

Since 1985 the Cubans have become more involved in directly countering UNITA. This apparently is because the FAPLA has failed to do a good job. Another reason is that the Cubans, in defensive roles day in day out, month after month, face a horrendous morale problem, and certainly their officers would rather see at least some combat.

The social work done by the Cuban troops includes medical aid, construction of bridges and roads, and emergency assistance in famine areas. There are 7,000 Cuban civilians in Angola who teach, construct, do health work, help with forestry, the sugar crop and other agriculture, and are also involved in communications.

There has been friction between the MPLA and the Cubans. The Angolan army resents the Cubans having better food – even better than the population, portions of which often are close to starving. In addition, the Cubans are taking diamonds and wood without payment. Some top MPLA people, according to intelligence reports, have become fed up with the Cubans.

Captain Antonio Luis Francisco Mango of the general staff of the FAPLA's 16th Brigade, who recently deserted, stated: "Concerning the presence of the Cubans in Angola, the Angolan people feel oppressed. They feel oppressed because of the role the Cubans play in Angola. Initially we thought they were coming here under the banner of proletarian internationalism, but over time we discovered that their mission has nothing to do with helping the Angolan people. Their mission is to occupy our country."³

In addition to military advantages, the benefits to the Cubans are several. First, maintaining a relatively large force in Angola keeps unemployment low in Cuba. Second, the Soviets pay the logistical cost of stationing the Cubans there. In addition, according to intelligence sources, the Cubans in Angola receive more advanced arms from the Soviet Union than even the weapons sent by Moscow