side in Ethiopia—they are helping an African country defend its territorial integrity and countering aggression."[28]

The Somali invasion had been encouraged by ambivalent signals from Washington. Henze wrote in June 1980 that "in light of severe political deterioration in Ethiopia," the Somali government found the temptation to invade "irresistible. The crucial decision seems to have been taken only, however, when the Somalis concluded they had a good chance of securing Ameri-

27. Cuban archivists have not yet developed finding aids for the documents on the Horn of Africa. With the exception of three slim folders, these documents remain in sealed boxes. The best work on Cuba's intervention in the Horn is William LeoGrande, *Cuba's Policy in Africa, 1959–1980* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).

28. Memorandum from Paul Henze to Brzezinski, 1 March 1978, p. 1, in Box 1, Horn, Staff Material, National Security Adviser, Brzezinski Collection, JCL. Of course, memory can be fickle. The following year, Brzezinski wrote to Carter that "in 1978 the Ethiopians followed their friendship treaty with Moscow by their military operations against the Somalis." The president wrote on the margin: "The Somalis were invaders of Ethiopia." See Memorandum from Brzezinski to Carter, "NSC Weekly Report," No. 84, 12 January 1979, p. 2, in Box 42, Donated Historical Material, Brzezinski Collection, JCL.

can military aid."[29] The invasion made swift progress, and in late August 1977 Secretary of State Cyrus Vance told the Chinese foreign minister that "I think they [the Somalis] will succeed by virtue of their military strength to accomplish most of their objectives, namely that the solution that is reached will be that they, as a practical matter, will be in control of the Ogaden." Mengistu turned to Cuba, which had a small military mission in Addis Ababa and had begun sending military instructors and medical doctors in April 1977. He asked Cuba for troops, but Castro's reply was negative. A secret Cuban military history notes that "it did not seem possible that a small country like Cuba could maintain two important military missions in Africa." In a cable on 16 August, Castro ordered the head of the Cuban military mission in Ethiopia to reject Mengistu's appeal:

> We absolutely cannot agree to send Cuban military forces to fight in Ethiopia. You must convince Mengistu of this reality. We will honor our agreements about military advisers and military instructors. We will also continue to send medical aid. . . . Despite our sympathy for the Ethiopian revolution and our profound indignation at the cowardly and criminal aggression to which it has fallen victim, it is frankly impossible for Cuba to do more in the present circumstances. You cannot imagine how hard it is for us constantly to rebuff these requests.[30]

However, as Ethiopia's military situation deteriorated, the Cuban leader relented. The intervention of Cuban troops prevented a Somali victory.

Why did Havana intervene? Arguably the key is provided by Brzezinski, who told Carter in late March 1977 that "Castro's effort to get the Ethiopians and Somalis together seems to have failed, and Castro ended up more favorably impressed by the Ethiopians. He found the Somalis, who pressed their longstanding territorial demands on Ethiopia, more irredentist than socialist."

29. Henze to Brzezinski, 3 June 1980, p. 1, in Box 5, Horn, Staff Material, National Security Adviser, Brzezinski Collection, JCL. For some of these ambivalent signals, see the notes from Mondale to Carter, 12 May 1977 and 13 May 1977, enclosed with Memorandum from Henze to Brzezinski, 14 May 1977, in Box 1, Horn, Staff Material, National Security Adviser, Brzezinski Collection, JCL; Memorandum from Brzezinski to Carter, n.d., enclosed with Memorandum from Henze to Brzezinski, 15 June 1977, in Box 1, Horn, Staff Material, National Security Adviser, Brzezinski Collection, JCL; and NSC, "Meeting of Somali Ambassador Addou with President Carter," Memorandum for the Record, 16 June 1977, in Box 1, Horn, Staff Material, National Security Adviser, Brzezinski Collection, JCL. The best study of Carter's policy in the Horn is Mitchell, "Jimmy Carter and Africa." See also Raymond L. Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation: American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan,* rev. ed. (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1994), pp. 695–719; and Donna Rose Jackson, "The Carter Administration and the Horn of Africa" Ph.D. diss., Wolfson College, Cambridge University, Cambridge, UK, 2002.

30. MemoConv (Vance, Foreign Minister Huang Hua et al.), 23 August 1977, 9:30 a.m.–11:50 a.m., p. 14, FOIA; Ministerio de las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias, "Las misiones internacionalistas desarrolladas por las FAR en defensa de la independencia y la soberanía de los pueblos," n.d., p. 65, Archives of the Instituto de Historia de Cuba, Havana; and Cable from Fidel Castro to Ochoa, 16 August 1977, in CIFAR. On the military instructors and medical doctors, see "Las misiones internacionalistas," pp. 65, 95.

Castro had been impressed by the Ethiopian revolution and by Mengistu. During an extended trip to Africa in early 1977, Castro told the East German leader Erich Honecker that "a real revolution is taking place in Ethiopia. In this former feudal empire the land has been given to the peasants. . . . Mengistu strikes me as a quiet, honest and convinced revolutionary leader." Moreover, Castro had been singularly unimpressed by Somalia's president Siad Barre: "He is above all a chauvinist."[31] We know in retrospect that Castro's impression of what was happening in Ethiopia was wrong. But, arguably, this was not clear in 1977. Although the Ethiopian junta's consolidation of power was undeniably bloody, the regime had decreed a radical agrarian reform and had taken unprecedented steps in favor of the cultural rights of the non-Amhara population.[32]

The Cuban intervention enabled Mengistu to shift his forces against Eritrea, where he unleashed a war of terror, but the Cubans themselves refused to fight there. On 25 November 1977—the day that Castro decided to send troops—he stressed that "these soldiers are to fight exclusively on the Eastern Front against Somalia's foreign aggression." All the available evidence indicates that the Cubans were true to their word. Risquet told Honecker in 1989 that "at no moment did Cuban troops participate in operations against the rebels in Eritrea. . . . Nor were Cuban military officers involved in the planning of military operations." The Cubans tried to mediate a resolution to that conflict.[33]

The Cuban decision to send troops to Ethiopia was welcomed by the Soviet Union, which consulted closely with Havana throughout the operation—in contrast to Angola, where Cuba had sent its troops despite Moscow's initial objections. On 27 November 1977, Brezhnev wrote Castro a warm message expressing "our complete agreement with your policy. We are pleased that our

31. Brzezinski to Carter, n.d. [late March 1977], p. 1, FOIA; "Niederschrift über das Gespräch zwischen Genossen Erich Honecker und Genossen Fidel Castro am Sonntag, dem 3. April 1977, von 11.00 bis 13.30 Uhr und von 15.45 bis 18.00 Uhr, im Hause des ZK," 3 April 1977, pp. 20–21, 23, in DY30 JIV 2/201/1292, Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (SAPMO), Berlin.

32. On the early years of the Ethiopian revolution, see Marina B. Ottaway and David Ottaway, *Ethiopia: Empire in Revolution* (New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1978); René Lefort, *Ethiopie: La révolution hérétique* (Paris: Maspéro, 1981); Fred Halliday and Maxine Molyneux, *The Ethiopian Revolution* (London: Verso, 1981); Joseph Tubiana, ed., *La révolution éthiopienne comme phénomène de société: Témoignages et documents* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1990); and Andargachew Tiruneh, *The Ethiopian Revolution 1974–1987: A Transformation from an Aristocratic to a Totalitarian Autocracy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

33. "Respuesta de Fidel a Senén, 14–15.00 hrs-25.11.77-via telf. secreto," CIFAR; "Vermerk über das Gespräch des Genossen Erich Honecker, Generalsekretär des ZK der SED und Vorsitzender des Staatsrates der DDR, mit Genossem Jorge Risquet, Mitglied des Politbüros und Sekretär des ZK der KP Kubas, am 17.4. 1989," 17 April 1989, p. 16, in DY30 JIV 958, SAPMO. On the mediation efforts, see esp. "Büro Axen," in SAPMO, DY IV 2/2.035/127.

assessment of events in Ethiopia coincides with yours, and we sincerely thank you for your timely decision to extend internationalist assistance to Socialist Ethiopia."[34] But agreement does not necessarily equal subservience. Until more documents on the Horn of Africa are released from the Cuban archives, it will be impossible to assert categorically that the Soviet Union played no role in Havana's decision to send troops. However, in my years of research on Cuban foreign policy I have not discovered a single instance in which Cuba intervened in another country at Moscow's behest. A U.S. interagency study coordinated by the NSC concluded in August 1978 that "Cuba is not involved in Africa solely or even primarily because of its relationship with the Soviet Union. Rather, Havana's African policy reflects its activist revolutionary ethos and its determination to expand its own political influence in the Third World at the expense of the West (read U.S.)."[35]

Other U.S. officials, however, had a more jaundiced view. In March 1978, Brzezinski warned Carter that the Cuban intervention would prove costly for the president: "It is only a matter of time before the right wing begins to argue that the . . . [failure to respond to the Cuban-Soviet intervention in the Horn] demonstrates our incompetence as well as weakness. This will have a negative impact politically."[36] Against this backdrop, a second crisis erupted in the Shaba province. On 13 May 1978 the Katangans again invaded Shaba from Angola, and again Mobutu's army proved unable to resist. Whereas the West had responded to the first Shaba crisis by sending Moroccan troops aboard French planes, it now responded by sending French and Belgian troops aboard U.S. aircraft. The Katangans withdrew in haste.

At Brzezinski's urging, Carter concluded, on the basis of unreliable third-hand reports, that Cuba had been involved in the Katangan attack. In reality, the opposite was true. In early 1978, after Cuban officials had received intelligence reports of a possible second incursion by the Katangans, Castro sent Risquet to Luanda with a 14-page memorandum to Neto that sheds light on the quality of Cuba's analysis of African affairs and on the manner in which the Cubans dealt with the Angolan government. Risquet met with Neto on

34. Note from Brezhnev to Fidel Castro, 27 November 1977, in CIFAR. See also "Para entregar al Teniente General Krivolpasov, 25.11.77, por el Primer Secretario PCC Fidel Castro," in CIFAR. Little of any value has been published on Soviet policy in the Horn in 1977–1978 except "Anatomy of a Third World Cold War Crisis: New East-bloc Evidence on the Horn of Africa, 1977–1978," *Cold War International History Project Bulletin,* No. 8–9 (Winter 1996/1997), pp. 38–102; and Robert G. Patman, *The Soviet Union in the Horn of Africa: The Diplomacy of Intervention and Disengagement* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 150–306.

35. "Response, Presidential Review Memorandum-36: Soviet-Cuban Presence in Africa," 18 August 1978, p. 15, National Security Archive, Washington, DC (hereinafter referred to as NSArchive).

36. Memorandum from Brzezinski to Carter, 3 March 1978, in Box 28, Donated Historical Material, Brzezinski Collection, JCL.

20 February 1978, the day after his arrival. "Our conversation lasted approximately one-and-a-half hours," he told Castro. "I presented our position based on the written document. Of course, my reading [of the memorandum] was interrupted by conversation."[37] Risquet reminded Neto that the first invasion of Shaba had taken Havana by surprise:

> During the first week of March 1977, I was not in Angola [where he was head of the Cuban civilian mission], but in Libya, where I had gone to see Fidel. Had I been in the PRA [People's Republic of Angola], I might have been told, either by you or by some other comrade in the Angolan leadership—to the extent that you knew beforehand what was going to happen—of the imminent attack. As you know, in the military briefing that took place after I returned, I asked whether there had been prior knowledge of the invasion or whether, on the contrary, the Katangans had acted without authorization and behind the back of the government of the PRA.
>
> You asked [the Angolan Defense Minister] Comrade Iko Carreira to answer my question, but the answer was vague and unsatisfactory. I believed, however, that it would not be correct to insist, particularly because many Angolan, Cuban, and Soviet comrades were present.
>
> I later thought about it and concluded that perhaps my question had been inappropriate, given where I asked it, but I do not think that it was unreasonable, given the possible consequences for the Cuban troops of the outbreak of war in Angola, the territorial integrity of which is, for Cuba, a sacred cause.[38]

Risquet told Neto that Havana had learned from several sources that the Katangans were "prepared to renew action against Mobutu in the near future." Calmly but firmly, he made clear that Castro would be opposed to such an operation. However, even though Cuba was providing vital aid to the Angolans, the memorandum was not condescending and contained no threat of retaliation if Angola failed to heed Cuba's advice. But it did contain lucid warnings about the likely consequences of a second invasion of Shaba: "The imperialists will in all likelihood intervene, as they did on the previous occasion. Indeed, they will probably intervene more forcefully, even directly, not just with Moroccan, but with imperialist forces—from France, for example." Risquet indicated that Cuba worried about the security of Angola:

> In southern Africa, Angola is today, even more than a year ago, the pillar in the struggle against the racists, and it is, without question, the revolutionary vanguard. The imperialists know this. The imperialists must know what Angola is doing for Zimbabwe, what Angola is doing for Namibia, what Angola is doing for South Africa. Bravely, Angola lends real support to the liberation movements

37. Memorandum from Risquet to Castro, 21 February 1978, p. 1, in ACC.

38. Memorandum from Risquet to Neto, February 1978, pp. 4–5, in ACC.

> of Namibia, Zimbabwe, South Africa. It does so in concrete terms, with the training on its territory of 20,000 fighters from these three countries oppressed by the racists.
>
> In so doing, Angola runs a risk, but it is a risk worth taking; it is an unavoidable duty of solidarity and internationalism. In this case, the imperialists are politically cornered; they cannot openly defend the cause of the racists, so they seek solutions that will tame the raging volcano by means of some concessions. In the case of the international assistance to these three movements—SWAPO, ZAPU [Rhodesian rebels], and the ANC [the African National Congress, in South Africa]—the coordination that has been established between Angola, Cuba, and the USSR is perfectly lubricated. This coordinated action, well thought out and carefully executed by the three governments, is achieving good results and will be decisive in the victory of these three movements in the short, medium, or long term.
>
> This excites the imperialists' hatred of Angola. The imperialists seek a pretext, a political "justification," to launch an open attack on Angola. The renewal of the Shaba war could provide this pretext.[39]

"President Neto," the memorandum concluded, "we could no longer delay telling you about these concerns. They are not new. We have had them for some time. If we have not talked as frankly in the past as we do now it is because we wanted to refrain from doing anything that could be interpreted as interference—even if only in form—in the internal affairs that are properly the concern of only you and your government."[40]

Risquet reported to Castro that Neto had "declared that he agreed fully with us." The next day, Neto sent Risquet a handwritten letter laying out his position: "As was clear in our conversation, I am in full agreement with the views expressed by the Cuban leadership and Comrade Commander-in-Chief Fidel Castro."[41] Risquet's memorandum is striking for the respect, indeed almost deference, shown toward what was, by all obvious criteria, a client. Angola depended on Cuban troops for its security and was receiving an impressive amount of technical assistance from Havana.

On 4 May 1978, a few days before the second Shaba crisis began, South Africa launched an airborne attack against Cassinga, a SWAPO refugee camp in Angola, 250 kilometers north of the Namibian border. The SADF had been carrying out raids since the summer of 1976 across the border to attack SWAPO and also to help Savimbi's UNITA, which had not accepted defeat and was waging guerrilla war against the Angolan government. But this was

39. Ibid., pp. 8–9.

40. Ibid., pp. 11–12.

41. Memorandum from Risquet to Castro, 21 February 1978, p. 3, in ACC; and Memorandum from Neto to Risquet, 21 February 1978, in ACC.

the first time since South Africa's ill-fated 1975 invasion of Angola that the SADF had dared strike so deep into Angolan territory. This escalation and the arrival of French and Belgian troops in southern Zaïre convinced Cuba that the foreign threat against Angola was growing. At Luanda's request, Havana, which had withdrawn 12,000 soldiers before the first Shaba crisis, reversed course and started sending reinforcements to Angola.

The crisis in the Horn and the second Shaba crisis marked the end of the tentative rapprochement between Washington and Havana. "Africa is certainly central to our concerns," Peter Tarnoff, a senior U.S. State Department official, told Castro during a visit to Havana in December 1978 accompanied by NSC aide Robert Pastor. "As I look over the transcript of our talks [the previous evening, with Cuba's Vice President Carlos Rafael Rodríguez], I see that we have spent 70 percent of our time on Africa." The Carter administration was upset not only because Cuba was sending more troops to Angola and supporting the Namibian and Rhodesian insurgents, but also because Cuban troops had intervened in the Horn. The Cuban leader was deeply disappointed in Carter. "We felt that he was the first American president in all these years [since 1959] with different attitudes and a different style of treatment of Cuba," Castro told Pastor and Tarnoff. But these perceptions had been shattered by U.S. allegations of Cuba's involvement in the latest Shaba crisis, by the resumption of U-2 spy flights over Cuban territory, by the demands that Cuba curtail its presence in Africa, and by the continuation of the long-standing economic embargo. "We feel it is deeply immoral to use the blockade as a means of pressuring Cuba," Castro said, adding:

> We are deeply irritated, offended, and indignant that for nearly 20 years the blockade has been used as an element of pressure in making demands on us. . . . Perhaps I should add something more. There should be no mistake—we cannot be pressured, impressed, bribed, or bought . . . Perhaps because the U.S. is a great power, it feels it can do what it wants and what is good for it. It seems to be saying that there are two laws, two sets of rules, and two kinds of logic, one for the U.S. and one for other countries. Perhaps it is idealistic of me, but I never accepted the universal prerogatives of the U.S.—I never accepted and never will accept the existence of a different law and different rules.[42]

He concluded, "I hope history will bear witness to the shame of the United States, which for twenty years has not allowed sales of medicines needed to save lives. . . . History will bear witness to your shame."[43]

42. MemoConv (Tarnoff, Pastor, Fidel Castro), 3–4 December 1978, 10:00 p.m.–3:00 a.m., pp. 6–7, 2, 5, 9–10, in Vertical File: Cuba, JCL.

43. Ibid., p. 25. On 15 May 1964 the United States had barred the export of medicine to Cuba.

Tarnoff and Pastor probed Havana's intentions in southern Africa. Rodríguez's response was firm:

> What we would like to stress is that no kind of peaceful solution can possibly be based on systematic concessions to [Rhodesia's Prime Minister Ian] Smith, [South Africa's President John] Vorster, and [South Africa's Prime Minister P. W.] Botha. So the revolutionary movements in these countries have prepared themselves for alternative solutions and you must understand that we will be willing to help if the peaceful solutions are not reached. And if Smith and all his forces combine to try to crush the liberation movements [in Rhodesia] it would be a similar situation to the ones in which we helped Guinea Bissau and Angola.[44]

In Guinea-Bissau, Cuba had sent military instructors, who had provided decisive assistance to the rebels fighting for independence from Portugal; in Angola, as the Americans knew only too well, Cuba had sent troops. In talks the next day, Castro emphasized the same message.[45]

The Cubans were not bluffing. They did not want to intervene in the Rhodesian conflict. Raúl Castro said as much to Mozambican President Samora Machel when the latter mused that he might have to ask for Cuban troops to help defend Mozambique against Rhodesian incursions:

> I must tell you frankly that in addition to our country's normal limitations—its level of economic development, its lack of natural resources, its small size, its location ninety miles from the United States, etc., etc.—one must now add several other factors . . . including the military aid we are giving to ten friendly countries and the present concentration of our men and material resources in Angola and Ethiopia. . . . This represents not only an economic burden for us because we bear all the costs of our military assistance, but also a significant reduction in our own ability to defend our homeland and in the availability of materiel and military cadres at home.[46]

The Cubans hoped that the negotiations for majority rule in Rhodesia and Namibia would succeed. They saw their role as strengthening the liberation movements and preventing an unjust settlement. If necessary, they would intervene, preferably only with military instructors. From across the divide that separated them, Pastor grasped the Cubans' message and their position. Upon his return to Washington, he conveyed that message to Brzezinski:

44. MemoConv (Tarnoff, Pastor, Carlos Rafael Rodríguez et al.), 2–3 December 1978, pp. 16–17, in Vertical File: Cuba, JCL.

45. MemoConv (Tarnoff, Pastor, Castro), 3–4 December 1978, 10:00 p.m.–3:00 a.m., in Vertical File: Cuba, JCL.

46. MemoConv (Raúl Castro, Samora Machel et al.), 13 December 1977, p. 16, CIFAR.

> The Cubans don't trust the negotiating process. They think their military presence is helpful in preventing mass killings by the whites; we believe that their presence undermines the possibility of negotiating a peaceful solution. There really is no way to bridge the gap between our positions. However I do think they will give us room to seize the initiative (if we can do it); I believe Castro when he says that Cuba will not be an obstacle to peace. They won't be helpful; we shouldn't have any illusions about that, but they won't be an obstacle, at least in their own terms, at this time. You can be sure, however, that if we trip, they will strike like vultures.[47]

Looking back on this period, former Carter administration officials have argued that their firm support for universal suffrage in Rhodesia stemmed from their concern for the rights of Rhodesia's black population.[48] But the declassified U.S. documents clearly show that fears of seeing the Cubans "strike like vultures" also helped shape Carter's policy on Rhodesia.

U.S.-Cuban relations further deteriorated in the two remaining years of the Carter administration. Through late 1978 the U.S. State Department regarded Cuba's policy in Africa as "the most intractable obstacle to significant improvement in bilateral relations," but after the Sandinista victory in Nicaragua in mid-1979, Central America moved to the eye of the storm.[49] Even then, however, the Cuban military presence in Angola continued to haunt the Carter administration. In January 1980, Castro told Tarnoff and Pastor that "at one point they [the Angolans] almost agreed to a troop cut, but in the end they changed their mind. They were very intransigent about it." Castro pointed out that South Africa's military activities against Angola—including bombings, incursions from Namibia, acts of sabotage, and assistance to UNITA—had intensified and that "these have worried the Angolans very much and spoiled the agreement which was almost reached for us to withdraw. As I said before, there is no way for us to act unilaterally." Pastor interjected: "If the United States had waited for South Vietnam to say it could leave, it would still be there."[50] Pastor was right, but he missed the point. Cuba was not the United States, and its relationship with Angola was different from the U.S. relationship with South Vietnam.

The Western press has asserted that the presence of the Cuban troops—

47. Memorandum from Pastor to Brzezinski and Aaron, 19 December 1978, p. 1, in Vertical File: Cuba, JCL.

48. I am relying on Mitchell, "Jimmy Carter and Africa." She has interviewed the key protagonists, including President Carter.

49. DoS, "Cuban Presence in Africa," 28 December 1978, p. 19, FOIA.

50. MemoConv (Tarnoff, Pastor, Castro et al.), 4 p.m., 16 January, to 3:00 a.m., 17 January 1980, pp. 62–63, in Vertical File: Cuba, JCL.

"the rental army from Cuba"—cost Angola a fortune, possibly as much as $500 million a year. An editorial in *The Economist* in 1987 claimed that "Cuba itself is well paid for its mercenaries," and *The New York Times* columnist William Safire wrote the following year that "Castro's Cuba desperately needs to continue to rent out its troops."[51]

The Cuban documents debunk these assertions. On 26 May 1976, Raúl Castro reminded Neto that "at present some 25,000 Angolan soldiers are being fed by the Cuban military mission." He wanted to find out when the FAPLA would be able to start feeding its own troops and whether the Angolan government could eventually supply the Cuban troops with "fresh food." Neto's reply was non-committal: "He explained that they had never raised the possibility of helping to defray these expenses because they believed that this was a delicate subject and they were afraid that they might offend their Cuban comrades if they raised it. They were ready to study the matter and they would make some proposals."[52]

Nothing came of this, however, and finally, in May 1978—two years later—General Senén Casas, the chief of the general staff of the Cuban armed forces, again raised the issue with Neto:

> There is a subject that is very awkward for us. It embarrasses us, but we have to raise it. It is the cost of maintaining our troops here. . . . The problem is that Cuba cannot afford to pay for anything in hard currency. We will pay all those expenses that we can defray with our own currency, for instance the salaries of our officers and our soldiers. But we are not in a position to spend even one cent in foreign currency, because, quite simply, we don't have it.[53]

After describing the difficult economic situation facing Cuba, General Casas asserted that his request was not an ultimatum: "The fact that we say this does not imply, in the least, that we are thinking of withdrawing or reducing our troops. We will maintain our presence even if you cannot satisfy our request." Neto's reply was similar to the one he had given to Raúl Castro two years earlier: "If it is painful for you to raise this subject, it is even more painful for us to broach with you our concern about the heavy burden that Cuba is bearing, and our desire to help. . . . We cannot let Cuba bear this burden alone. We must help."[54]

51. Richard Harwood, "Will Cuban Troops Leave Angola? The Heart of the Mysterious Talks on Namibian Independence," *The Washington Post,* 15 August 1982, B4; "A Silver Lining, Maybe, to Angola's War Clouds," *The Economist,* 10 October 1987, p. 39; and William Safire, "Hostage to Jackson," *The New York Times,* 4 July 1988, p. 23.

52. "Septima Reunión RC-AN," 26 May 1976, pp. 3–4, in CIFAR.

53. "Notas sobre la entrevista del general de división Senén Casas y el presidente Neto," 19 May 1978, pp. 4–5, in CIFAR.

54. Ibid., p. 10.

The issue was finally settled in a military agreement signed in September 1978. The agreement stipulated that Havana would continue to pay the salaries of the Cuban military personnel in Angola, whereas the Angolan government would defray all other expenses.[55]

This was the only military agreement ever concluded between the two countries. It was extended tacitly—that is, neither side asked that it be terminated or modified—until the Cuban troops left Angola. In Risquet's words: "It lasted forever!"[56] Fidel Castro told Angola's president José Eduardo dos Santos in March 1984 that "the Angolans know that we have never charged for our military aid; we cannot pay all the expenses, such as feeding our troops, but we pay their salaries, and no one knows how many millions of pesos our military assistance has cost us. . . . Our soldiers are internationalists; they are not mercenaries."[57]

Until 1 January 1978, when Angola began to compensate Havana for the Cuban aid workers in the country, the aid had been provided free. A Cuban official stated that if the Angolans had wanted only several hundred aid workers, Cuba would have paid their salaries. But Angola wanted several thousand, and Cuba could not afford to pay them. Still, the amount charged was small. For example, Angola had to pay Cuba $815 per month for a medical doctor, with half of the payment in hard currency and the other half in Angolan currency, which was non-convertible.[58] In October 1983, as Angola's economic situation steadily deteriorated, Havana decided to forgo any further compensation. At the time, 4,168 Cuban technical advisers were in Angola. Risquet noted that this change of policy "means that Cuba will no longer receive $20 million a year."[59]

Cuba and Constructive Engagement

The election of Ronald Reagan in November 1980 posed a new danger for Cuba. During the presidential campaign, Reagan had called for a blockade of

55. "Convenio sobre los principios de colaboración en la rama militar, entre la República de Cuba y la República Popular de Angola," 14 September 1978, in CIFAR.

56. Jorge Risquet, interview, Havana, 14 January 2005.

57. "Fidel-dos Santos," 17 March 1984, p. 27.

58. See Departamento General de Relaciones Exteriores del CC del PCC, "Informe," pp. 55–57; and "Acuerdo especial sobre condiciones generales para la realización de la colaboración económica y científico-técnica entre el gobierno de la República de Cuba y el gobierno de la República Popular de Angola," 5 November 1977, in Archives of the Ministerio para la Inversión Extranjera y la Colaboración Económica, Havana (hereinafter referred to as CECE).

59. Risquet, "Análisis de la situación en la República Popular de Angola," December 1983, pp. 6–7, in ACC. For the number of Cuban technical advisers, see "Protocolo de la V Sesión de la Comisión

Cuba to force the Soviet Union out of Afghanistan. In an interview with *The Wall Street Journal* in May 1980, he explained the proposal:

> [L]et's make no mistake, the Soviet Union owns Cuba lock, stock, and barrel. We blockade it, now it's a grave logistical problem for them. I'm quite sure they would not come sailing over with a navy and start shooting. But we blockade Cuba, which could not afford that blockade, and we say to them: "Get your troops out of Afghanistan and we give up the blockade."[60]

The Cubans took this threat seriously, as they explained to the East Germans in March 1981: "Not since the so-called October Crisis of 1962 has the U.S. attitude toward Cuba been as fraught and aggressive as it has been since the Republicans' 1980 victory."[61] Unfortunately the Cuban authorities have not yet released documents concerning their response to the threat posed by the Reagan administration, but a sense of what those documents might contain can be gleaned from other Cuban materials that have been declassified.

Cuban officials considered a number of possible steps the United States might take, including an invasion, a total blockade, a partial blockade, and surgical air strikes. When Risquet met with Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere in January 1982, he explained how Cuba was responding:

> We have strengthened our defenses rapidly, and we have trained and armed 500,000 men in addition to the million we already had. What restrains the imperialists is that the cost of an adventure will be high. They will suffer more casualties than they did during the Second World War. We know that they can destroy us. We do not seek war. We want peace. But we will defend ourselves.[62]

The burden on the Cuban economy was severe.

Until late 1986, when Reagan was weakened by the Iran-Contra scandal, the Cubans worried about the prospect of a U.S. military attack. The tension might rise and fall, they argued, but the danger was always there. Moreover, Cuban leaders knew that if worse came to worst, they would be left on their own. They had faced this prospect during the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, when the Soviet Union had negotiated over their heads with the United States. Castro had emphasized this point to a high-level East German delegation in 1968: "The Soviet Union has given us weapons. We are and will be forever thankful . . . but if the imperialists attack Cuba, we can count only on

Mixta Intergubernamental Cubano-Angolana de Colaboración Económica y Científico Técnica," 23 October 1983, p. 2, in CECE.

60. "An Interview with Ronald Reagan," *The Wall Street Journal,* 6 May 1980, p. 26.

61. Annex #1 ("Aktuelle Fragen der Beziehungen der USA zur Republik Kuba"), p. 1, enclosed in Memorandum from Günter Sieber (head of the SED International Relations Department) to Erich Honecker, 4 March 1981, in DY 30, JIV 2/20/197, SAPMO.

62. Risquet, "Entrevista con el presidente Nyerere, 27-1-82," p. 6, in CIFAR.

ourselves."[63] This realization had not mattered so much in the 1970s, when the danger of a military attack by the United States had receded. But the election of Reagan changed everything. To appreciate Cuba's policy in Angola, one must keep in mind this double constraint: the perceived threat from the United States, and the likely fragility of the Soviet shield.

Castro's position on Angola was straightforward: Cuban troops would remain as long as Angola faced external military threats. He established two key preconditions for their departure. First, Namibia must become independent, as stipulated in 1978 by United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution 435. As long as South Africa continued to occupy Namibia, SWAPO would be based in Angola, and Angola would be exposed to South African incursions from Namibia. Second, South Africa must end its aid to Savimbi's UNITA. This aid, as U.S. intelligence analysts noted, had increased "substantially" after Reagan's election.[64] The Cubans saw their mission as defending Angola against foreign attack, and they asserted that they would assist the Angolan government in its war against UNITA only as long as South Africa continued to assist Savimbi. Risquet addressed this point in a February 1984 planning document: "If the South Africans leave southern Angola and Namibia becomes independent, . . . the war against UNITA will become an internal Angolan matter and therefore will have to be fought only by the FAPLA, without the participation of our troops."[65] Castro reemphasized the point a few months later during a meeting with East German officials: "The Cuban troops . . . are in the country to fight against the external enemy, not against the internal counterrevolution."[66]

Some 3,000 Cuban soldiers served as military advisers in FAPLA units fighting UNITA, but the bulk of the Cuban force was positioned as a shield against a South African invasion of central Angola. Aware of the SADF's air superiority, which had been enhanced by modern military airports in northern Namibia, the Cubans had pulled their troops from the border in 1979 and had built a defensive line approximately 250 kilometers to the north. This line, which they kept fortifying and extending, eventually ran 720 kilometers from the port of Namibe in the west to the town of Menongue in the

63. "Aus der Aussprache mit Genossem Fidel Castro am 14. November 1968 während des Mittagessens im Gürtel von Havanna," pp. 4–5, in DY30 IVA 2/20/205, SAPMO.

64. U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, "Peacemaking in Angola: A Retrospective Look at the Effort," 10 June 1998, p. 1, FOIA.

65. Risquet, "Algunas ideas en cuanto a lo que debe ser nuestra posición en relación al proceso negociador iniciado unilateralmente por la dirección angolana," February 1984, p. 5, in ACC.

66. "Vermerk über ein Gespräch des Genossen Fidel Castro, Erster Sekretär des ZK der KP Kubas und Vorsitzender des Staats- und Ministerrates, mit Genossen Hermann Axen, Mitglied des Politbüros und Sekretär des ZK der SED, am 26 Juli 1984," 27 July 1984, p. 5, in DY30 IV 2/2.035/41, SAPMO.

east. If the South Africans wanted to invade central Angola, they would first have to cross the Cuban line. Repeatedly, the Cubans urged the Angolans not to keep large garrisons too far south of the line because Cuban forces would be unable to come to their rescue if the SADF were to attack. Repeatedly, the FAPLA disregarded the Cubans' advice.

In 1978 South Africa had agreed to abide by the terms of UN Security Council Resolution 435 and to grant independence to Namibia. Afterward, however, it had found a number of pretexts to avoid living up to its pledge. South Africa's defiance of the UN provoked widespread international condemnation, but the Reagan administration eased Pretoria's isolation by introducing the principle of linkage: South Africa's withdrawal from Namibia, the United States declared, would have to occur concurrently with the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola. This blurred the distinction between a legal act—Cuba's troops were in Angola at the invitation of the government—and South Africa's illegal occupation of Namibia against the wishes of the local population and the resolutions of the UN. Even close U.S. allies believed that the U.S. administration's attempt to draw a parallel was at best strained. The Canadian ambassador told the UN Security Council that linkage

> has no warrant in international law, . . . is incompatible with resolution 435 and . . . has been rejected by this Council. Perhaps worst of all, that condition, by any objective analysis, is totally unnecessary, is a deliberate obstacle and is the cause of grievous delay. . . . To hold Namibia hostage to what this Council has previously described as "irrelevant and extraneous issues" is palpably outrageous. . . . Just as the system of *apartheid* has only one defender, so freedom for Namibia has only one obstacle.[67]

Linkage was a boon for Pretoria. South African Foreign Minister Pik Botha told the South African parliament in May 1988 that after the advent of the Reagan administration, the situation had changed for the better:

> [T]he Americans came here to Cape Town and asked us what our attitude would be if they could get the Cubans out. We then said that if they could get the Cubans out it would be a "new ball game." That is how it happened that . . . we again became involved in negotiations based on Resolution 435, but with a Cuban withdrawal as a prerequisite. During the seven years in which Pres[ident] Reagan has governed, this standpoint has formed a shield against sanctions and

67. Statement by Ambassador Stephen Lewis, United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Official Records, 2588th Meeting, 13 June 1985, pp. 10–11. Arguably the only scholarly discussion of U.S. policy toward southern Africa in the Reagan years is still the brief account by Pauline H. Baker, *The United States and South Africa: The Reagan Years* (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1989). The most important account by a participant is Chester A. Crocker's stimulating though partisan *High Noon in Southern Africa: Making Peace in a Rough Neighborhood* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1992).

> no sanctions were imposed against this country because of the South West Africa [Namibia] issue.[68]

Emboldened by the friendly administration in Washington, South Africa launched a series of bruising invasions of southern Angola throughout the 1980s in order to pursue SWAPO insurgents, cripple the Angolan government, and help UNITA. But the SADF never attacked the Cuban defensive line that barred the way to central Angola.

Reeling from the blows of a South African incursion in late 1983 and urged on by Washington, Angola signed an agreement with South Africa on 16 February 1984 in Lusaka, the Zambian capital. The accord stipulated that the SADF would evacuate the Angolan territory it had occupied. In exchange, Angola would not allow SWAPO or Cuba to operate in the area the SADF had vacated. A joint SADF-FAPLA force would police the area to keep SWAPO guerrillas out and prevent them from infiltrating into Namibia. The two governments would engage in talks about the implementation of Resolution 435. The agreement made no mention of South Africa's aid to UNITA.[69]

The Lusaka agreement and its aftermath highlight the limits of Cuban (and Soviet) control over the Angolan government and reveal Pretoria's vision for southwestern Africa. The Angolans did not consult Cuban or Soviet leaders before deciding to sign the accord. They had not even informed Havana or Moscow in advance of the terms of the agreement. A month after the accord was signed, an Angolan delegation led by President dos Santos visited Cuba for talks with Castro and other senior officials.

The conversations were extraordinary. Castro had grounds for complaint and was irritated, but he spoke with restraint. He briefly summed up the history of the bilateral relationship since 1975. He reminded his guests that the Cubans' role was to protect Angola against external aggression. He repeated Cuba's desire—first expressed by Raúl Castro in April 1976—to bring its troops home: "The day there is peace in Angola we will be able to withdraw. We will then be able to strengthen significantly our own defenses, and our men will no longer have to bear the heavy burden of leaving their families thousands of kilometers behind for two years. More than 200,000 Cubans have already made this sacrifice."[70] But Cuba, he declared, would leave only with Angola's consent:

> How many times have the Americans wanted to negotiate with Cuba about our troops in Angola and Ethiopia, and we have always said that we will not discuss

68. Pik Botha, 7 May 1988, Republic of South Africa, Debates of Parliament, 6th Sess., 8th Parliament, col. 9404.

69. See SecState to All African Posts, 25 February 1984, FOIA.

70. "Castro-dos Santos," 17 March 1984, p. 43.

> it? . . . We have always refused to discuss the problems of Angola with the United States. We have always asserted that we would discuss them only and exclusively with Angola. . . . This has been our position toward Angola; but we feel that the Angolans have not treated us in the same way.[71]

The Cuban leader pointed out that the September 1978 military agreement, "which is the agreement that continues to apply," stipulated that Cuba and Angola "agree to maintain systematic contacts at the appropriate levels in order to develop deep, multifaceted analyses of the political and military situation . . . and to consult with each other before making decisions or taking actions in the military arena." He then expressed his irritation with the Angolans:

> To speak frankly, since we signed that agreement, you have never consulted us about any decision that was going to affect us; you have almost never informed us beforehand, and on only a few occasions did you inform us after the fact that there had been talks with the United States. At times we learned through our intelligence service in Western Europe that there had been contacts between Angola and South Africa, or between Angola and the United States; at other times we learned of it in the press.[72]

The Lusaka agreement, Castro declared, fit this pattern all too well: "We are faced with a fait accompli, as are the Soviets. I don't think this is right." He objected to the terms of the agreement, but this was not the problem, he said:

> The final decision was yours, not ours, but at least we could have talked about it beforehand, and we, as well as the Soviets, could have expressed our disagreement beforehand. Then we would have had no grounds whatsoever for complaint. But both the Soviets and we, your two main allies, the two who support Angola, who have been making immense efforts on your behalf, we are faced with a fait accompli. . . . Who is going to question Angola's independence when Angola is so independent that it feels free to mistreat its best allies and even to violate the agreements it has signed? Of course, Angola must determine its own future, but to honor your agreement with us you should have consulted us beforehand. These agreements give us, too, some rights.[73]

He concluded wryly: "I wonder whether our Angolan comrades have looked at these agreements lately."[74]

The Angolans were contrite in their reply. They acknowledged that they should have consulted their allies; that it had been a mistake, an oversight;

71. Ibid., pp. 29–31.

72. Ibid.

73. Ibid., pp. 38–40.

74. Ibid.

that they were a young state; and that they would be more careful in the future. Castro did not press the point further, and the discussion shifted to the military and the economic situation of Angola. Eventually the question of health care came up. An extraordinary exchange occurred among the Cubans while the Angolans looked on. Rodolfo Puente Ferro, the Cuban ambassador in Angola, noted that "there are regions, provincial capitals, where really there is no medicine. The sick are given prescriptions, but then they have to go to the witch doctor, to the traditional healer, because there is no medicine. The mortality rate is high because of this lack of medicine." The Cuban health authorities, he said, had tried to help, offering fifty-five types of medicine that were manufactured in Cuba—medicines "that are really necessary and indispensable for the diseases found in Angola." The Cuban government had offered them at cost—$700,000 for a six-month supply. Puente Ferro reported that after months of silence, the Angolans had finally asked for twenty-nine of these medicines, but the goods had not yet been shipped because Luanda had failed to release the requisite letters of credit.[75]

Castro asked: "Can we manufacture this medicine for $700,000?" After Puente Ferro had confirmed that it was possible, Castro continued: "Well . . . then let's do it and send it to Angola, and let them pay later. . . . We don't want to make any profit from this medicine; we will sell it at cost. . . . If the situation is critical, we'll send it on the first available ship, and let them pay later." He added:

> We cannot let a man die in a hospital, or a child, or an old person, or a wounded person, or a soldier, or whoever it may be, because someone forgot to write a letter of credit or because someone didn't sign it. Besides, we're not talking about large quantities. We won't go bankrupt if you can't pay. We won't be ruined. If we were talking about one hundred million dollars, I would have to say: compañeros, we cannot afford it. But if we're talking only about $700,000, . . . we can handle it.

The Angolans briefly expressed gratitude. "I would like to thank compañero Fidel Castro for this very generous decision," dos Santos said. He had one concern, however: "We know that Cuba has made another very important, very generous decision. . . . It has suspended the payment in hard currency for its technical assistance to Angola. . . . We would like to have an idea, more or less, of how long Cuba can bear this burden." Castro replied: "I believe . . . taking into account the situation of Angola, that you must not worry about this. We can bear it for as long as necessary. Don't worry. We will make this sacrifice." He then talked about other costs Cuba had borne: "The

75. The comments on medicines here and in the next paragraph are from ibid., pp. 51, 55–57, 64–66, 71–73.

major sacrifice is the human cost, you see? It is asking our people to leave their families behind. . . . It's a sacrifice for those who go and for our national budget because we pay their salaries with a 30 percent bonus." Dos Santos responded: "Thank you very much, compañero."

The Lusaka agreement did not lead to peace in Angola. Over the next fourteen months the Americans, South Africans, and Angolans held desultory conversations about the matter. The South African government maintained its earlier linkage with the presence of Cuban troops in Angola: "It has been the consistent position of the South African and United States governments that a Cuban withdrawal from Angola should be carried out parallel with the reduction of South African forces [in Namibia] in terms of resolution 435." Accordingly the South Africans demanded that all Cuban troops leave Angola within three months of the beginning of the implementation of Resolution 435.[76] The South African proposal did not mention UNITA. In a February 1985 analytical report, the CIA offered its interpretation of South Africa's objective: "We believe most key officials in the South African government are determined that Savimbi eventually will take power in Luanda. Savimbi's triumph would at the same time eliminate one of the regimes most hostile to Pretoria in the region and serve as part of a ring of 'moderate' buffer states surrounding Namibia." The South Africans, the CIA predicted, would scuttle any settlement that did not pave the way for Savimbi's takeover.[77]

As the talks dragged on, South Africa continued to carry out acts of sabotage against Angola. Chester Crocker, who was Reagan's assistant secretary of state for Africa, writes in his memoirs that in October 1984 "my special assistant Robert Cabelly probed SADF military intelligence boss Pieter van der Westhuizen about the signals being sent by his covert operations far north of the border. 'It tells the MPLA you want to kill them, not to deal,' Cabelly noted. 'I agree,' replied the man we had nicknamed 'the ratcatcher of Southern Africa.'"[78] The talks finally collapsed in May 1985.

The best epitaph to these negotiations was offered by Marrack Goulding, the British ambassador in Angola under Margaret Thatcher. He was a privileged observer. Because the United States had no formal diplomatic relations with Angola, U.S. officials kept in touch with their Angolan counterparts through the British embassy in Luanda. "For nearly seven years, the British

76. "Text of the South African Proposals," 15 November 1984, enclosed in Conradie (Deputy Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations) to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, 26 November 1984, Doc. S/16839, Security Council Supplement for October, November, and December 1984.

77. CIA, Directorate of Intelligence, "Angola: Prospects for MPLA-UNITA Reconciliation," February 1985, p. 7, FOIA.

78. Crocker, *High Noon,* p. 215. For an excellent study of these covert operations, see Peter Stiff, *The Silent War: South African Recce Operations 1969–1994* (Alberton, South Africa: Galago, 1999).

served as our principal channel of communication to the Angolans," Crocker writes. "No foreign power, and few people in Washington, knew more of the intimate details of our diplomacy."[79] According to Goulding:

> Crocker and [his senior deputy Frank] Wisner were trying to persuade the Angolan government that Angola need not fear Linkage. Once Namibia was independent, they argued, South Africa would no longer have reason to attack Angola or provide military support to UNITA. . . . I was always uneasy about the UNITA limb of the argument. The South Africans would still want UNITA to replace the Angolan government, which they saw as a malevolent Marxist influence in the region.[80]

Goulding adds: "My other difference with my American friends related to the Cubans. As far as I was concerned they [the Cubans] were a good thing. They had done wonders for Angola's education and health services and were preventing the South African army . . . from running wild all over southern Angola."[81]

Moscow's Proxy?

Cuba could not have sustained its 30,000 troops in Angola without Soviet assistance. The troops' weapons came from the Soviet Union, and Soviet economic aid underpinned the Cuban economy.[82] The Cubans were aware of this reality. In the 1960s they had publicly criticized the Soviet Union, but by the 1970s they acknowledged Moscow's leading role in the Communist world, and the Cuban armed forces called the Soviet military, in a phrase heavy with symbolism, their "older brothers." But when the Cubans deemed it necessary, they were willing to challenge Moscow. They had done so when they had sent troops to Angola in November 1975. They did it again during an attempted coup against President Neto on 27 May 1977. Much about the coup remains obscure, but two key points are clear. First, the plotters enjoyed sympathy,

79. Crocker, *High Noon,* p. 461.

80. Marrack Goulding, *Peacemonger* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), p. 142.

81. Ibid.

82. According to Western sources, Soviet economic aid to Cuba in the 1980s was approximately $4 billion to 5 billion per annum, and military aid over $2 billion. Cuban officials, however, assert that what Western analysts called Soviet "economic aid" was, in fact, largely fair terms of trade between Cuban and Soviet products. For Western estimates, see William LeoGrande and Julie Thomas, "Cuba's Quest for Economic Independence," *Journal of Latin American Studies,* Vol. 34, No. 2 (May 2002), pp. 325–363; Ernesto Hernandez-Catá, *The Fall and Recovery of the Cuban Economy in the 1990s: Mirage or Reality?* IMF Working Paper WP/01/48 (Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund, 2001); and U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, National Intelligence Daily, 3 July 1991, FOIA. I thank Professor Lars Schoultz for drawing my attention to these sources.

and perhaps outright support, from the Soviet embassy. Second, the Cubans played a decisive role in defeating the revolt. The U.S. ambassador to the UN, Andrew Young, touched on this point during testimony before a Senate subcommittee in 1978: "The Cubans and the Russians haven't been always united in Angola. . . . When there was a recent coup attempt against Neto, it was pretty clear from African sources that the Russians were behind that coup. Yet the Cubans sided with Neto."[83]

In the 1980s, the Cubans repeatedly clashed with the Soviet Union over military strategy in Angola. The three-year saga of Mavinga, a small town in southeastern Angola roughly 250 kilometers north of the Namibian border and east of the Cuban defensive line, exemplifies this. Mavinga, which had been occupied by UNITA in September 1980, was considered the gateway to Jamba, Savimbi's headquarters, "a complex of thatched-roofed buildings spread over an area of some 3000 square kilometers about 200 km to the south of Mavinga."[84] For both the Soviet Union and Angola, an offensive against Mavinga became synonymous with an advance on Jamba.

By the late spring of 1984, the prospect of attacking Mavinga had become an idée fixe of Colonel-General Konstantin Kurochkin, the head of the Soviet military mission in Angola who had gained renown as a commander of Soviet airborne forces in Afghanistan. "In the military art, one must choose the direction of the main blow," he told Risquet and General Leopoldo ("Polo") Cintra Frías, the head of the Cuban military mission in Angola, after reminding them that he had fought in four wars, including World War II (when Risquet had been an adolescent and Polo an infant). Kurochkin argued that the capture of Jamba, which he considered the enemy's stronghold, was more important than Polo's idea of striking at bands of UNITA guerrillas who had penetrated into the central regions of Angola. These groups, he said, could be disposed of later: "Compañeros, you must remember the lessons of history. For example, years after the civil war had ended in the Soviet Union we were still fighting the bandits in Central Asia." The two Cubans were not persuaded. "But that was Central Asia," Risquet objected. "If the bandits had been between Moscow and Leningrad you could not have waited so long. The problem for us is that the bandits are in the region that is most important for Angola's economy." Undeterred, Kurochkin pressed on, informing them that he had broached his plan in Moscow and had spoken with the chief of the Soviet General Staff, Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov, who joined him in briefing So-

83. Testimony of Ambassador Andrew Young, 12 May 1978, in U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on African Affairs, U.S. Policy toward Africa: Hearings, 95th Cong., 2d Sess., 1978, p. 32. See also Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions,* p. 372.

84. Fred Bridgland, *The War for Africa: Twelve Months That Transformed a Continent* (Gibraltar: Ashanti, 1990), p. 15.

viet Defense Minister Dmitrii Ustinov for "two hours and seventeen minutes." Ustinov had approved the plan, but when Kurochkin returned to Angola he had been confronted with Polo's resistance. This had been going on for more than a month, Kurochkin said, "and Moscow wants to know how things are going." He turned to Risquet: "Compañero Risquet, I don't agree with Comrade Polo. . . . Compañero Risquet, let's talk frankly . . . let's discuss and let's analyze everything in order to reach a common position." But Risquet said that he agreed with Polo, who in turn remarked that Kurochkin "didn't understand me and didn't understand Risquet."[85] There matters stood.[86]

Over the next few months, however, Soviet, Angolan, and Cuban officers continued to debate the problem. Two documents illuminate this debate. On 12 September 1984, Kurochkin and Polo met in the ministry of defense in Luanda with the Angolan defense minister, General Pedro Maria Tonha ("Pedale"); the Angolan chief of the armed forces, Colonel Antonio dos Santos Franca ("Ndalu"); and his deputy, Lieutenant-Colonel Roberto L. R. Monteiro ("Ngongo"). Kurochkin insisted on the operation against Mavinga, but Polo disagreed, arguing that the FAPLA should focus instead on the central region. Ndalu and Ngongo supported Polo.[87]

Two weeks later, Kurochkin met with Angolan President dos Santos at the president's house and brought out the heavy artillery. "Comrade President," he said,

> yesterday I spoke with the [Soviet] Minister of Defense, Marshal of the Soviet Union Ustinov, and with the chief of the General Staff, [Marshal Sergei] Akhromeev [who had just replaced Ogarkov], and this morning I spoke again with the chief of the General Staff, and he asked me to inform our Angolan comrades that it is necessary to defeat the enemy forces in the Mavinga region in order to strike a decisive blow against UNITA.

Again, Polo disagreed and warned that they would be attacking an area in which South Africa enjoyed air superiority.[88]

Meanwhile, a parallel discussion was going on in Moscow between Gen-

85. "Versión de la conversación sostenida en el Estado Mayor de la Misión Militar Cubana en Angola, efectuada a las 1600 horas del día 6 de junio de 1984," pp. 30–31, 19, 34–35, in CIFAR.

86. Polo became the bête noire of Kurochkin, who served in Angola from 1982 to 1985 and was widely known there as "General Konstantin." Polo later recalled, "Konstantin complained about me with Moscow, and the Soviet military leaders complained about me with the Cuban leadership." Despite the Soviet complaints, Polo remained in Angola as head of the Cuban military mission until mid-1987. General Polo Cintra Frías, interview, Havana, 16 July 2005.

87. "Versión de la conversación sostenida en el Ministerio de Defensa de la RPA el 12 de septiembre de 1984," in CIFAR.

88. "Versión de la conversación sostenida en Futungo de Velas el 29 de septiembre de 1984," p. 6, in CIFAR.

eral Ulises Rosales del Toro, the chief of the General Staff of the Cuban armed forces, and a group of Soviet commanders, including Akhromeev. Akhromeev's deputy, Army-General Valentin Varennikov, waxed almost lyrical about the importance of the Mavinga operation: "Everything grows from here (pointing to the province of Cuando Cubango [where Mavinga and Jamba were located]). That is, this entire tree [UNITA] grows from here; it is from here that Savimbi receives everything; it is here that he has his key bases and his training centers." But Ulises forcefully repeated Cuba's objections.[89]

The following year, in 1985, the Soviet Union finally convinced the Angolans to attack Mavinga, over Havana's objections. The Cubans refused to participate in the offensive, which began in August and at first progressed well. "UNITA tried to stop them," a senior SADF officer writes, "but . . . they could not disrupt FAPLA's momentum."[90] The situation changed in late September, when the South Africans struck with air power and long-range heavy artillery. The FAPLA's Mavinga offensive ended in utter failure. A Cuban military analysis after the operation noted that the planners had failed to take into account that the South African air force dominated the skies of southern Angola and that Angola's air-defense weapons were inadequate, leaving the FAPLA units "at the mercy of the enemy's planes." After acknowledging that "the Cuban military mission in Angola lacked precise information about what had taken place on the ground because no Cuban advisers participated in the operation," the analysis concluded with praise for the FAPLA soldiers who had performed well under harrowing circumstances: "They mounted a gritty resistance to the enemy's air and ground attacks, and they endured the suffering caused by lack of water and food with stoicism."[91]

In January 1986 a Cuban delegation traveled to Moscow for talks about Angola. Risquet, who led the mission, argued that "our great weakness is that South Africa has air superiority over southern Angola. We must eliminate this." He insisted that "cutting off the claws of the racists in southern Angola" would not only make it possible for the FAPLA to operate in the area against UNITA but "would also make it easier for the SWAPO guerrillas to infiltrate into Namibia and . . . would give great encouragement to all the peoples of southern Africa."[92]

89. "Reunión entre el mariscal de la Unión Soviética S. F. Ajromieiev y el general de división Ulises Rosales del Toro. Moscú, 17.9.84 16 horas, Ministerio de Defensa de la URSS," p. 12, in CIFAR.

90. Jan Breytenbach, *Buffalo Soldiers: The Story of South Africa's 32 Battalion 1975–1993* (Alberton, South Africa: Galago, 2002), pp. 255–256.

91. MINFAR, "Sintesis del informe resumen de la 'Operación II Congreso,' realizado por el EMG-FAPLA, 15-11-85," pp. 19–20, in CIFAR.

92. "Reunión Bilateral Cuba-URSS," 24 January 1986, pp. 15–16, in ACC; and "Tripartita Cuba-URSS-RPA," 27 January 1986, pp. 33–34, in ACC.

This proposal was discussed in much more technical terms in meetings between high-ranking Soviet and Cuban officers. General Ulises Rosales del Toro, who led the Cuban delegation, was persistent, well-prepared, and, when necessary, willing to spice up his arguments with subtle sarcasm. The Soviet officers, led by Marshal Akhromeev, promised improvements in air-defense weapons and military aircraft, but Ulises pointed out that the weapons on offer would not overcome South Africa's air superiority over southern Angola. "We must eliminate the impunity with which the South Africans operate, chopping off their hands inside Angola," he urged. The Soviet reply was evasive: "In this case we can coordinate with SWAPO. If the South Africans intensify their air strikes, SWAPO can attack their airports [in northern Namibia]. The Vietnamese did this [against the Americans]; it can work." But this was a wild overestimation of SWAPO's capabilities. All Ulises could do was to repeat his arguments to the Soviet officers, who were always polite and at times even deferential but gave little ground. Having failed to persuade his interlocutors, Ulises concluded: "We believe that the Soviet response is inadequate."[93]

Why the Soviet Union did not do more is unclear. Perhaps, as Akhromeev and his colleagues said, they were overextended; perhaps they feared that if the Cubans attained air superiority or even parity in southern Angola, they might plunge forward, eject the SADF from Angola, and advance into Namibia. General Ulises Rosales later claimed that "the Soviets wanted to limit our ability to threaten the border [with Namibia] because they feared that we would cross it. They had anti-aircraft weapons that could have neutralized the South African air force, but they didn't give them to us."[94]

Before leaving Moscow, Ulises stressed to the Soviet and Angolan officers that the FAPLA must not launch another operation against Mavinga until the South Africans no longer controlled the skies. His assessment led to an exchange with Iko Carreira, the head of the air-defense forces of the FAPLA. Carreira said that he had "listened carefully to our Cuban comrade. His words are somewhat pessimistic. He does not take into account the capabilities of our military. . . . We . . . must liberate our territory." Ulises replied: "With re-

93. "Versión de la sesión de trabajo realizada entre la delegación cubana y la delegación de la URSS en el Ministerio de Defensa el día 26.1.86," pp. 2 (quoting Ulises), 14 (quoting Colonel General Illarionov, head of the secretariat of the minister of defense), in CIFAR; "Versión del encuentro del primer sustituto del ministro de las FAR, Jefe del EMG Gral de Div Ulises Rosales del Toro, con el primer sustituto del ministro de defensa de la URSS Jefe del EMG, Mariscal Ajromeev en el hotel de las Fuerzas Armadas Soviéticas, el día 30.1.86," p. 2 (quoting Ulises), in CIFAR; and Memorandum from Ulises Rosales to Marshal Akhromeev, mid-February 1986, p. 2, in CIFAR. See also "Encuentro Tripartito realizado en el Ministerio de Defensa de la URSS el día 28 de enero de 1986," in CIFAR; and Memorandum from Colonel-General Zaitsev to Ulises Rosales, 8 February 1986, in CIFAR.

94. General Ulises Rosales del Toro, interview, Havana, 12 July 2005.

spect, when we analyze the situation we do not ignore the need to liberate the territory. But one must identify the correct moment to achieve this, and one must calculate the odds of success."[95]

Later in the year, the Soviet Union urged the Angolans to launch another offensive against Mavinga, but the Cubans were able to convince the Angolans to hold back. Instead, the FAPLA focused its efforts against UNITA in the central and northern regions of the country. The military situation improved, spurring the Soviet Union and Angola to try again. In September 1987, over the opposition of the Cubans, the FAPLA launched another offensive against Mavinga. "The plan of the operation," a Cuban military report noted, "was a carbon copy of the 1985 operation."[96] The Cubans again refused to participate. As in 1985, the South Africans stopped the advance. But unlike in 1985, when they had simply mauled the FAPLA and forced them to retreat, this time they pursued them. By early November, the SADF had cornered the best units of the Angolan army in the small town of Cuito Cuanavale and were poised to destroy them.

From Cuito Cuanavale to New York

The final act of the Cuban saga in Angola opened with the South African advance on Cuito Cuanavale and ended with the New York agreements of 22 December 1988, which declared that the SADF would leave Namibia within three months (except for 1,500 soldiers who would be confined to base and would depart after an additional four months), that Namibia would become independent as stipulated by UN Security Council Resolution 435, that Pretoria would give no further aid to UNITA, and that the Cuban troops would leave Angola within twenty-seven months.

Little has been written about this period. The major published source is the memoir of Chester Crocker, who explains the outcome—the New York agreements—largely as a triumph of U.S. patience, skill, and wisdom.[97] A different explanation emerges from Cuban and U.S. documents. In April 1987, the U.S. ambassador to South Africa, Edward Perkins, had reported to Secretary of State George Shultz that the South African government was "implacably negative" about Namibian independence.[98] Crocker's account fails to ex-

95. "Encuentro Tripartito realizado en el Ministerio de Defensa de la URSS el día 28 de enero de 1986," pp. 16–17, in CIFAR.

96. MINFAR, "Antecedentes y desarrollo de la maniobra 'XXXI Aniversario del desembarco del Granma,'" p. 1, in CIFAR.

97. Crocker, *High Noon,* pp. 353–482.

98. Amb. Perkins to SecState, Cable, 17 April 1987, FOIA.

plain how the United States supposedly was able to move Pretoria from implacable opposition to acquiescence. In fact, U.S. policy strengthened the hardliners in Pretoria, who opposed Namibian independence and sought a military solution in Angola that could propel UNITA to power.

A South African incursion in southeastern Angola in the fall of 1987 had been so brazen that on 25 November the UN Security Council demanded that South Africa "unconditionally withdraw all its forces occupying Angolan territory."[99] Publicly, the United States had joined in the unanimous vote, but privately Crocker reassured the South African ambassador to the United States that "the SAG [South African Government] should take note that the resolution did not contain a call for comprehensive sanctions and did not provide for any assistance to Angola. That was no accident, but a consequence of our own efforts to keep the resolution within bounds."[100] This gave Pretoria time to wipe out the elite units of the Angolan army. By mid-January 1988, South African military sources and Western diplomats were announcing that the fall of Cuito was "imminent."[101]

In the end, however, Cuito did not fall. On 15 November 1987, after meeting for more than ten hours with key advisers, Castro ordered the transfer of the best units of the Cuban army and its most sophisticated hardware from Cuba to Angola. He intended to do much more than save Cuito Cuanavale: he had decided that it was time to force the SADF out of Angola. "By going there [to Cuito Cuanavale] we placed ourselves in the lion's jaws," he explained. "We accepted the challenge. And from the first moment we planned to gather our forces to attack in another direction, like a boxer who with his left hand blocks the blow and with his right—strikes." As in 1975, Castro had not consulted with Moscow beforehand. He was well aware that Mikhail Gorbachev and other Soviet leaders were intent on détente with the United States—"Gorbachev's mind is entirely focused on [the forthcoming summit in] Washington," Castro remarked—and were therefore wary of any action that might lead to increased fighting in southern Africa.[102]

The documents that detail the Cuban-Soviet relationship in the weeks that followed the 15 November decision are fascinating. On 23 November,

99. UN Security Council Resolution No. 602, 25 November 1987, in UNSC Official Records, 2767th Meeting, pp. 12–13.

100. Cable from SecState to Amembassy Pretoria, 5 December 1987, FOIA.

101. See the front-page coverage in *The Star* (Johannesburg), 21 January 1988, p. 1.

102. Quotations from "Transcripción sobre la reunión del Comandante en Jefe con la delegación de políticos de Africa del Sur (Comp. Slovo) efectuada en el MINFAR el 29.9.88," p. 16, in CIFAR; and "Reunión de análisis de la situación de las tropas cubanas en la RPA, efectuada a partir de las 17:25 horas del 15.11.1987," p. 134, in CIFAR. See also the comments of Jorge Risquet cited in V. I. Vorotnikov, *Gavana-Moskva: Pamyatnye gody* (Moscow: Fond imeni I. D. Sytina, 2001), p. 210. Vorotnikov was the Soviet ambassador in Havana.

Ulises Rosales del Toro arrived in Moscow to inform the Soviet High Command of the Cuban decision. "We delayed going to Moscow for eight days," Risquet later explained, "so that they would be facing a fait accompli."[103] Ulises's meeting with Akhromeev and Defense Minister Dmitrii Yazov was stormy. The Cuban decision to force the SADF out of Angola worried the Soviet generals. Both Yazov and Akhromeev feared that Cuba would face "a massive response from South Africa, which would send in strong forces . . . South Africa is not going to abandon this territory without a fight." Akhromeev predicted that major clashes would ensue between Cubans and South Africans at a particularly inopportune moment. Yazov added: "You know that our General Secretary [Gorbachev] will soon go [to Washington] to sign the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty." Cuba's proposed operations, Yazov said, would not be "very desirable from the political point of view . . . The United States is the United States, and they will use whatever pretext they can to accuse the Soviet Union, and Cuba, of following an aggressive policy, etc. In any case, we don't want to do anything that the Americans can use against the Soviet Union and Cuba." Ulises did not back down and instead emphasized that the Cuban decision had been triggered by Soviet mistakes, telling Yazov, to his face, that the Soviet Union bore responsibility for the disastrous offensive against Mavinga.[104]

The official Soviet response was delivered to Raúl Castro in Havana on 30 November. The Soviet authorities complained that they had not been consulted and argued that the Cubans had overreacted to the situation in Angola: "This step [proposed by Cuba] goes beyond the needs of what is taking place in Angola." The document insisted that if the Americans asked any questions, they should be told that Cuba was merely rotating its troops.[105] Castro replied the following day. After pointing out that the situation in Angola had become very dangerous, he told Gorbachev:

> We do not bear any responsibility for the military situation that has been created there. The responsibility belongs entirely to the Soviet advisers, who insisted on urging the Angolans to launch an offensive in the southeast. . . . We have always been against foolhardy operations like this, which cannot solve the problem, which waste resources, and which divert attention from the attacks on the

103. Jorge Risquet, interview, Havana, 2 February 2003.

104. "Reunión con el Ministro de Defensa de la URSS en el Ministerio de Defensa," 27 November 1987, pp. 14–15, 16, 18, in CIFAR. See also "Nota verbal al Asesor Principal de las FAR," 19 November 1987, in CIFAR; and "Reunión en el Ministerio de Defensa de la URSS para informar la situación creada en la RPA," 25 November 1987, in CIFAR.

105. "Nota entregada al Ministro de las FAR el 30.11.87 por el encargado de negocios soviético, compañero Kisiliov," 30 November 1987, in CIFAR. See also "Nota del Ministro de las FAR sobre la entrevista con el compañero Kisiliov," 30 November 1987, in CIFAR.

> UNITA guerrillas in those regions of the country that are truly strategic in military, economic, social, and political terms. . . .
>
> The Soviet note criticizes our decision to send reinforcements because it—I quote—"goes beyond the needs of what is taking place in Angola." . . . The military situation has continued to deteriorate. The facts prove that our decision to send reinforcements without delay was absolutely correct. We cannot exclude the possibility of armed clashes with the South Africans. Anyone can understand how risky it is to be weak in such circumstances. . . .
>
> The Soviet note proposes that we say we are conducting a normal troop rotation. This would be a mistake. There is no reason to invent an excuse or to resort to lies. It would undermine morale and weaken the correctness of our stance. If, during your talks, the Americans ask about these reinforcements, they should simply be told the truth: that the flagrant and shameless intervention by South Africa created a dangerous military situation that obliged Cuba to reinforce its troops in an absolutely defensive and legitimate action. They can be assured that Cuba sincerely wishes to cooperate in the search for a political solution to the problems of southern Africa. At the same time, they must be warned that South Africa's actions overstep the limits, and the result may be serious conflict with the Cuban troops. . . .
>
> Finally, I want to assure Compañero Gorbachev that Cuba will do everything in its power to help Angola overcome this difficult situation.[106]

Over the next two months, however, Cuban-Soviet relations improved. The first positive signs appeared on 8 December when Risquet met with Soviet Politburo member Egor Ligachev during the Congress of the French Communist Party in Paris. In a cable to Castro, Risquet reported:

> I had a half-hour conversation with Ligachev; the main subject he wanted to discuss was Angola. I explained the military situation to him and explained why the reinforcements had been necessary . . . To this he said, "You act first and you inform us later." He was laughing, and he gave me a playful nudge, but he said it . . . and it was clear that he was concerned. . . . He asked me what the USSR should do, and I said that they should replace as much of the war materiel that we are sending to Angola as they could, so that we would be able to rebuild our defenses in Cuba. I added that Fidel had written to Gorbachev about this, and he said he knew.[107]

Risquet ended on an upbeat note: "The conversation was very cordial even though it took place in a boxing ring—the only spot that was available in the sports arena where the Congress is taking place."[108]

106. Fidel Castro to Gorbachev, 1 December 1987, in CIFAR.

107. Risquet to Castro, 8 December 1987, in CIFAR.

108. Ibid.

Ultimately, Soviet leaders reacted as they had in late 1975 when Cuba had sent its troops to Angola without consulting them. Initial irritation gave way to acceptance of the fait accompli, and they began to provide assistance. Moscow supplied many of the weapons that the Cubans requested for their troops in Angola, including sophisticated mobile air-defense systems and MIG-23 fighter-interceptors that would allow the Cuban forces to challenge the South African air force. Surveying the military situation in Angola on 24 January 1988, Castro told Risquet: "Things have gone well [during this period] . . . when we have acted alone, while quarreling with the Soviets. . . . Now that we can count on some Soviet cooperation, we will proceed with much more pleasure. This is good."[109]

On 23 March 1988, the South Africans launched their last major attack against Cuito. The offensive, a South African military officer recounted, was "brought to a grinding and definite halt" by the defenders.[110] Three days later, Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Anatolii Adamishin arrived in Havana to brief the Cubans on Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze's recent conversations in Washington with Reagan and Secretary of State George Shultz, as well as his own talks with Chester Crocker. Crocker had warned Adamishin that "South Africa will not withdraw from Angola until the Cuban troops have left the country." The American official added that the South African military leaders "feel every day more comfortable in Angola, where they are able to try out new weapons and inflict severe blows on the Angolan army." The message was clear: If Cuba and Angola wanted South Africa to withdraw from Angola, they would have to agree to significant concessions.[111] Castro was unimpressed: "One should ask [the Americans]," he told Adamishin, "If the South Africans are so powerful, . . . why haven't they been able to take Cuito? It has been four months since they banged on the doors of Cuito Cuanavale. Why has the army of the superior race been unable to take Cuito, which is defended by blacks and mulattos from Angola and the Carib-

109. "Orientaciones de FC sobre RPA," 24 January 1988, p. 11, in CIFAR.

110. Breytenbach, *Buffalo Soldiers,* p. 308. No scholarly accounts of the campaign have been published. For the South African perspective, see ibid., pp. 272–325; Geldenhuys, *A General's Story,* pp. 208–251; Helmoed-Römer Heitman, *War in Angola: The Final South African Phase* (Gibraltar: Ashanti, 1990); Steenkamp, *South Africa's Border War,* pp. 149–177; and Bridgland, *War for Africa.* For the Cuban perspective, see Rubén Gómez, *Al sur de Angol*a (Havana: Biblioteca, 2002); César Gómez Chacón, *Cuito Cuanavale: Viaje al centro de los heroes* (Havana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1989); and Roger Ricardo Luis, *Prepárense a vivir: Crónicas de Cuito Cuanavale* (Havana: Editora Politica, 1989). My own assessment is based on Cuban documents from the CIFAR and on recently declassified U.S. documents.

111. "Conversaciones sostenidas el 26/3/88 entre el compañero Jorge Risquet y el viceministro de relaciones exteriores de la URSS Anatoly Adamishin," pp. 3, 5, enclosed with Memorandum from Risquet to Fidel Castro, 27 March 1988, in ACC.

bean?"[112] As he spoke, Cuban troops hundreds of miles southwest of Cuito had begun to advance toward the Namibian border. "At any other time," according to a U.S. intelligence report, "Pretoria would have regarded the Cuban move as a provocation, requiring a swift and strong response. But the Cubans moved with such dispatch and on such a scale that an immediate South African military response would have involved serious risks."[113] The South Africans denounced the Cuban advance, warning that it posed a "serious" military threat to Namibia and might precipitate "a terrible battle."[114] But the SADF gave ground.

As Cuban soldiers approached the Namibian border, officials from Cuba, Angola, South Africa, and the United States were sparring at the negotiating table. Throughout these talks, the Soviet Union remained on the sidelines. The U.S. State Department's intelligence bureau reported in June 1988 that "the Soviets seem to want an early resolution, but have so far only offered vague and tentative ideas regarding the forms it might take. They are still unprepared to press their allies." South African President P. W. Botha, who for years had dismissed the Cubans as Soviet proxies, told the South African parliament that Gorbachev wanted peace, but "it is not clear to what extent the Russians can influence President Castro." The truth was: not much. Anatolii Dobrynin, the long-time Soviet ambassador to the United States who served from 1986 to 1988 as head of the Soviet Communist Party's international department, deferred to Jorge Risquet on the Angolan issue, telling him: "You have the leading role in these negotiations."[115]

For both South Africa and the United States, the key question was whether Cuban troops would stop at the Namibian border. Crocker sought clarification of this matter from Risquet. "My question," he told him, "is the following: Does Cuba intend to halt the advance of its troops at the border between Namibia and Angola?" Risquet replied:

> I have no answer to give you. I can't give you a Meprobamato [a well-known Cuban tranquillizer]—not to you or to the South Africans. . . . I have not said whether or not our troops will stop. . . . Listen to me, I am not threatening. If I

112. "Conversación del Comandante en Jefe Fidel Castro Ruz, primer secretario del comité central del Partido Comunista de Cuba y presidente de los Consejos de Estado y de Ministros, con Anatoli L. Adamishin, viceministro de relaciones exteriores de la URSS. Efectuada el día 28 de marzo de 1988," p. 48, in ACC.

113. Abramowitz (INR) to SecState, 13 May 1988, pp. 1–2, FOIA.

114. Statements by General Jannie Geldenhuys, Chief of the South African Defence Force, cited in *The Star* (Johannesburg), 27 May 1988, p. 1, and by Defense Minister Magnus Malan, cited in *The Star* (Johannesburg), 17 May 1988, p. 1.

115. U.S. State Department, Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR), "Peacemaking in Angola: A Retrospective Look at the Effort," 10 June 1988, p. 4, FOIA; statement of P. W. Botha, 24 August

> told you that they will not stop, it would be a threat. If I told you that they will stop, I would be giving you a Meprobamato, a Tylenol, and I want neither to threaten you nor to reassure you. . . . What I have said is that the only way to guarantee [that our troops stop at the border] would be to reach an agreement [on the independence of Namibia].[116]

The next day, 27 June, Cuban planes attacked a South African position at Calueque, eleven kilometers north of the border. "It was a very deliberate, well-planned attack," a South African colonel recalled.[117] A CIA report two days later noted that "Cuba's successful use of air power and the apparent weakness of Pretoria's air defenses . . . illustrate the dilemma Pretoria faces in confronting the Cuban challenge. South African forces can inflict serious damage on selected Cuban-Angolan units, but Cuba retains advantages, particularly in air defenses and the number of aircraft and troops."[118] Until that moment, U.S. intelligence analysts had believed that Pretoria enjoyed air superiority. But that crucial advantage had now evaporated. Cuba had achieved air superiority over southern Angola and northern Namibia. A few hours after the Cubans' successful strike against Calueque, the SADF destroyed a nearby bridge over the Cunene River. They did so, the CIA report surmised, "to deny Cuban and Angolan ground forces easy passage to the Namibia border and to reduce the number of positions they must defend."[119] Never had the danger of a Cuban advance into Namibia seemed more real.

A few days later, the South African government received another blow. An editorial in *Die Kerkbode,* the official organ of South Africa's Dutch Reformed Church, expressed disquiet "on Christian-ethical grounds" about the "more or less permanent" presence of the SADF in Angola. "Doubts about the wisdom of the Government's military strategy are not new," the Johannesburg *Star* noted in an editorial. "But what is especially significant about *Die Kerkbode*'s querying the ethics of the Angola operations is that the doubts are now being expressed from within the [ruling] National Party's own constituency. Hardly a revolt, but this subterranean questioning from the guardians of the Afrikaner conscience cannot be easily ignored by government."[120] *Die Kerkbode* argued the case on moral grounds, but the timing—after the South

1988, Republic of South Africa, *Debates of Parliament,* 6th Sess., 8th Parliament, col. 15508; and "Entrevista Dobrynin-Risquet," 10 May 1988, p. 14, in ACC.

116. "Entrevista de Risquet con Chester Crocker. 26/6/88, 18:30 horas. Hotel Hyatt, El Cairo," pp. 22–23, 26–27, in ACC.

117. Bridgland, *War for Africa,* p. 361. The statement is by Colonel Dick Lord.

118. CIA, "South Africa-Angola-Cuba," 29 June 1988, FOIA.

119. CIA, "South Africa-Angola-Namibia," 1 July 1988, FOIA.

120. Editorial, *Die Kerkbode* (Cape Town), 8 July 1988, p. 4; and Editorial, *The Star* (Johannesburg), 8 July 1988, p. 10.

African failure at Cuito, the Cubans' advance toward the Namibian border, and the successful Cuban strike against Calueque—suggests that the military situation had been important in triggering the editorial.

On 22 July, senior Cuban and Angolan military officers met their South African counterparts and U.S. officials in Cape Verde to discuss a possible ceasefire. After a few hours, the South Africans accepted the Cubans' demands: In exchange for an immediate ceasefire, South Africa would withdraw all its troops from Angola by 1 September.[121] On 25 August, as the last SADF troops were preparing to leave Angola, Crocker notified Shultz: "Reading the Cubans is yet another art form. They are prepared for both war and peace. . . . We witness considerable tactical finesse and genuinely creative moves at the table. This occurs against the backdrop of Castro's grandiose bluster and his army's unprecedented projection of power on the ground."[122]

The negotiations continued through the fall, as thousands of Cuban soldiers waited within striking distance of Namibia and as Cuban planes patrolled the skies. Finally on 22 December in New York came the dramatic reversal: South Africa accepted the independence of Namibia. Many factors influenced Pretoria, but there would have been no New York agreements without the pressure from Cuba on the battlefield and at the negotiating table.

The Balance Sheet

From 1975, when the first Cuban troops were sent to Angola, until 1991, when the last of them departed, 2,077 Cubans died in Angola. Another 200 died elsewhere in Africa during those same years, mostly in Ethiopia in 1978.[123] In addition to the death toll, perhaps the major cost of the Cuban presence in Africa was what Castro called the "human cost"—asking tens of thousands of Cubans to spend two years on a distant continent under difficult living conditions far from their loved ones.[124] Beyond these sacrifices, the as-

121. See "Documento aprobado como resultado de las discusiones militares celebradas en Cabo Verde el 22–23 de julio de 1988," July 1988, in CIFAR.

122. Amembassy Brazzaville to SecState, Cable, 25 August 1988, p. 6, at NSArchive.

123. See the tallies recorded in Secretaría Ministro FAR, "Misiones internacionalistas militares cumplidas por Cuba, 1963 a 1991," 1998, table 2, in Oficina Secreta, 2do Sec. CC PCC, Havana.

124. I have been told repeatedly by Cubans that no soldier or reservist was ever forced to serve in a military mission abroad. I know this was true in the period I studied in *Conflicting Missions* (1959–1976), but I was skeptical about the years that followed, given the sheer number of soldiers serving in Africa. Two years ago I read the minutes of a 1981 conversation between Raúl Castro and Angolan officials. According to Castro, the soldiers "and even the officers" scheduled for duty in Angola were asked whether they were willing to go, and "those who did not want to go could serve here [in Cuba]." I remained skeptical, but during one of my last research trips to Cuba I came across a batch of orders

sessment of the costs of Cuba's policy in Africa becomes much more tentative, in part for lack of evidence—my own research is still ongoing—but also because a good deal must be left to speculation and counterfactual history.

On the economic side, Cuba always paid the salaries of its troops in Africa. The Soviet Union provided the weapons, cost-free. The other costs were generally borne by the host country, although at times they were borne by the Cubans themselves, as in Angola until late 1978. For Cuba, paying the salaries of its soldiers in Africa entailed a special burden. Most of the troops were reservists, and they continued to receive the salaries they had been earning in their civilian jobs, in addition to the modest stipends they received while in Africa. Furthermore, from 1975 to 1988 more than 70,000 Cuban aid workers—almost all skilled professionals—were in Africa. This technical assistance was provided free or at very low cost.

The increases in Soviet economic aid to Cuba during these years may have been influenced by the desire to compensate Cuba for the burden of a policy in Africa that Moscow generally endorsed. Clear evidence of a connection between the two may lie in sealed boxes in the Cuban and Soviet archives. But this linkage should not be exaggerated. No evidence has come to light that, for example, Cuba's decision to provide its technical assistance to Angola cost-free after 1 October 1983 led to any increase in Soviet aid to Cuba.

Although Cuba was generous with its assistance, Cuban officials were not profligate. Declassified documents attest to the Cuban government's attempts to minimize hard-currency expenditures. During the 1988 negotiations, for example, one of Risquet's concerns was to economize on hotel bills. He informed Castro that during the May meeting in London "we [the delegation] . . . were able to stay in the homes of Cubans [who live there] and we saved a lot of money," but he was worried about the forthcoming meeting in Cairo "because only four or five Cubans live there."[125]

from Ulises Rosales dated November 1987 through April 1988. The essence of each was the same: "All military personnel [scheduled to be sent to Angola] must be interviewed, one by one, to ascertain whether they are willing to go." More research is necessary, of course. See Raúl Castro, "Conversaciones entre representantes del MPLA-PT y el PCC," 29 December 1981, p. 139,in ACC; Memorandum from Ulises Rosales to Jefe Ejército Oriental, 18 November 1987, in CIFAR; Memorandum from Ulises Rosales to Jefe Brigada de Tanques Independiente Plaza, 18 November 1987, in CIFAR; Memorandum from Ulises Rosales, "Para el reforzamiento de las tropas cubanas en Angola," 20 November 1988, in CIFAR; Memorandum from Ulises Rosales to Jefe del Ejército Occidental, 27 January 1988, p. 2, in CIFAR; Memorandum from Ulises Rosales to Jefe Ejército Occidental, late February 1988, in CIFAR; and Memorandum from Ulises Rosales to Jefe UM 1011, 5 April 1988,in CIFAR. See also Report from Raúl Castro, "Reunión de análisis de la situación de las tropas cubanas en la RPA, efectuada a partir de las 17:25 horas del 15.11.1987," pp. 117, 120–121, 15 November 1987, in CIFAR.

125. "Reunión con el Comandante en Jefe el 18/6/88," p. 45, in CIFAR.

On the political side, the dispatch of Cuban troops to Africa hurt Cuba's relations with the United States. In 1975 Henry Kissinger had been ready to normalize relations—until the Cubans landed in Luanda. Carter's attempt to normalize relations in 1977 was crippled by the Cuban military presence in Africa. But even if Cuba had bent to Washington's will, the prospect of normalization would likely have withered in the face of the bitter clashes between Washington and Havana that began in 1979 over Nicaragua and El Salvador. It is highly unlikely that normalization would have survived Cuba's challenge in the U.S. backyard.

Given these clear costs, what were Cuba's motivations in Africa? In addressing this question in *Conflicting Missions,* which discussed Cuban policy in the 1960s and early 1970s, I was able to pore over a vast number of U.S. intelligence reports produced by analysts at the CIA and the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR). These reports occasionally referred to Castro's ego—"his thirst for self-aggrandizement"[126]—as a motivating factor for his foreign policy activism, but they all stressed self-defense and revolutionary ideology as his main motivations. U.S. intelligence analysts acknowledged that Castro had repeatedly offered to explore a modus vivendi with the United States and had been repeatedly rebuffed. The American response was to launch paramilitary operations against Cuba, to attempt to assassinate Castro, and to cripple the island's economy with an economic blockade. Hence, Cuban leaders concluded that the best defense for Cuba would be to take the offensive—not by attacking the United States directly, for that would be suicidal, but via the Third World. Cuba would assist revolutionary forces whenever possible, thereby gaining friends and weakening U.S. influence.

But to explain Cuban activism in the 1960s solely in terms of self-defense would be to distort reality—a mistake that U.S. intelligence analysts did not make. The second motivation cited by the CIA and State Department intelligence reports was Castro's "sense of revolutionary mission."[127] As far back as 1963, the head of the CIA's Board of National Estimates told the CIA director that Castro "is first of all a revolutionary."[128] Many other reports stressed the same point: Castro, the U.S. analysts wrote, was "a compulsive revolution-

126. Memorandum from Denney (INR) to SecState, "Cuban Foreign Policy," 15 September 1967, p. 4, Pol 1 Cuba, Subject-Numeric Files: 1963–73, Record Group (RG) 59, National Archives (NA), Washington, DC.

127. Ibid., p. 5.

128. Memorandum from Sherman Kent to Director of Central Intelligence, 4 September 1963, NSC 145-10001-10126/205, John F. Kennedy Assassination Collection, RG 263, NA.

ary,"[129] a man with a "fanatical devotion to his cause,"[130] and a leader who was "inspired by a messianic sense of mission."[131] Castro, they argued, believed he was "engaged in a great crusade."[132] The U.S. analysts concluded that the men surrounding Castro shared his sense of mission—for all of them, "revolution is their raison d'être."[133] The director of the State Department's intelligence bureau, Thomas Hughes, wrote in 1964 that Castro and his cohorts were "dedicated revolutionaries, utterly convinced that they can and must bring radical change to Latin America some day."[134]

Far fewer U.S. intelligence reports are available on Cuba's Africa policy in the 1970s and 1980s. As a result, my analysis here must be based largely on what the Cubans did and on what Cuban documents say.

In assessing the motivations for Cuba's policy toward Africa in the years covered in this essay, I see continuity with the 1960s, but also differences. The major difference is that the element of self-defense, so stark in the 1960s, became less salient. On the one hand, from Cuba's perspective, its security and well-being in the 1970s—as in the 1960s—would have been enhanced if the United States and its allies had been weakened. In this broad sense, self-defense may have influenced the decision to send troops to Angola in 1975 and to Ethiopia in 1977. However, Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter were contemplating normalization of relations with Cuba, and the Cubans knew it, just as they knew that sending troops to Africa would derail this normalization. Self-defense, therefore, cannot be considered a major factor in Cuba's activism in Africa in the 1970s.

The situation changed in the 1980s. Arguably, Ronald Reagan's hostility toward the Cuban revolution was as visceral as that of John F. Kennedy. At least through 1986—when the Iran-Contra scandal limited Reagan's options—the Cubans were haunted by the prospect that the United States might strike their country, and they were painfully aware of the inadequacy of the Soviet shield. As late as November 1987, Castro remarked: "They [the Americans] can wage a war without casualties against Cuba, they can place their aircraft carriers around there [the island] and start firing their heavy guns at

129. "Cuba: Castro's Problems and Prospects over the Next Year or Two," Special National Intelligence Estimate, 27 June 1968, p. 3, in Box 8/9, National Intelligence Estimate, National Security Files, Lyndon B. Johnson Library (LBJL), Austin, TX.

130. CIA, Directorate of Intelligence, "Cuban Subversive Policy and the Bolivian Guerrilla Episode," May 1968, p. 3, in Box 19, National Security File Country File (NSFCF), LBJL.

131. "The Situation in the Caribbean through 1959," Special National Intelligence Estimate, 30 June 1959, p. 3, at NSArchive.

132. "The Situation in Cuba," National Intelligence Estimate, 14 June 1960, p. 9, at NSArchive.

133. U.S. Department of State, Policy Planning Staff, "Caribbean: Cuba," Draft Outline, 13 February 1964, p. 6, in Box 26/29, NSFCF, LBJL.

134. Hughes to SecState, "Cuba in 1964," 17 April 1964, pp. 10–11, FOIA.

twenty different places, and there is nothing we can do to them."[135] This sounds like the 1960s.

But the parallel is not exact. Kennedy and Reagan posed different threats to Cuba. Kennedy had refused to accept the existence of the fledgling Cuban revolution. By the early 1980s, however, very few Americans espoused roll-back in Cuba. Cuban leaders recognized that Reagan was far more intent on controlling Cuba's foreign policy than on bringing down the governnment. They believed that a U.S. military attack against their country could be triggered by factors that were beyond their control, such as a Soviet invasion of Poland—but tension over Poland ebbed sharply after 1981–1982. What did not ebb was U.S. opposition to Cuba's revolutionary activism abroad, both in Central America and in southern Africa. The Cubans were well aware that the presence of their troops in Angola fueled U.S. hostility and increased the danger of a U.S. military response. They also were aware that the overseas deployments diverted precious military resources from defense of the island itself.

Therefore, after the 1960s, self-defense cannot be considered a key motivation for Cuba's activism in Africa.

One possible answer is that Castro was simply doing the Soviet Union's bidding. The image of Castro as Moscow's puppet has been a long-standing myth—one that simplifies international relations and casts Cuba's actions in a squalid light. But it sidesteps difficult questions. As former under secretary of state George W. Ball wrote in his memoirs: "Myths are made to solace those who find reality distasteful and, if some find such fantasy comforting, so be it."[136]

Although the evidence that Cuba was not a Soviet proxy in southern Africa is compelling enough to convince all but the most gullible, this is not true for the Horn of Africa. Former Soviet officials have confirmed that Cuba's decision to send troops to Angola in 1975 was taken without consulting Moscow, but they have said nothing about the Horn. Even former U.S. officials such as Henry Kissinger and Chester Crocker now acknowledge the independence of Cuba's policy in southern Africa, but they have not done so about the Horn of Africa.[137] Whereas I have gathered thousands of pages of Cuban documents that detail Havana's policy in southern Africa, I have only several dozen about the Horn. I cannot, therefore, assert with authority that

135. "Reunión de análisis de la situación de las tropas cubanas en la RPA, efectuada a partir de las 17:25 horas del 15.11.1987," 15 November 1987, p. 170, in CIFAR.

136. George W. Ball, *The Past Has Another Pattern: Memoirs* (New York: Norton, 1982), p. 374.

137. Crocker writes that in the initial phase of the U.S. negotiations with the Cubans and Angolans in early 1988, "we still viewed Gorbachev rather than Castro as the potential ripening agent. But it gradually became clear that Castro was driving the Communist train in Angola." See Crocker, *High Noon,* p. 379.

the Soviet Union did not influence Cuba's decision to send troops to Ethiopia in 1977. What I can do, however, is state that in my years of research on Cuban foreign policy I have never found an instance in which Castro sent troops to another country at Moscow's behest. Furthermore, the few relevant Cuban documents that are available—as well as declassified U.S., East German, and Soviet documents—indicate that Castro was genuinely impressed by the Ethiopian revolution and by Mengistu and that he considered the Somali invasion "unjustified and criminal."[138] These clues suggest not that Castro was egged on by the Soviet Union but that Soviet military and logistical assistance made it possible for him to pursue the course he himself wanted to take.

But if the Soviet Union was not the inspiration for Cuban policy in Africa, can the policy instead be explained by citing Castro's oversized ego and his desire to play a monumental role on the international scene? The relevant point, in judging this matter, is not whether Castro has a large ego, but whether his ego significantly shaped the policies that have been discussed in this essay. I should note that I have no first-hand knowledge of Fidel Castro. In twelve years of obsessive research in Cuba, I have never been able to interview him, though not for want of trying. Hence, I must rely on the evidence I do have—the more than 12,000 pages of Cuban documents I have amassed over the past three years, in addition to several thousand I gathered for *Conflicting Missions.* These materials include almost 2,000 pages of transcripts of conversations of Fidel Castro with his brother Raúl and his closest aides. What emerges from these documents is that policy is driven not by Castro's ego but by his commitment to a revolutionary cause in which he deeply believed.

This conclusion dovetails with that of U.S. intelligence analysts, who saw Castro as a leader "engaged in a great crusade," and it echoes Henry Kissinger's assessment that Castro sent troops to Angola in 1975 because he "was probably the most genuine revolutionary leader then in power."[139] Obviously, Castro's sense of revolutionary mission was not the only force shaping his foreign policy, but it was the foundation of that policy. He saw Cuba as a special hybrid: a Communist country with a Third World sensibility in a world dominated by the conflict between privileged and underprivileged—humanity against imperialism—and in which the major faultline was not between Communist and capitalist states but between developed and underdeveloped countries. For Castro, the fight against imperialism was more than a fight against the United States: it was a fight against poverty and oppression in the

138. Fidel Castro to Neto, 7 March 1978, in CIFAR.

139. "The Situation in Cuba," National Intelligence Estimate, 14 June 1960, p. 9, at NSArchive; and Kissinger, *Years of Renewal,* p. 785.

Third World. In this war his battalions included not only the tens of thousands of soldiers who fought in Africa and the hundreds who fought in Latin America and Asia, but also the Cuban doctors and aid workers who labored in some of the poorest regions of the world.

Of course, Cuba could not have pursued this policy in Africa or in Latin America without the economic and military support it received from the Soviet Union. If Cuba attained air superiority in southern Angola and northern Namibia in 1988, for example, it was with weapons that had been provided by the Soviet Union for free. Castro's ability to act was made possible by the existence of a friendly superpower on which Cuba depended for its economic and military lifeline, a situation reminiscent of the way Israel's freedom of maneuver has been made possible by the support of the United States. Nonetheless, for Cuba—as for Israel—this economic and military dependence did not translate into being a client.

The Soviet Union enabled Castro to pursue a policy in Africa that was motivated, above all, by his revolutionary idealism. For no other country in modern times has idealism been such a key component of its foreign policy. Not the United States, pace the rhetoric of Wilsonian idealism.[140] Not the Europeans. Arguably, a good dose of idealism has characterized the foreign policy of the Scandinavian countries after World War Two—I am thinking of their generous foreign aid and their willingness to assist the liberation movements of the Portuguese colonies, Namibia, and South Africa—but this policy did not entail risks.[141] Cuba, by contrast, constantly faced great risks and costs when pursuing its revolutionary goals.

Was it worth it? In the case of Ethiopia, I am ambivalent. In the Ogaden in early 1978, Cuban troops defended Ethiopia from unprovoked aggression, and they upheld a principle—the inviolability of borders—that is vital to Africa. For twelve years thereafter, Cuban doctors and aid workers rendered valuable assistance to the Ethiopian population. Yet the unsavory nature of Mengistu's regime, which waged a bitter war against the Eritrean rebels, raises

140. The myth of Wilsonian idealism focuses on the president's rhetoric and his support for the rights of distant European countries, but overlooks or grossly distorts his record in the Caribbean and Central America.

141. Researchers at the Nordiska Afrikainstitutet of Uppsala have recently published several important volumes on this subject. See Iina Soiri and Pekka Pertola, *Finland and National Liberation in Southern Africa* (Uppsala, Sweden: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1999); Tore Linné Eriksen, ed., *Norway and National Liberation in Southern Africa* (Uppsala, Sweden: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2000); Tor Sellström, ed., *Liberation in Southern Africa-Regional and Swedish Voices: Interviews from Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zimbabwe, the Frontline and Sweden* (Uppsala, Sweden: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1999); Tor Sellström, *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa,* 2 vols. (Uppsala, Sweden: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1999, 2002); and Christopher Munthe Morgenstierne, *Denmark and National Liberation in Southern Africa* (Uppsala, Sweden: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2003). See also Piero Gleijeses, "Scandinavia and the Liberation of Southern Africa," *International History Review,* Vol. 27, No. 2 (June 2005), pp. 324–331.

questions about Cuba's decision. Call it bias, but although I cannot condemn the Cuban role, I cannot applaud it either.

The major commitment of Cuban troops and technical assistance was, however, in Angola. Except for a few months in the Ogaden in early 1978, Angola was the only place in Africa in which Cuban soldiers fought and died. Was it worth it? Taking into account that over the years the Angolan government became increasingly repressive, corrupt, and indifferent to the needs of its people, this is a fair question. The answer depends on one's vantage point. In terms of Cuba's narrow interests, it was certainly not worth it. Cuba drew no tangible benefits from its presence in Angola. If, however, one believes that countries have a duty to help other countries—and internationalism is at the core of the Cuban revolution—then the answer is definitely yes, it was worth it. The Cuban contribution to Angola is clear. The MPLA government, despite its many flaws, was far better than UNITA would have been. British Ambassador Marrack Goulding aptly characterized Savimbi as "a monster whose lust for power had brought appalling misery to his people."[142] Moreover, the Cuban military shield throughout the 1980s prevented the SADF from wreaking even greater destruction on the country.[143] Furthermore, Cuba's contribution must be appreciated within the wider context of southern Africa. The Cubans in Angola helped SWAPO. They were instrumental in forcing Pretoria to accept the independence of Namibia, in the same way that they had helped bring about majority rule in Rhodesia in the late 1970s. Moreover, the Cubans' success on the battlefield and their skill at the negotiating table reverberated beyond Namibia. As Nelson Mandela said, the Cuban victory over the SADF "destroyed the myth of the invincibility of the white oppressor . . . [and] inspired the fighting masses of South Africa. . . . Cuito Cuanavale was the turning point for the liberation of our continent—and of my people—from the scourge of apartheid."[144]

Any fair assessment of Cuba's policy in Africa must recognize its impressive successes, and particularly its role in changing the course of southern African history despite Washington's best efforts to stop it. Any fair assessment must note the assistance that tens of thousands of Cuban experts provided free of charge or at nominal cost throughout Africa and the scholarships that were given, all expenses paid, to some 40,000 young Africans to study in

142. Goulding, *Peacemonger,* p. 193.

143. According to a UN Economic Commission for Africa study, gross domestic product in Angola in 1988 was "under 50 per cent of what it probably would have been in the absence of South African aggression." See UN Economic Commission for Africa, *South African Destabilization: The Economic Cost of Frontline Resistance to Apartheid* (New York: United Nations, 1989), p. 8.

144. Interview with Nelson Mandela, 26 July 1991, transcribed in *Granma* (Havana), 27 July 1991, p. 3.

Cuba. When all this is taken into account, despite the questions that may be raised about the Cuban commitment in Ethiopia, one has to agree with Nelson Mandela's words when he visited Havana in 1991: "We come here," he said, "with a sense of the great debt that is owed the people of Cuba. . . . What other country can point to a record of greater selflessness than Cuba had displayed in its relations to Africa?"[145]

145. Ibid.