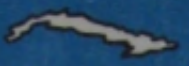

CUBAN INTERNATIONALISM IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Edited by Sergio Díaz-Briquets

CUBAN INTERNATIONALISM IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Edited by Sergio Díaz-Briquets

DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY PRESS
600 Forbes Avenue
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15282

Published by:
Duquesne University Press
600 Forbes Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15282

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Cuban internationalism in Sub-Saharan Africa / edited by Sergio Diaz
-Briquets.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references.
ISBN 0-8207-0201-3
ISBN 0-8207-0226-9 pbk
1. Africa, Sub-Saharan—Military relations—Cuba. 2. Cuba—
Military relations—Africa, Sub-Saharan. I. Diaz-Briquets,
Sergio.
DT353.5.C9C83 1989
327.7291067—dc20

89-16974
CIP

Printed in the United States
of America

Contents

Acknowledgments

The idea for this project arose out of a conversation with Olga Nazario. Her ongoing analysis and insights regarding Cuban activities in Sub-Saharan Africa, and her extensive contacts with students of the region, greatly contributed to the selection of the topics covered by the essays in this book. In a very real sense, she is the coeditor of this volume, although she is not responsible for any of its shortcomings.

Jorge Pérez-López and Lidia Soto-Harmon made major contributions toward the completion of this collection; the research stamina and intellectual breadth of Jorge is always a source of amazement, as is Lidia's ability to weave her way through the complexities of a computer.

My deepest appreciation goes to the editorial staff of Duquesne University Press. John Dowds, its director and general editor, an eminently capable professional, patiently guided me through the always beleaguering publishing labyrinth. He is a man who has much to offer and from whom much can be learned. His assistant editor, Susan B. Wadsworth, skillfully saw to it that I and the other contributors complied with her always reasonable demands.

My partner, Beatriz C. Casals, while totally supportive of my academic activities, at times unwittingly keeps me away from working on my commitments. But that is a joy. I just wish I had more time for her and the gang of four.

Sergio Díaz-Briquets

List of Abbreviations

ANC, African National Congress (South Africa)
CIM, Military Intelligence Service (Angola)
CTC, Cuban Central Workers Union (Confederacion de Trabajadores de Cuba)
DSR, Department of Security for Leaders (Department de Segurança de Responsaveis—Mozambique)
EEC, European Economic Community
ESBEC, Basic Secondary Schools in the Countryside (Escuelas Secundarias Basicas en el Campo—Cuba)
FAPLA, Forças Armadas Populares de Libertação de Angola (Angolan army)
FAR, Cuban Armed Forces (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias)
FLEC, Liberation Front for the Cabinda Enclave (Frente para Libertação do Enclave de Cabinda)
FLS, Front Line States
FNLA, National Front for the Liberation of Angola (Frente Nacional para Libertação de Angola)
FRELIMO, Mozambique's Liberation Front (Frente de Libertação de Mozambique)
MININT, Ministry of the Interior (Cuba)
MINSE, Angolan Ministry of Security (Ministerio de Seguridade)
MNR, Mozambique National Resistance
MPLA, Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (Movimento Popular para Libertação de Angola)
PAIGC, African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde (Partido para a Independencia de Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde)
PCC, Cuban Communist Party
SADCC, Southern Africa Development Coordinating Conference
SADF, South African Defense Force (South African army)
SNASP, National Service of Popular Security—Mozambique (Serviço Nacional de Segurança Popular)

SWAPO, Southwest Africa People's Organization
UJC, Young Communists Union (Cuba)
UNECA, Caribbean Union of Construction Enterprises (Union de Empresas Constructoras Caribe)
UNITA, Union for the Total Independence of Angola (Uniôa Nacional para Independência Total de Angola)
WSLF, Western Somali Liberation Front
ZANU, Zimbabwe African National Union
ZAPU, Zimbabwe African People's Union

Introduction

Sergio Díaz-Briquets

This book appears just a few months after the signing of the tripartite accords between Angola, Cuba and South Africa. The accords will contribute to a much changed situation in Southern Africa with major ramifications for Cuba. As such, the book provides one of the first post-accord assessments of what the African involvement has meant to Cuba, and how Cuba's relations with the region—as a result of the accords and a very different geopolitical international environment—may evolve in the future. The collection seeks to be comprehensive: it examines political, economic, social and military ramifications of the involvement, in Cuba as well as in Africa. It contains contributions of Cuban and Southern Africa specialists; their different viewpoints provide contrasting yet converging interpretations of a rapidly changing situation.

A new chapter in this complex and often controversial relationship between Cuba and Sub-Saharan Africa may indeed be beginning with the 1988 tripartite accords. Under the conditions of the accords, Cuban troops will gradually depart from Angola, South Africa will withdraw from Namibia, and Namibia will become an independent nation. This new chapter, facilitated by the East-West rapprochement instigated by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's unprecedented policies, patient U.S. diplomatic efforts, South African exhaustion and a bold Cuban military gamble, presents innumerable challenges and opportunities for Havana. The course of future Cuban dealings with Sub-Saharan Africa, as well as with other nations, may well be determined by this development.

Havana could not have chosen a more propitious time to begin the pullout of Cuban troops from Angola. Bogged down in Angola for more than a dozen years and facing mounting domestic economic difficulties, the accords grant Castro a welcome opportunity to extricate Cuba from Southern Africa. And he can do so while claiming that

the sacrifices endured by the Cuban people over so many years were not in vain. Cuba's military presence was instrumental in safeguarding a victory for the socialist camp in Angola in 1975 and was a major factor in bringing independence to Namibia. Thus, Cuba can claim an influential role in the demise of colonialism in Africa.

Cuba's prestige in Africa has increased with the signing of the 1988 accords, effectively halting the growing uneasiness of many African governments over Cuba's extended presence in the continent. A showdown with Moscow over Cuba's African policies was avoided as an inward-looking Soviet Union, no longer willing to continue supporting a militant and activist Cuban foreign policy, is finally able to reduce the financial outlays it provides to support Cuban activities in Angola. After more than two decades of active involvement in African affairs, the Soviet Union has only meager results to show for its efforts and investments. These gains, further, are tentative at best, and may not be long lasting. The endless Ethiopian suffering and the May 1989 coup attempt against the Mengistu regime in Addis Ababa are cases in point. The same may be true for Cuba. Future developments in Ethiopia may tarnish what has long been regarded as a major Cuban foreign policy triumph.

Cuba's African foreign policy victories have left some deep scars as well. As many as 600,000 Cuban troops may have served there, plus an indeterminate number of civilian collaborators. Many Cuban soldiers—no one really knows *how* many for sure—died there and many others were maimed. Since 1975, the Cuban economy has been bled by the logistic and subsistence demands associated with maintaining such large expeditionary forces. There may be far deeper, but still below the surface, ideological and psychological burdens that the Cuban society will have to bear.

What's next for Cuba in Africa? With the last of the colonial wars coming to an end, the chances for further Cuban military imbroglios in the region have diminished but are not completely eliminated. Apartheid and South Africa still remain, as do ongoing or potential ethnic and regional conflicts in a continent with a mosaic of political and cultural interests. Luanda must still cope with Savimbi and UNITA. The ferociousness of the civil wars in Ethiopia and Sudan has not abated but rather continues to intensify. At some point—and given the right circumstances—Castro may wish to involve Cuba in one of these frays. With Gorbachev at the Kremlin, however, the right mix of circumstances may fail to materialize. Without the logistic and economic support of the Soviet Union, Havana can hardly aspire, militarily at least, to be the global actor it was during much of the

Breshnev tenure in the seventies and eighties. The options open to Castro remain in the political, diplomatic and civilian cooperation areas. In the past, Cuba had relative success in these pursuits; Castro is likely to intensify these efforts in the future.

But the world is changing. A less confrontational Soviet Union and the disenchantment with the socialist model in much of the Third World limit the scope of what Castro can realistically expect to accomplish. The state of the Cuban economy and the economic pressures under which the Soviet Union finds itself lend credence to this conclusion. Under these circumstances, the receptivity to Cuba's overtures may be limited. Sub-Saharan Africa continues, and will continue, to remain dependent on foreign assistance. Cuba is destined to fill some of this void in selected social and economic sectors, but the demand for Cuban technicians in other sectors may not be too strong. Cuba continues to embrace orthodox and outmoded socialist economic models, while the world becomes increasingly convinced that the solution to a host of contemporary problems lies in market mechanisms. Further, Cuba may be hard pressed to find the necessary resources to underwrite internationalist cooperation programs. In much of Africa, however, Cuba will retain a strong influence. Many Africans regard Cuba as a friend who gave a hand in a time of need. Even though they may reject much of what Cuba represents or can offer, a powerful bond of friendship—forged over many years—remains. Havana can be expected to capitalize on this reservoir of good will.

Contributors to this volume examine selected features of Cuba's involvement in Sub-Saharan Africa. The principal focus is on Southern Africa, a choice dictated by recent developments in Angola, and more particularly by the signing of the peace accords. Political, military and civilian aspects of the involvement are evaluated, as are its domestic and international ramifications. Historical and analytical, this collection of essays also seeks to forecast the future evolution of relations between Cuba and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Olga Nazario and Juan Benemelis review the course of Cuba's political relations with Sub-Saharan Africa. After an uncertain beginning in the sixties, by the seventies Cuba was embarked on an ambitious diplomatic courtship of the region. Diplomatic relations at first were selective and essentially conditioned by an affinity of revolutionary goals and objectives. Che Guevara's foray into the Congo in the mid-sixties, an "anti-imperialistic," internationalist crusade, represented an extreme example of the part the young revolution wanted to have in the region. So did the initial ties with

pro-independence movements in the Portuguese colonies of Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, Angola and Mozambique during the sixties and early seventies.

Consequential commitments of combat and civilian personnel in Angola and Ethiopia were not insurmountable impediments for the gradual evolution of a more pragmatic policy during the seventies. By the mid-eighties, Cuba had diplomatic relations with over 40 African countries. Among those were Zaire and the Ivory Coast. These two countries, as Nazario and Benemelis indicate, were—and remain—among the strongest supporters of the UNITA forces Cuba has been battling in Angola for over a decade. While this more pragmatic approach has benefitted Cuba politically, it has meant little for the country's effort to diversify its economic relations abroad. Commerce between Cuba and Sub-Saharan African countries remains quite limited. The slim offerings of the Cuban economy primarily account for this failure. A severe economic crisis in the eighties forced Castro to reduce Cuba's African presence; the crisis even led to the closing of several embassies.

William Ratliff has an overriding theme in his assessment of Cuba's military activities in Sub-Saharan Africa: that the presence of Cuban armed forces in the region would not have been as decisive had Cuba not been able to combine its human resources with the logistic support of the Soviet Union and its Eastern European allies. An awareness of this complementarity is essential if one is to understand how a minor and economically underdeveloped regional Caribbean power was able to determine the outcome of a major African international conflagration (the Somalian–Ethiopian conflict), and assure the victory of the MPLA forces in the post-independence 1975 Angolan civil war.

Cuban–Soviet cooperation in African activities did not follow Moscow's dictates but resulted from a commonality of interests. The evidence is convincing, as Ratliff indicates, that, in at least some instances, Cuba led the Soviet Union into military ventures rather than the other way around. This is consistent with Castro's unshakable commitment to direct Cuba's foreign policy, although at times he has been forced to compromise his independence of action. The Cuban–Soviet joint ventures have not always run smoothly, however. Differences over military strategy have surfaced. In Angola, for example, the Cuban military is reported to have been displeased with what they regarded as timorous Soviet offensive tactics. The more daring tactical approach propounded by the Cubans was consonant with a desire to produce results concrete enough to justify to a

restless population at home more than a decade of involvement in a costly foreign venture. A dangerous Cuban drive toward the Angola-Namibia border in mid-1988 effectively validated the Cuban viewpoint, since this action was one of the main catalysts leading to the signing of the December 1988 peace accords.

Ratliff's overview is timely since he reminds the reader that the presence of Cuban military personnel in Africa did not begin with Angola and Ethiopia. As he notes, "in the early sixties, there was no African national liberation movement that did not count on solidarity from Cuba." And this solidarity manifested itself in more than rhetorical statements. As early as 1963, Cuba sent some 400 soldiers and equipment to Algeria to assist in a border conflict with Morocco. As noted previously, the 1965 conflict in the Congo witnessed several hundred Cuban soldiers fighting on behalf of the revolutionary Patricio Lumumba. In Guinea-Bissau, Portuguese colonial forces had to contend with a small but well-trained contingent of Cuban troops. While significant, these earlier military interventions were dwarfed by the eventual large scale commitment of Cuban military power in Angola and Ethiopia.

Geostrategic concerns, a feature of the increasing pragmatism of Cuba's African policies—a trend also highlighted by Nazario and Benemelis—increasingly influenced the nature of Cuban African military activities. The decisiveness with which Castro sided with the Mengistu regime in Addis Ababa and turned against Cuba's former Somali allies is the most poignant example. Cuba's other previous allies in the Horn of Africa, the Eritreans, experienced a less ominous threat. But Cuban support to Addis Ababa allowed Mengistu to concentrate his military might on the thus far unsuccessful effort to subdue the courageous rebel province. As Ratliff indicates, in its zeal to gain influence in the continent, Cuba has backed politically popular African causes, but, when necessary, has not hesitated to support some of Africa's most brutal and tyrannical regimes.

Cuba is the only Third World nation which has launched a worldwide foreign technical assistance program that rivals comparable efforts sponsored by small and mid-sized developed nations in both scope and coverage. In fact, in terms of the overall number of civilian technicians abroad, Cuba is near the top of all countries: tens of thousands of Cuban technicians serve overseas. Sub-Saharan African nations, in particular, have benefitted from the Cuban civilian assistance program. In the article coauthored by Jorge Pérez-López and myself, we offer a selective but systematic examination of how revolutionary Cuba is able to provide this assistance and the reasons why it

has chosen to do so. This analysis, based largely on Cuban sources, focuses on the three areas in which Cuban assistance has been concentrated. Two of these, not surprisingly, are social sectors—public health and education—in which Cuba is viewed as having made substantial progress. The alleged Cuban successes have even been touted as models that other developing countries should emulate.

Experiences accumulated domestically serve as building blocks for the foreign programs. Civilian assistance entails the provision of Cuban technicians, as well as highly ambitious training programs in the recipient country, and often in Cuba as well. Elementary and secondary education is offered to thousands of African youth in special Cuban schools, as well as advanced professional education for university graduates. Training opportunities are available in a variety of fields but especially in public health. Thousands of foreign physicians have graduated from Cuban medical schools, have received advanced training in Cuba, or have attended foreign medical schools that have been organized or are largely staffed by Cuban doctors. The best indicator of the magnitude of the Cuban international public health effort is the considerable number of Cuban physicians practicing in other nations. Havana is proud of having more Cuban physicians abroad than the number fielded by the World Health Organization.

Havana is known to have received compensation for some of these services, but in most cases the assistance is provided free of charge to needy countries. In exchange, Cuba gains increased prestige and influence abroad, particularly with beneficiary countries. Aid is provided as a solidarity gesture to other developing countries which, in Castro's eyes, have been victimized by centuries of colonialism and the onslaught of capitalism. The more significant and costly programs have operated in countries in which Cuba has made heavy military commitments, such as Angola and Ethiopia. It is not farfetched to assume that some of the so-called assistance programs were established in order to satisfy the needs of Cuban civilian and military personnel stationed in those countries.

More tangible returns have accrued to Cuba through the provision of the construction services abroad. Despite major domestic difficulties in this sector, Cuba has sold construction services to rich oil exporting countries. Angola is a case in point, but there are others in regions other than Sub-Saharan Africa (Libya and Iraq, for example). Not all seems to have gone well with the construction activities, however. Persistent rumors suggest that the quality of Cuban con-

struction leaves much to be desired. Similar complaints have occasionally been voiced about the efficacy of services Cuba grants in other fields, including social services. On balance, however, and given the tremendous need in most of Sub-Saharan Africa, Cuba has helped fill an immense demand for technicians.

Cuban–Mozambican relations exemplify the independent African policy followed by Havana since the sixties. Gillian Gunn, in an essay substantially based on confidential interviews conducted with Mozambican and U.S. officials, describes the cordial but often stormy relationship between the two nations. When Mozambique became independent in 1975, Cuba was a natural ally as Maputo embarked on its own socialist path—while besieged by South Africa and Rhodesia—and as FRELIMO began the difficult task of taking over the administration of a developing country. Cuba was in a position to offer security assistance and was well-equipped, for linguistic and other reasons, to provide urgently needed advisers and educational opportunities to help train a desperately needed corps of native technicians.

A murky and fluid relationship between Castro and a pre-independence FRELIMO, colored by Castro's leadership ambitions in the Third World, gave way to closer ties following the Portuguese withdrawal from Southern Africa. Similar tactical and ideological objectives were instrumental in bringing about this rapprochement, but a more intimate relationship was cemented by the mutual personal affinity between Samora Machel, Mozambique's leader, and Fidel Castro. The first encounter between the two leaders has been described by Mozambicans, according to Gunn, as "love at first sight."

Diverging national interests, perceptions at variance over the threats posed by each nation's most feared enemy, and disagreements over the Soviet Union's role in the nonaligned movement, gradually led to more independent political positions. Havana was uncomfortable with FRELIMO's overtures to South Africa, UNITA and Washington; Maputo was dissatisfied with the quality of some of the Cuban aid, and was concerned about the damage that could have resulted from Cuba's confrontational policies toward South Africa. These disagreements, however, took place in an environment of mutual respect and friendship. Machel's death in 1986 brought to power a more pragmatic and pro-Western Joaquim Chissano and a marked improvement in Maputo's relations with the West, including Washington. Gunn predicts continued cooperation between Cuba and Mozambique, but a cooperation that will increasingly emphasize civilian rather than military assistance. The eventual withdrawal of Cuban military forces from Angola will reinforce this trend.

The complex nature of Cuba's political and military involvement in Angola is reviewed by Olga Nazario. She notes that the massive military assistance Havana began to provide to the MPLA represented a dramatic leap in the nature and scale of Cuba's overseas activities. This signaled the beginning of a more daring internationalist policy and of a period in which revolutionary Cuba attained its greatest visibility and influence abroad. Major military victories in Africa (Angola, Ethiopia), coincided with equally important political gains much closer to home (a friendly Manley in power in Jamaica, Grenada, Nicaragua), as a hesitant United States struggled with its post-Vietnam syndrome. The unanticipated duration of the Angolan operation, and a changed international political environment—culminating with the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan—gradually transformed one of Castro's most ambitious and initially successful moves into a foreign policy nightmare. Savimbi and his UNITA forces, despite repeated attempts, could not be defeated in the field. Cuba's Angolan presence was losing the diplomatic support it had enjoyed from most African governments.

With the odds for a conclusive military victory dwindling, and with mounting superpower pressures to resolve regional conflicts, Castro eventually came to accept the inevitable. The negotiated peace in Southern Africa was at long last achieved, but according to terms that would have been unacceptable to Havana just a few months earlier. Castro, despite appearances to the contrary, may have some difficulties accounting for such limited gains. UNITA was not defeated and is still a serious threat to the MPLA regime. Further, the accords failed to address the issue of continued Western military assistance to the UNITA rebels, even though they call for an end to the presence of Cuban troops. While an orderly evacuation from Angola may help Havana cope with the country's grave economic crisis—by not being forced to abruptly absorb into the economy all the returning military and civilian personnel—it may also cast a long shadow over the already eroded fervor sustaining the revolutionary mystique.

Del Aguila, using data from confidential Radio Marti interviews conducted in 1986 and 1987 with emigrating Cubans, examines a topic never studied before: how Cubans view the country's military involvement in Angola. Despite considerable methodological shortcomings—the sample is composed of emigrants who are disaffected with conditions in revolutionary Cuba—the interview data reveals how segments of Cuban society became disillusioned with the Angolan predicament. The involvement, in both economic and human terms, has exacted a heavy political toll: some observers have sug-

gested that its domestic effects may be similar to those experienced by the United States in its Vietnam involvement.

According to the interviews, the war in Angola was the subject of everyday preoccupation, and many Cubans had strong negative feelings about its continuation. Few Cubans vocalize their feelings, however, given the degree of internal political control. Cuba's Angolan war, in del Aguila's own words, was "sustained without having to fear overt reaction to it." Nevertheless, Angola has served to change the meaning of internationalist activities. Internationalism, once a prestigious and commendable revolutionary duty—and one that also brought substantial material payoffs—increasingly became a lackluster obligation that no longer provided moral and financial rewards. Particularly for the young who must bear the brunt of military service, rejection of the Angolan war translates into disenchantment with the revolution's internationalist policies. In del Aguila's view, the war's unpopularity served as a major incentive, along with other factors, for Castro's willingness to negotiate the 1988 peace accords.

Jeff Herbst and Jaime Suchlicki (see Appendix A) provide two sharply different assessments of the prospects for the December 1988 accords. Herbst traces the developments leading to the unexpected signing of the accords after many years of fruitless efforts. He strongly feels that a key determinant was the daring military move toward the Angola–Namibia border made by the Cuban expeditionary force in late 1987. This action changed the regional security equation. The until then uncontested South African military superiority was challenged by the Cuban gambit. South Africa refused to accept the challenge, given the high risks and excessive human and financial costs doing so would have entailed. Evolving Soviet regional interests brought pressure to bear on the Angolans and their Cuban allies. The U.S. mediation served a significant and highly unusual role for a superpower without diplomatic relations with either Angola or Cuba. The strained relationship between Washington and Pretoria complicated the mediation even further.

Herbst and Suchlicki differ with regard to whom they consider to be the winners and losers. Both concur that the agreements grant Havana a welcome opportunity to withdraw from Angola. Namibia is a big winner, too, since it gains its independence. The MPLA government in Angola will benefit by the establishment of an independent Namibia that will act as a buffer against future South African military incursions. Suchlicki sees Jonas Savimbi and his UNITA as big losers since, in the absence of South African support, the rebel forces will be

badly weakened. Herbst's assessment is different. He foresees a stalemate, with the MPLA government as weakened by the Cuban withdrawal as is UNITA without direct South African military support.

The crucial difference between the two analysts, however, is with respect to the future role of the United States in Southern Africa. Herbst's response is unequivocable: in view of the Soviet retrenchment, the accords give the United States a golden opportunity to lead the region in search of constructive solutions to many of its problems. Suchlicki, on the other hand, judges the agreements to be a major defeat for U.S. foreign policy: they will inexorably result in the consolidation of a Marxist government in Angola and in the establishment of a new one in Namibia, once SWAPO—as most observers expect—assumes power in the newly independent nation. Further, the nature of the agreements allows Castro to minimize the burden of the military exit from Angola since it permits the phased withdrawal of the troops, thereby minimizing domestic absorption problems, a development Suchlicki regards as counter to American interests.

Suchlicki and Herbst disagree, finally, in their evaluation of Havana's commitment to its withdrawal from Angola. The enforceability of this provision of the accords, once South Africa completes its early military withdrawal and Namibia attains independence, has been questioned. Suchlicki believes the MPLA and Cuba will use the time interval between the South African withdrawal and that of Cuban forces to attempt once again to crush UNITA. In Herbst's view, this scenario is unlikely as long as the Soviet Union remains on a steadfast course of reducing its presence in Southern Africa. This interpretation is consistent with Ratliff's thesis that the military significance of Cuba is contingent upon the support it receives from the Soviet Union. The skeptical Suchlicki won't be surprised if Cuba decides to disguise a continued military presence while claiming to have completed the withdrawal. This viewpoint is shared by the equally suspicious Ratliff.

The volume closes with a thorough analytical bibliographical assessment of the sources available for the study of Cuba's involvement in Sub-Saharan Africa. Included are Cuban and foreign sources. A contrast is drawn between the lively exchanges seen in the Western literature and the more ideological socialist sources, in particular the more doctrinaire Cuban literature. Earlier bibliographies are evaluated; in conjunction with the contribution of René Pérez-López, these earlier compilations provide a comprehensive survey of the literature of great utility to the novice or experienced investigator interested in Cuba's internationalist activities in Africa.

1/Cuba's Relations with Africa: An Overview

Olga Nazario and Juan F. Benemelis

INTRODUCTION

Cuba's internationalism in Africa, particularly the military aspect, continues to arouse notable interest among scholars in the United States and Europe. Most works on the subject tend to focus on Cuba's relations with the Soviet Union in order to explain Cuba's objectives as well as the seeming degree of independence Cuba enjoys in Africa. This level of analysis is used mainly because Cuba's relatively wide international projection is unusual for a country with such limited resources. It is generally accepted that, in Africa, Cuba is neither a proxy of the Soviet Union nor a totally autonomous actor.

Unlike the attention the subject has received in the West, Cuban-African interaction has generated relatively little research on the part of Cuban and African scholars. While an abundance of official rhetoric can be heard on both sides of the Atlantic, little critical assessment of this complex and important relationship has been made. Because the Cuban government carefully guards hard data regarding its African activities, Cuban scholarly research on the subject will probably not surface unless the winds of *glasnost* reach the island.[1] Moreover, the scarcity of research conducted by Africans themselves deprives us of a valuable mirror, in which we could view both the extent and effectiveness of Cuban initiatives in the region as well as Cuba's contribution to two major African concerns: stability and development. Unfortunately, many African authors often tend to

---

Opinion, views and conclusions expressed or implied in this article are solely those of the authors and do not represent the views of the Radio Martí Program, the Voice of America, the U.S. Information Agency, or any other government agency.

group all military and civilian cooperation received from the Socialist bloc together, rather than distinguishing between aid given by Cuba, the Soviet Union or Eastern Europe. One is left to wonder if this is because African students find Cuba's role in their region much less significant than do their counterparts in the West.

Despite the lack of a comprehensive view of Cuba's involvement in Africa, this is perhaps the key factor that explains its visibility on the international scene. Contact with Africa, one of the most significant initiatives of the Cuban Revolution, has extended the scope and reach of Cuba's international relations further than ever before. No other Latin American country—not even Brazil which also has a dynamic African policy—has yet matched Cuba's far-reaching commitments in the African continent. The development and continuity of Cuba's relations with Africa have to a great extent been facilitated by Fidel Castro's long tenure in power. Other Latin American countries also attempted diplomatic initiatives toward Africa's newly independent countries in the early sixties, but their initiatives were soon thwarted when their countries suffered abrupt changes in government.[2]

Among Cuba's wide-ranging activities in Africa—some more successful than others—military involvement and civilian internationalist cooperation figure as the most prominent. These two aspects of Cuban activities, dealt with extensively in the following chapters, have involved guerrilla training to liberation movement combatants, the deployment of thousands of soldiers in at least two countries, as well as the provision of teachers, doctors, technicians, construction workers, etc., to several African countries.

This internationalist cooperation frequently overshadows Cuba's more traditional diplomatic, political and economic relations with Africa. This paper briefly traces the evolution of the Revolution's African policy, emphasizing Cuba's formal relations with African countries. It offers a review of the early periods of Cuba's African involvement, providing some background for the more specific issues dealt with in the following chapters.

WHY AFRICA?

Most studies on Cuba's foreign policy conclude that one of its primary objectives has been to ensure the survival of the Revolution. The maneuverings and alignments deemed necessary to achieve that end have been made in accordance with the moment in history in which the Revolution took place and with the Cuban leadership's

interpretation of the international situation it has confronted at any given moment. The policy toward Africa, to different degrees and through different means, reflects this survivalist objective.

Cuba initially established contacts with African countries in search of Third World solidarity with the Cuban Revolution. When the Revolution triumphed in 1959, the Cuban leadership viewed the international situation as entering a new, "essentially revolutionary" era, one that offered new alternatives for the underdeveloped world. Just four years earlier, in the midst of the Cold War, a group of leaders who had emerged from the recent anticolonial struggles waged in Africa and Asia met in Bandung, Indonesia, to declare their resistance to the centripetal force of the major powers. They proclaimed that all small countries had the right to self-determination, to remain neutral in the face of the East-West conflict, and to be respected and not threatened by the major powers. These leaders agreed on the need for solidarity among the underdeveloped countries. In this spirit, shortly after their meeting, these countries sided first with Egypt during the Suez Canal Crisis (1956), and later with the insurgents in the Algerian war (1954–1962).

Idealistic and nationalistic Cuban officials were encouraged by these developments. They felt that their revolution was not an isolated case. In fact, they found similarities between the Cuban Revolution and those in Vietnam, Indonesia and China, among others, in terms of their anti-imperialist struggle and desire to transform Cuban society. They drew a parallel between their plan for the Cuban economy and Egypt's nationalization of the Suez Canal, and they felt a kinship between their own revolutionary government and those liberation movements seeking to end colonialism in Africa, particularly with the Algerian struggle against French rule.[3] The fact that a young, inexperienced but charismatic Fidel Castro suddenly shared the world stage with such contemporary Third World leaders as Ghana's Kwame Nkruma, India's Jawaharlal Nehru, Egypt's Abdel Gamal Nasser, Yugoslavia's Josef Tito and Indonesia's Sukarno, and that the Revolution was favorably received by the Afro-Asian countries, enthused Cuban revolutionaries.[4]

As the "self-fulfilling prophesy"[5] of inevitable conflict with its immediate and most powerful neighbor rapidly materialized, Cuba sought solidarity with the Afro-Asian world, hoping its support would help to safeguard the Revolution in the face of aggression. "Cuba needs solidarity," the chief of the regional department of the Cuban foreign ministry explained in 1960, "and has to find it among all the countries that are joined by the same [colonial] patterns of

economic penetration, disrespect for sovereignty, pressure, and vassalage to which all underdeveloped countries are subject."[6]

Cuba also reached toward Africa to comply with the objectives of its new independent foreign policy. Two fundamental objectives of the new policy were the expansion of markets and of Cuba's diplomatic and cultural links with all countries. As early as June 1959, Cuba's legendary revolutionary, Ernesto "Che" Guevara, traveled to several of the nonaligned Afro-Asian countries, Egypt, India, Indonesia and Yugoslavia, among others. The purpose of Guevara's trip was to search for markets for Cuba's sugar in anticipation of a cut in the U.S. quota, to acquire weapons in Yugoslavia, and to secure Nasser's and the Arab world's support of Cuba.[7]

As part of the new foreign policy, Cuba also committed itself to supporting those issues that concerned the Afro-Asian world. At his first attendance at the United Nations General Assembly in September 1959, Foreign Minister Raúl Roa joined the rest of the Afro-Asian countries in calling for the elimination of apartheid in South Africa and in supporting the self-determination of the other African colonies, particularly the struggle of the peoples of Angola, Mozambique and Guinea (Bissau) against Portugal. Moreover, in 1961, when the Afro-Asian leaders took the initiative in creating the Non-Aligned Movement, Cuba attended the first conference held in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, becoming the only Latin American country to request membership at the time.

Despite growing ties to the Afro-Asian world, this solidarity was not enough to deter the threat of U.S. aggression as perceived by the Cuban leadership. In the early sixties, at the Organization of American States, many Latin American nations were supporting the United States in its attempt to isolate Cuba from the region. Because of its geographical location, it is highly unlikely that Cuba could have, in the early sixties, cut its economic, political and military ties with the United States and sustained a nonaligned position as did Egypt, India or Ghana. By mid-1960, when Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev said that the Soviet Union would defend Cuba in the event of U.S. aggression, the Cuban leaders highlighted that, among those who had declared solidarity with Cuba, the support of the socialist countries was becoming more evident every day.[8]

Cuba's policy toward Africa, initially an essential part of Cuba's effort to expand its international role and secure solidarity and foreign support for the Cuban Revolution, was soon radicalized. Although many African colonies attained independence in 1960 (e.g., Dahomey, Upper Volta, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Gabon, Ivory

Coast, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, Togo and Congo-Kinshasa), Cuba did not immediately seek ties with all of them; it only established relations with those countries that were seen as truly revolutionary, namely Guinea, Mali and Ghana.

After the 1961 victory at the Bay of Pigs, Cuban leaders became more belligerent toward the United States and any country supporting U.S. policies. Fidel Castro redefined the objectives of Cuba's foreign policy, and Havana committed itself to the anti-imperialist struggle:

> We cannot consider ourselves at peace with an imperialism that constantly increases its efforts to strangle us. . . . And this situation will determine our international conduct. . . . They are our enemies and we will know how to be their enemies. This situation will determine our policy on the international scene, in the United Nations, and everywhere else.[9]

Between 1959 and 1963, however, Cuba's foreign policy was inconsistent. The undisputed Cuban leader and main architect of Cuba's foreign policy, Fidel Castro, struggled between the need to insure his personal power internally and the search for logistical support for what would become Cuba's internationalist foreign policy. Nonetheless, the policy toward Africa received increasing attention as Cuba became isolated from the Western Hemisphere.[10]

INTERNATIONALISM

Cuba's initial support to guerrilla groups in Africa delayed the establishment of formal diplomatic, political and economic relations with most countries in the region. Frustrated by Latin America's growing support for the U.S. attempt to isolate Cuba, Fidel Castro embarked on a cross-regional policy of supporting subversive activities. The global interests of the world powers did not include Africa as a priority area, which allowed Castro greater room to maneuver in that region.

Through Cuba's actions in Africa and Latin America, Castro attempted to validate the guerrilla "foco" theory as a means to reach power. These activities were also expected to be the catalyst that would alter subjective conditions and promote revolutions. They also were to create the image that Cuba was independent from the Soviet Union, as well as offer Africa a development alternative—the Cuban model:

> The path of the Revolution, the path followed by Cuba, although it may be long and hard, is the only path that promises the people a secure future, a great and stable future.[11]

Revolutions similar to the Cuban were expected to take place in Latin America, but conditions in Africa were also viewed as propitious for armed struggle. On one hand, many of the remaining colonies were struggling for independence. On the other, in most African nations, independence awakened the hopes and expectations of the masses and their leaders. Sovereignty was expected to be a magic formula that would automatically promote or generate social and economic development.

Shortly after independence, the masses began to demand immediate material solutions and with few exceptions, the new elites were unprepared to confront the complexity and magnitude of the social, economic and political problems inherited from the colonizers. Marxist economic theories of centralization and freedom from the capitalist international division of labor appeared easy and attractive solutions. Extremist groups also pressured for armed struggle against institutional powers.

Cuba was willing to assist those in Africa who were committed to the armed struggle. By 1962, Fidel Castro had cemented close ties with Algeria's leader Ben Bella. Because of Algeria's then recent success in its liberation struggle, that country became a main center for the training of guerrillas in Africa. It was there, as well as later in Tanzania and in the Congo-Brazzaville, that Cubans participated in the training of insurgents from Namibia, Rhodesia, Zanzibar, Senegal, Cameroon, Nigeria, South Africa, the Belgium Congo and others. Some of these nationals struggled against the colonial regime in their countries; others opposed the post-independence governments in power. By 1964, Cubans had become directly involved in the Congo crisis, where Che Guevara unsuccessfully led a group of guerrillas.[12]

The guerrilla offensives of the sixties did not achieve the expected results either in Africa or in Latin America. Furthermore, these activities countered the Soviet policy of expanding diplomatic and commercial relations with all countries and supporting those communist parties that were following peaceful roads to power. Thus, starting in 1972, Cuba began to align itself more closely with the Soviet line and initiated its first diplomatic initiative toward Africa.

But, both Cuba and the Soviet Union—in close coordination—substantially increased military assistance to African liberation move-

ments in the early seventies. As Portugal's empire in Africa crumbled in 1974, Cuba sent a small military contingent to support the African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde (PAIGC), modestly assisted Mozambique's Liberation Front (FRELIMO), and deployed several thousand troops in Angola to ensure the victory of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) in 1975. Between 1977–78, Cuban troops were sent to assist Ethiopia in its dispute with Somalia over the Ogaden region. These African campaigns legitimized what had until then been a loose concept: *internationalism*.

In 1976, the Cuban constitution formalized internationalism as the guiding principle of the nation's foreign policy. Defined not only as an ideology but also as a course of action that guides Cuba's international behavior, Cuban officials explain that internationalism assumes an anti-imperialist nature because of Cuba's close alliance with the Soviet Union. Internationalism is based on "an appreciation of the real course of the historical development of class struggle at the local and international level."[13] According to Fidel Castro, the sacred duty of a revolutionary in no longer just to make revolutions, but rather to be an "internationalist."[14]

The successful commitment to internationalism, as seen in the recent Angolan and Ethiopian military operations, increased Cuba's confidence in its policy toward Africa. Nevertheless, Cuba surprisingly did not return to the earlier policy of fomenting revolutions or supporting almost any group that opposed perceived reactionary governments. Instead, Cuba became more selective and only supported specific groups such as the African National Congress, the Southwest Africa People's Organization, the Polisario Front, the Zimbabwe African People's Union, and later the Zimbabwe African National Union—all classified as liberation movements. All these movements enjoyed the recognition and support of most African countries. Cuban policy was increasingly geared toward nurturing the revolutionary governments that espoused Marxism-Leninism as their country's ideology and toward the expansion of state-to-state relations with all African countries.[15]

The term "internationalism," however, now encompasses an extremely complex amalgam of nongovernmental and intergovernmental relations that daily flood the Cuban media. It is frequently used by the Cuban leadership primarily to exalt the unselfishness of the Cuban Revolution and to exact support from its population. While initially understood to mean Cuba's generous support to liberation movements or to governments in the process of consolidating a

socialist movement, since the mid-seventies the term also has been used to refer to activities generally known as *export of services*. Ironically, Cuba does not boast about its staunchest gestures of internationalist solidarity. Activities such as procuring weapons from the Palestinians to ensure a constant flow to the Nicaraguan government and to El Salvador's guerrillas are rarely exposed in the Cuban media.[16]

Formal Diplomatic and Political Relations with Africa

Cuba's diplomatic and political relations with Africa were very limited in the sixties and even in the seventies. The development of these customary ties were sacrificed for the sake of fomenting world revolution. Initially, relations were established only with governments in Africa that shared a similar revolutionary zeal. In 1964, the involvement of the capitalist countries in the Congo crisis convinced Cuban officials they needed a greater presence in Africa. Still, Cuba established diplomatic relations with only those countries identified as the most progressive, both because of their support for the deposed Congolese leader, Patricio Lumumba, and because of their opposition to the Western powers' meddling in the Belgium Congo—today Zaire. Up until 1972, Cuba only had diplomatic representatives in Algeria, Egypt, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Morocco, Tunisia, Sudan, Congo-Brazzaville and Tanzania, although most of Africa was already independent.

Cuba did not develop its relations with Sub-Saharan Africa with ease. Cuban revolutionaries failed to understand African socialism. The symbolism, naturalism and agrarian communal spirit of the African masses could not be categorized under strict Marxist-Leninist ideology. This lack of understanding of African realities accounts for many of Cuba's decisions reflecting poor judgment, such as Cuba's miscalculation on the prospect of guerrilla warfare in Congo; paternalism toward Ghana's Kwame Nkruma; and the inability to convince francophone African leaders, such as Senegal's Leopold Sedar Senghor and Ivory Coast's Felix Houphouet Boigy, of Cuba's independence from the Soviet Union. Cuba had greater ease in developing relations with northern Arab Africa.

Although Cuba had diplomatic relations with few African countries in the early sixties, it did make an effort to develop economic and cultural ties with those countries. Egypt was the only African country to sign a commercial agreement with Cuba in 1959, but agreements

with other countries followed shortly. Trade or commercial agreements were signed with Morocco (1961), Ghana (1962), Mali (1962) and Algeria (1963). Cultural cooperation agreements were signed with Guinea (1960), Egypt (1960), Mali (1964) and Ghana (1967).[17]

In 1965, Cuba signed the first scientific-technical agreements that would spearhead its program of civilian cooperation, or export of services, with many African countries. An agreement reached with Algeria was established for the provision of Cuban medical assistance to that country. A similar agreement was signed with Egypt providing for the exchange of scientists, students and physicians.[18]

Algeria was the centerpiece of Cuba's relations with Africa in the sixties. Cuba had sent 50 Cuban doctors to Algeria shortly after that country's independence in 1962 as a gesture of internationalist solidarity, and in 1963, Cuba sent men and weapons to support Algeria in a border skirmish with Morocco. More traditional relations with Algeria were developed after a brief cooling of contacts following the overthrow of the Algerian leader and Cuba's close friend, Ben Bella. In 1968, Cuba agreed to cooperate with Algeria in the fields of education, radio, television, journalism, sports, arts and culture.[19] In the late sixties, cooperation with Algeria took a qualitative and quantitative step. An agreement signed in September 1969 stipulated that Cuba would establish and staff a center for training medical and public health specialists in Mostaragem, Algeria. This was followed by the provision of a medical contingent sent later to staff the Ernesto Che Guevara Hospital, also in Mostaragem.

During the early seventies, close relations continued. In 1970, visa requirements for Cuban and Algerian nationals traveling between the two countries were eliminated. Agreements were also reached for the exchange of graduate students, musicians, radio and television programs. Cooperation between the two countries also included the training of Cuban petroleum technicians in Algeria. In 1973, Cuba and Algeria signed their first political cooperation agreement, calling for cooperation and exchange of delegations and information between two Cuban organizations—Cuban Central Workers Union (CTC) and the Cuban National Association of Small Farmers—and the Farmers Union of Algeria.[20]

The breadth of cooperation Cuba established with Algeria was unprecedented in Cuba's meager formal relations with other African countries. Such cooperation was nonexistent with Sub-Saharan Africa and would not be matched (and excelled) until the late seventies, when Cuba established close ties with the Angolan government.

In the seventies, Cuba launched its major diplomatic offensive

toward Africa. More closely aligned to the Soviet policy of developing formal ties with most African countries, Cuba established diplomatic relations with many states that had obtained independence in the early sixties but that it had previously viewed as reactionary. For instance, in 1972 Cuba formalized relations with Sierra Leone, Somalia, Zambia, Mauritania and Equatorial Guinea. In 1974 it established diplomatic relations with Dahomey (Benin), Burundi, Gabon, Madagascar, Zaire, Liberia, Uganda, Nigeria, Senegal, Cameroon and Guinea-Bissau.

After 1975, Cuba became more willing to establish relations with newly independent nations. Angola, Mozambique and Cape Verde were rapidly recognized as new, independent nations in 1975. Cuba also established relations with Ethiopia in 1975, following the overthrow of Haile Selassie. Between 1976 and 1979, Cuba established relations with most of the remaining African countries: Libya, Niger, Chad, Mauritus, Comoros, Botswana, Malvides, Seychelles, Gambia, Lesotho, Rwanda and Togo. In 1980, Cuba immediately recognized Zimbabwe when it became independent.

After its independence, Angola became the centerpiece of Cuban policy in Africa. In addition to the deployment of thousands of Cuban troops in that country, other intergovernmental relations were rapidly established. The extensive list of agreements signed in 1976 depicts the depth of Cuba's relations with the new nation (see Appendix, p. 27). In subsequent years, Cuba has continued to strengthen its intergovernmental relations with Angola, and has found in Angola one of its most important sources of interlocution in Africa.[21]

Since the mid-seventies, Cuba has displayed a more pragmatic approach in the development of diplomatic, political and economic relations with countries which do not share its ideological zeal. This flexibility allowed Cuba to practically complete its initial objective of expanding relations in the mid-eighties. Relations are no longer strictly conditioned by ideological considerations. Instead, economic interests have also become an important element in reaching toward African countries. In fact, the increased emphasis on pragmatism has allowed for ties certainly unthought of in the past. For example, Cuba has intensified its technical-scientific cooperation with Mobuto Seke Sekou's government in Zaire, and in 1986 it established diplomatic relations with Felix Houphouet Boigy's government in the Ivory Coast. Both leaders of these nonrevolutionary governments were staunch foes of Cuba in the sixties; what is more, in the eighties both Zaire and the Ivory Coast were known to be major supporters of the

Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), the insurgents combatting the Cuban-supported MPLA government in Angola.

Despite the expansion and diversification of relations with many African countries, Cuba does not maintain close ties with all of them. In terms of political links, Cuba remains closer to countries whose governments espouse at least some socialist orientation, such as Angola, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Mozambique, Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. Countries that are more western-oriented maintain diplomatic relations with Cuba, but political and economic ties are usually kept at a lower level of importance.[22]

Another angle of Cuba's pragmatic approach to Africa is the more cautious reaction to the overthrow of friendly governments. By the mid-eighties, Cuba abstained from breaking relations with countries when a close ally was deposed. For example, when Thomas Sankara, leader of Burkina Faso's revolution and Cuba's close friend, was assassinated in October 1987 by his close collaborator, Blaise Campaoré, Cuba did not break relations with that country. Cuba condemned the lack of unity among revolutionaries but continued relations with the new government.[23] Another example of this phenomenon of strong state-to-state relations regardless of changing leaders is Cuba's relationship with Uganda. These relations have been unaffected by coup d'etats, regardless of the ideologies they have imposed.

Cuba's African policy has earned significant political returns at the international level. Many African countries have supported Cuban positions at international organizations on such issues as U.S. control of the Guantanamo base, support for the Nicaraguan government, Puerto Rican independence and other topics that have directly opposed U.S. policies. Most significantly, it was the support of the African nations that awarded Fidel Castro the chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1979. Also, at the Organization of African Unity, member states consistently supported the Angolan and Cuban position of refusing to link the independence of Namibia with the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola, despite their support for a political settlement to those conflicts.[24]

In addition, African heads of states frequently visit Cuba at the invitation of Fidel Castro. The Cuban media portray these visits as manifestations of the degree of solidarity Cuba has obtained with the African world. Almost every week, high Cuban government officials and their African counterparts hold meetings of joint economic or scientific commissions. While some visits are motivated by the internal

concerns of a particular African country, Cuba is often a stopover for African leaders who are visiting other countries in Latin America or attending the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

Export of Goods and Services

Cuba's increased pragmatism has allowed for the development of economic and technical cooperation with many African countries. Cuba has established joint economic commissions and has signed scientific-technical agreements with practically all the countries with which it maintains diplomatic relations. These agreements cover a wide range of interactions, from cultural exchanges to cooperation in the fields of health, fishing, education and others.

Cuba's cooperation with Marxist or socialist countries has included training of national militias, assisting in creating mass organizations, and the providing of military advisers, as well as medical and security personnel for African chiefs-of-state. All these activities are conducted by mutual agreement between Cuba and the host government. Most of the interchange is part of Cuba's export of services or transfer of know-how to Africa, for which it is duly compensated. However, Cuba also provides assistance free of charge to poor African nations.

Cuba claims that its capacity to export technical services resulted primarily from the transfer of technology it acquired between 1971 and 1975. High sugar prices during that period lured Western Europe, Japan, Canada and Argentina to grant loans and credit to Cuba, which in turn allowed Cuba to import technical knowledge.[25] From a net importer of technology and technical services, Cuba became an exporter of them. Some of the services Cuba exports to Africa are: feasibility studies for industrial and agricultural projects; engineering projects for small towns; turn-key projects in the sugar industry, cement plants and others; training for hotel management personnel; and consulting services for various types of projects.[26]

Exporting services has an advantage for the Cuban government: through it Cuba can accrue foreign exchange without having to make major initial investments, sacrifice raw material, or follow other typical requirements of exporting goods. It is expected, according to Cuban sources, that the export of services will soon become one of the most significant revenue-earning exports of Cuba. Although Cuba does not disclose figures in its annual statistical reports, Havana's main African customers for its export of services are Algeria,

Mozambique, Angola, Seychelles and Congo.[27] Cuba, however, faces stiff competition for its services to Africa from the industrialized West European countries, as well as from Brazil, Yugoslavia, East Germany, China and Bulgaria, among others.

Despite the expansion of diplomatic relations, Cuba's trade with Africa has remained limited. In fact, trade is probably the least developed of the broad range of interaction that Cuba sustains with the region. In general, there is a lack of parity in commercial relations between Cuba and most of Africa, and there are several possible reasons for this. One might be that just like Cuba, many African countries export—not import—food. In 1980, Cuba's export of food items totalled 89.2 percent of its total exports, the highest of any Latin American nation; Cuba's export of manufactured goods totalled only 0.3 percent of its total exports.[28] Cuba cannot provide African countries with the manufactured or semi-factured goods they usually import from other developing countries. On the other hand, Cuba's endemic lack of foreign exchange has reduced its capability to import from Africa.

Nevertheless, Cuba has diversified its markets toward Africa, thus satisfying one of the original objectives of its foreign policy. In fact, Cuba ranks among the few Latin American countries which have tapped the African markets. Although Cuba exported only 8.3 percent of its total exports for 1980 to the developing world, 4.2 percent went to Africa. In comparison, in 1983, Brazil and Argentina exported 4.4 percent and 3.2 percent respectively to Africa while over 20 percent of their total exports went to the developing world.[29] Indeed, Cuba probably has expanded trade with Africa not only by choice, but because of a lack of significant trade partners in the developing countries of Latin America. Many of those countries broke relations with Cuba in the early sixties and did not resume them again until after 1975.

Cuba's trade with Africa, however is highly unbalanced. Of a total of 102,087 thousand pesos (Table 1) traded in 1985, 78,296 are total Cuban exports to Africa, while total imports from Africa amounted to only 23,791 thousand pesos.

Cuba's primary good, sugar, is basically the only good exported to Africa. As a result of its worsening economic situation and the decline in the prices of sugar, as well as the growing commercial dependency on its Socialist bloc partners, Cuba's total trade with Africa has declined gradually since 1981. For example, its total trade in 1986 amounted to only 77,833 thousand pesos. This declining trend may be related, however, to the downward swing in Cuba's total world

Table 1: Cuba's trade in goods (thousands of pesos)

	1958	1970	1975	1980	1985
Africa[a]	14,666	28,973	117,557	237,396	102,087
America[b]	1,172,045	41,780	337,127	532,055	452,403
Asia[c]	82,933	298,334	868,322	732,338	787,807

[a]Includes North and Sub-Saharan Africa.
[b]Includes Canada, the United States, Latin America and the Caribbean.
[c]Includes the Near and the Far East.
Source: Comité Central de Estadísticas, *Anuario Estadístico de Cuba, 1986* (Ciudad de la Habana: 1987).

Table 2: Cuba's trade with Africa (thousands of pesos)

	1958	1970	1975	1980	1985
Algeria	211	7,621	24,633	93,914	23,130
Morocco	12,065	14,141	42,960	—	—
Egypt	19	4,530	7,123	50,084	22,325
Sudan	5	1,228	10,768	—	—
Congo-Brazzaville	—	441	173	358	447
Others	2,366	992	31,900	93,040	56,185

Source: Comité Estatal de Estadísticas, *Anuario Estadístico de Cuba, 1986,* (Ciudad de la Habana: 1987).

trade. Specifically, Cuba's total world trade also declined from 5,534,907 thousand pesos in 1983 to 5,325,012 in 1986.[30]

Despite its wide range of diplomatic relations with many African countries—the largest perhaps of any Latin American country—Cuba does not enjoy a variety of trade partners in Africa. North African countries remain Cuba's traditional partners. Trade with "other," nonidentified countries has increased substantially (Table 2), including trade with Angola; nevertheless, Cuban sources do not provide a breakdown of countries, nor is there an explanation as to why trade with Sudan has ceased. Morocco ended its trade with Cuba when it broke relations with the Caribbean island due to Castro's support for the Polisario Front in Western Sahara.

CONCLUSION

At its genesis, the Cuban Revolution embraced foreign policy goals also shared by other Latin American countries. These goals included a desire to break, or at least reduce, dependency on the United States and to increase the capacity to maneuver in world affairs, as well as to expand and diversify diplomatic, political and economic relations toward nontraditional areas. In Cuba's case, these goals were attained in the early sixties, but the elimination of the political opposition to Castro and his subsequent monopolization of Cuba's foreign policy decision-making led Cuba into a new kind of dependency and through a process atypical in Latin America.

Castro's resentment of the United States, his espousal of Marxist-Leninist ideology and alliance with the Soviet Union became the forces that have steered the Revolution's foreign policy. Within these parameters, Castro has sought to maneuver in ways that enhance his domestic power and international prestige as well as contribute to expanding Cuba's presence and influence in world affairs.

Cuba's African policy has experienced victories and setbacks under Castro. The regime's early efforts to duplicate the Cuban model failed in both Africa and Latin America. Nevertheless, Cuba's contacts with guerrilla groups in the sixties reaped rewards in the seventies. The infrastructure that had been created in terms of personal relationships, intelligence gathering and logistical support allowed Cuba to respond boldly to new targets of opportunity—especially in Guinea-Bissau and in Angola—and to escalate Cuban military activities in Africa.

Its emphasis on military activities, though, retarded the expansion of formal relations with many African nations, an early goal of the Revolution. Nevertheless, despite a late start, Cuba's ties with Africa are impressive. Havana maintains diplomatic relations with more than 40 African countries and has embassies in not less than 30 of them. This record is unmatched by any other Latin American country, much less by those with resources as limited as Cuba. While the cost of these ties may seem prohibitive for Cuba,[31] such a presence in Africa provides it with firsthand information on the internal situations of many countries in the region. It also serves to convince the Cuban population that in spite of being isolated from Latin America, Cuba has many friends in the Third World.

Cuba's broad diplomatic, political and military ties to Africa contrast markedly with the inability to develop strong economic links with the region. The weak economic interchange is not due to a lack

of interest on Cuba's part. Since the late seventies, delegations from Cuba's foreign trade institutions routinely shuffle from one country to another, looking for customers and signing agreements intended to stimulate interchange between Cuba and potential African partners. The reason for poor economic ties lies basically in Cuba's own stagnant economic development. Cuba has failed to diversify its export products, suffers deficiencies in quality and delivery of goods and services exported, and is unable to offer substantial financing to African nations. Cuba cannot compete with Brazil or Argentina on the variety and quality of goods and services these countries export to the developing world. Nor can it compete with Libya or Saudi Arabia on the financing they can offer.

The importance of economic contact with Africa, however, rests in the future potential of these ties. With the groundwork for economic interchange established, Africa could welcome Cuban goods and services if and when Cuban capacity to export them increases or if a decrease in Havana's trade commitments to the Socialist bloc occurs, which would liberate Cuban products for the international market. The same conditions would apply to Cuba's capacity to import. Still, the experience of other Third World countries' trade with Africa suggests that South-South commercial relations provide diversification but are not a substitute for North-South trade.

Despite the emphasis on internationalist military cooperation, Cuba's formal ties with African countries are, in the long run, more important than its prominent troop deployments. Cuba's diplomatic, political and economic relations with Africa enjoy more autonomy that the country's military activities and are therefore not as vulnerable to repercussions from shifts in Soviet policy. Nor are these formal ties affected drastically by changes in government or ideologies; breaking diplomatic relations is an exception, not a norm. It is therefore almost certain that Cuba's formal, nonmilitary relations with Africa will persist long after the last Cuban soldier has left African soil, and that they will survive into the post-Castro era.

Appendix

Agreements Signed Between Cuba and Angola in 1976

—The ministries of Public Health of Cuba and of Angola agreed that Cuban medical and paramedical personnel would staff hospital and clinics in Angola.

—The Cuban National Institute for Sports, Physical Education and Recreation, and the Directorate for Youth and Sports of Angola, set the basis for cooperation in sports, organization, training of specialists, and exchange of athletes.

—The Cuban-Angolan Intergovernmental Commission for Economics and Scientific-Technical Cooperation was created for cooperation in the fields of fishing, construction, public health, foreign trade, education, labor, poultry breeding, etc.

—Direct cooperation between the Cuban National Fishing Institute and the Angolan State Secretariat for Fishing was established.

—The Cuban Communist Party and the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) agreed to cooperate in the field of revolutionary propaganda.

—Direct cooperation in domestic trade was established between the Cuban Domestic Trade Ministry and the Angolan State Secretariat for Commerce.

—Direct cooperation between the Cuban Foreign Trade Ministry and the Angolan State Secretariat for Commerce was established for cooperation in foreign trade.

—Direct cooperation in the sugar industry was established between the Cuban Sugar Industry Ministry and the Angolan State Secretariat for Industry and Energy.

—Political cooperation in the training of Angolan cadres was established between the Cuban Union of Communist Youths and the Youth of the MPLA.

—The Labor Ministries of Cuba and Angola agreed on exchanges in the areas of labor, resources, wages, work organization, social security, administration of work justice, etc.

Source: Jorge F. Pérez-López and Rene Pérez-López, *A Calendar of Cuban Bilateral Agreements, 1959–1976*, (Pittsburgh, PA: University Center for International Studies, 1980).

—Cuba agreed to provide assistance to Angola in the field of agriculture, with special emphasis on coffee cultivation. Cooperation included both work to be performed by Cuban workers and technicians as well as training of Angolan personnel. Similar agreements were signed for technical cooperation in the areas of education, forestry, public health and transportation.

—The Cuban Communications Ministry and the Angolan State Secretariat for Industry and Energy agreed to cooperate in the area of communications.

—The Cuban Ministry of Light Industry and the Angolan State Secretariat for Industry and Energy agreed to cooperate in manufacturing furniture.

—The Cuban Group for Community Development and the Angolan State Secretariat for Social Affairs agreed to cooperate in the development of urban and rural communities.

3/Internationalist Civilian Assistance: The Cuban Presence in Sub-Saharan Africa

Sergio Díaz-Briquets and Jorge Pérez-López

Introduction

From a modest beginning in 1963, when a group of 53 public health workers went to Algeria, Cuban civilian assistance to developing countries has grown by leaps and bounds. This assistance began in October 1962 with an offer from Fidel Castro to assist Algeria, a young nation sorely in need of public health personnel, and evolved over the years into an integral component of Cuban foreign policy. Cuba rationalizes its overseas assistance programs in terms of "proletarian internationalism."[1] These programs serve to buttress a variety of foreign policy objectives and have often been used by Cuba to take advantage of sudden geopolitical shifts. In some cases, Cuba has even reaped financial gains for the assistance it provides (e.g., when it sells services to nations capable of paying for them, such as oil-exporting nations), but in most instances overseas assistance also results in real and opportunity costs for Cuba.[2]

Cuba's financial outlays associated with the operation of the typical overseas aid program are generally modest. Cuban aid focuses on the provision of services, a people- rather than goods-intensive approach. The nature of the aid is consistent with the relative abundance in Cuba of skilled human resources relative to material resources. Although they are modest in size, Cuban aid programs are in high demand in Third World nations confronting a dire need for trained personnel. Especially appealing to many recipient countries is the willingness of Cuban internationalist workers to endure the

difficult living and working conditions that service providers from other nations often consider intolerable.[3]

These overseas civilian aid programs have a substantial political payoff for Cuba. Cuba's assistance programs tend to focus on those areas in which revolutionary Cuba has had some successes (public health, education, sports) and/or has accumulated considerable experience (sugar, fishing, animal genetics, construction). As these programs project a highly favorable image of Cuba's achievements, Cuba gains influence with other nations. Moreover, civilian aid programs in general make Cuba's overseas military involvements more palatable to other nations.[4] Finally, civilian assistance is consistent with Cuba's strong anti-Western stance, since it is granted to countries who are ideologically compatible.

Sub-Saharan Africa[5], the least developed and most politically turbulent region of the developing world, has been a major focus of Cuban civilian aid programs. Cuban medical doctors, veterinarians, builders, teachers and agricultural technicians are, or have been, active in over two dozen Sub-Saharan African nations, from Angola to Zimbabwe. Cuban workers have provided basic medical services in the Congo, felled trees in the Mayombe jungle in Angola, built mountain roads in Ethiopia and operated sugar mills in Mozambique.

OVERVIEW

In 1959, when the Cuban revolution took power, the African continent was only beginning its independence process. During the sixties and seventies, Cuba supported several pro-independence revolutionary movements in the region and gradually began to establish formal relations with the newly-created nations. Cuba currently has diplomatic relations with virtually all of independent Sub-Saharan Africa[6] and recognizes liberation movements in Namibia (the South West Africa People's Organization, SWAPO) and in South Africa (the African National Congress, ANC).[7]

Although Cuban overseas civilian assistance began as early as 1963, it appears that the only active programs during the sixties were in Guinea, Mali and Tanzania. In the seventies, as diplomatic ties were established with numerous Sub-Saharan African nations, the number of Cuban technicians in the African continent increased rapidly, as did the range of activities in which they were involved. Cuban civilian assistance abroad took a quantum leap forward in 1976

when Cuba began to aid Angola in a host of economic and social development activities, shortly after Cuba's military involvement in the country was initiated. Some of these assistance programs had as an integral component some training in Cuban institutions. Moreover, at about this time, Cuba also began an aggressive program of scholarships for study in Cuba for Sub-Saharan African elementary and secondary school children.

Magnitude of Assistance

Cuba does not publish systematic statistics on the magnitude of its military or civilian assistance abroad. On occasion, Cuban sources might describe the intensity of assistance given to a country—generally using qualitative terms—or a Cuban leader might provide figures on the Cuban presence abroad, but it is difficult to assess the magnitude of the assistance programs from the fragmented information.

Beginning with 1976, Western government agencies—the U. S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and British intelligence sources—have published estimates of the number of Cuban military and civilian personnel stationed abroad. Table 1 brings together available estimates of the presence of Cuban civilian personnel in Sub-Saharan Africa during 1976–79 and 1984.

The aggregate figures in Table 1 point to a substantial Cuban presence in Sub-Saharan Africa and to a rapid increase in the late seventies. According to the estimates, Cuba deployed nearly 4,100 civilian personnel in Sub-Saharan Africa in 1976, compared to nearly 11,000 two years later. The CIA concludes that the Cuban civilian presence in the region declined to about 8,400 in 1979, while British sources suggest that it remained at about the 11,000 level.[8] In 1984, the most recent year for which estimates are available, the number of Cuban civilian personnel in Sub-Saharan Africa has been given as nearly 9,100.

With regard to the distribution of Cuban civilian personnel by country, the estimates in Table 1 are quite limited. In 1976, for example, the published estimates identify Cuban presence in only two countries, Angola and Tanzania. It is acknowledged in the estimates that an additional 900 Cuban civilian personnel—22 percent of the total—were present in other Sub-Saharan African nations, but the specific countries where they served are not identified. In 1976, Angola absorbed about 70 percent of Cuban civilian personnel

Table 1: Cuban civilian personnel in Sub-Saharan Africa

Country	*1976*	*1977*	*1978*	*1979(a)*	*1979(b)*	*1984*
Angola	3000	4000	8500	6500	6500	6000
Cape Verde					10–15	
Congo					75	140
Equatorial Guinea					50	
Ethiopia		400	500	450	450	1100
Ghana						40
Guinea			35	200	50	240
Guinea-Bissau			85	40	30	75
Madagascar				25		35
Mali						10
Mozambique		400	400	600	600	900
Nigeria				10		5
Sao Tome and Principe			140	200	100	
Seychelles						20
Somalia		30				
Tanzania	200	200	200	80	150	150
Zambia			20			
Other	895	855	1090	280		345
Total	4095	5885	10970	8385		9060

Sources:

1976: *Africa Contemporary Record* (New York: Africana Publishing Company of Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1977–78).

1977: Central Intelligence Agency, *Communist Aid to Less Developed Countries of the Free World, 1977*, ER 78–104 78U (Washington, D.C., November, 1978), p. 9.

1978: Central Intelligence Agency, *Communist Aid Activities in Non-Communist Less Developed Countries, 1978*, ER 79–10412U (Washington, D.C., November, 1979), p. 14.

1979(a): Central Intelligence Agency, *Communist Aid Activities in Non-Communist Less Developed Countries, 1979 and 1954–79*, ER 80–10318U (Washington, D.C., October, 1980), p. 21.

1979(b): Zdenek Cervenka and Colin Legum, "Cuba in Africa: Phasing Out its Military Presence?" in *Africa Contemporary Record 1979–80* (1981), p. A170.

1984: U.S. Department of State, *Warsaw Pact Economic Aid to Non-Communist LDCs, 1984*, Publication 9345 (Washington, D.C., 1986), p. 16.

stationed in Sub-Saharan Africa; in 1978, nearly four out of five Cuban civilian personnel in the region were located there. The Cuban civilian presence in Ethiopia and Mozambique increased significantly over the period so that by 1984, 12 percent and ten percent, respectively, of Cuban personnel in Sub-Saharan Africa were stationed in those two countries.

As the number of Cuban civilian personnel in Sub-Saharan Africa

has grown, so has the range of activities in which they are involved. Areas of civilian cooperation in which Cuban personnel participate—or have participated—include education, public health, construction, agriculture (sugar cane cultivation, mechanization, animal genetics), veterinary science, technical assistance to industry (sugar production, electricity generation), fishing, transportation, public administration and economic planning. In some cases, Cuban personnel act in advisory capacities, but the bulk of Cuban personnel appear to be engaged in providing services (e.g., health care, education), with a small percentage engaged in the production of goods (e.g., Cuban lumberjack brigades operating in the Mayombe forest in Angola).

Revenue from Overseas Civilian Activities

An important development in the seventies which seems to have influenced Cuban overseas civilian activities was the possibility of obtaining hard currency income from the sale of services abroad. This option became viable after the 1973 OPEC oil embargo, when international oil prices skyrocketed and certain oil-exporting developing countries suddenly had the resources to invest in developing physical and human infrastructure. Cuba found that there was a demand in these countries for certain services (e.g., public health, construction) that could generate hard currency earnings.

The extent to which Cuba in fact receives payment from services performed abroad, however, is a matter of disagreement. According to Cuban sources, through 1977 all civilian assistance to developing countries was free.[9] Around 1978, however, Cuba began to offer for-pay services—particulary in the areas of construction and public health—to countries who were in a position to pay, e.g., oil-exporting countries. Cuban officials saw the provision of for-pay services as a way to balance the domestic economic constraints upon further increases in assistance with the strong demand for services from countries capable of paying.[10] As Castro explained in a major speech in December 1977:

> . . . the comrades of the Cuban construction brigades in Angola have opened a new possibility for our country's economy, the possibility of setting up construction enterprises capable of doing construction work anywhere in the world, on economic bases. In other words, they are opening up what we could call a new field for exports for our country: the possibility of exporting construction.

> The same applies to our doctors. They, too, are opening up a new possibility for our country. We furnish the aid. We aid many countries that are very poor, and we provide this aid free. There are other countries that have the resources and want to make contracts with Cuba for technical services, such as medical services. And I assure you that such services are paid for handsomely, at prices better than those paid for sugar, that's for sure. This opens up a new possibility for our country.
>
> This enables us to expand enrollment in our universities, because it isn't a question of having doctors in Cuba alone, but also of having doctors that can go to work in other countries as Cubans and representing Cuba. I don't mean emigres. I don't mean that at all. I mean brigades of Cuban doctors, like those construction workers who were in Angola, engineers and technicians in various fields, of different kinds, who will be able to provide this kind of service and benefit our country; architects and builders who can provide services and benefit our country. After all, our country's resources are not limited to sugar and nickel. Our development cannot be limited to minerals, sugar, tobacco, and other items. We must also develop intelligence. Nobody knows how great a people that develop their skill, their talent, their intelligence to the utmost can be![11]

Thus, it has been reported that since the late seventies, Cuba has followed a two-tier policy regarding compensation for civilian services performed abroad:

a. *Free services*: Provided to less developed countries or to those countries who face serious economic hardships. In general, recipient countries are responsible only for living expenses of Cuban personnel; Cuba continues to pay salaries in domestic currency (i.e., pesos) of internationalist workers. The bulk of Cuban services are provided on this basis. Emergency assistance lent to certain countries at times of natural disasters has also been offered for free.

b. *For-pay services*: Provided to countries with abilitiy to pay. Recipient countries are responsible for all expenses, including salary, generally payable in convertible currencies. Exact terms are negotiated by Cuba and the foreign government.[12]

Information on the terms under which Cuba provides services abroad is very scanty. Several sources have indicated that up to 1978, in Africa, as in other developing regions, all services were indeed performed for free.[13] Although there is conflicting information, the

weight of evidence suggests that most services provided to Sub-Saharan Africa have been, and continue to be, free. Countries who reportedly have compensated Cuba for services provided are Algeria and Libya in North Africa and Syria in the Middle East.

According to Castro, in mid-1987 Cuba was providing public health services to nearly 30 countries, and only two (Algeria and Libya) were paying for them.[14] It is clear that the collapse of oil prices in the international market had a negative impact on the hard-currency revenues Cuba was hoping to earn abroad. In those cases where recipient countries do pay for Cuban services, it appears that such services are priced very competitively. A Cuban source[15] reported that the cost to another nation of employing a Cuban physician (general practice) with more than eight years' experience was $1,100 per month, or about $13,000 per annum, in 1984. This compares with costs of $40,000 to $60,000 per annum for doctors employed by the World Health Organization in Africa, according to Cuban estimates.[16] It should be noted, however, that salaries of Cuban doctors are substantially lower than the $1,100 per month Cuba reportedly received from other nations. Relying on data reported by Cuba to the International Labour Office,[17] it can be estimated that in 1986, a general physician in Cuba earned approximately 4,200 pesos per annum ($5,250 U.S. dollars at the 1989 official but overvalued Cuban exchange rate).

There have been several reports indicating that Angola pays for at least some of the civilian services offered by Cuba. Referring to Cuban medical and construction personnel in Angola, a well-informed American scholar wrote in 1978, "While the Angolan government only paid room and board for the Cuban assistance in 1977, this year [1978] it is expected to cover all the expenses, including salaries."[18] And a news reporter described the compensation issue in 1980 as follows:

> Angola also pays for the bloc's services. It provides the rent and utilities for the Soviets' housing, pays $600 a month for every Cuban school teacher, allows the Soviet Union to keep 75 percent of the fish caught off the Angolan coast, and repays its debt for weapons with most of its income from oil and coffee.[19]

The nature and extent of Cuban civilian assistance to Sub-Saharan Africa in the fields of the most extensive collaboration, public health, education and construction, are reviewed below. Particular attention is given to the major recipient countries (e.g., Angola, Ethiopia) of Cuban assistance.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Cuba has gained much notoriety for its civilian assistance programs abroad, particularly those in the public health field. Havana proudly boasts of having more physicians working overseas than the total number of physicians fielded by the World Health Organization. Cuban health workers have conducted missions, or are currently stationed, in over 30 African, Asian and Latin American countries. In 1977, according to estimates compiled by Grundy and Budetti (Table 2) Cuban physicians represented over 50 percent of the stock of doctors in Angola, Cape Verde, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, and Sao Tome and Principe. In some of these countries, four of every five physicians were Cuban. Cuban medical and public health schools have become the training ground for hundreds of Third World physicians and medical technicians, and Cuban doctors help train considerable numbers of these physicians in their own countries.

Several factors explain why Cuba has been able to develop the capacity to offer public health services to Third World nations to the degree it does. Castro has never visualized the demand for medical personnel and other technicians in the Third World exclusively in national terms. All along he has been aware of the acute and growing need for trained personnel in much of the developing world.

Revolutionary Cuba has succeeded in its drive to increase its pool of physicians and other medical technicians, many of whom see internationalist service. By 1970, the national stock of physicians had just about reached prerevolutionary levels, as new graduating classes of medical students filled the physician vacuum created by massive emigration. The increase in the number of physicians since 1970 can only be described as phenomenal. In 1985, Cuba had a stock of nearly 23,000 physicians, with the number of physicians projected to increase very substantially. By the end of the century, the country is expected to have almost three times as many physicians as in 1985. Many of the new physicians are expected to serve abroad and will receive specialized training for this purpose (e.g., tropical medicine). The Cuban Minister of Economic Cooperation, Jorge Risquet, has stated that by the late nineties Cuba plans to have about 10,000 doctors in internationalist service.[20] There is continuing evidence, however, that quality of health care continues to plague the national system.[21] Some sources allege that many physicians, including those sent in internationalist missions, are poorly trained.[22] Castro himself has indicated that there have been serious problems with the training of Cuban physicians and that major measures have been taken to

Table 2: Distribution of Cuban health care personnel working abroad in 1978

Third World Country	*Number of Cuban Health Care Personnel*	*Number of Cuban Physicians*	*Total Number of Physicians*	*Percentage of Total Physicians from Cuba*
Iraq	378	208	4500	4.6
South Yemen	94	56	98	57.0
Algeria	17	11	1698	0.6
Benin	9	uk	95	uk
Cape Verde	81	44	62	71.0
Angola	286	286	383	75.0
Congo	31	17	213	8.0
Equatorial Guinea	48	26	31	84.0
Guinea	73	41	188	22.0
Guinea-Bissau	55	30	55	55.0
Libya	650	357	2586	14.0
Mozambique	120	67	510	13.0
Ethiopia	uk	300	674	45.0
Sao Tome and Principe	86	47	59	80.0
Tanzania	15	8	797	1.0
Zambia	18	11	472	2.3
Guyana	18	18	120	15.0
Jamaica	17	17	570	3.0
Laos	12	12	46	26.0
Vietnam	uk	uk	uk	uk

uk = unknown

Source: Paul H. Grundy and Peter P. Budetti, "The Distribution and Supply of Cuban Medical Personnel in Third World Countries," *American Journal of Public Health* 70:7 (July 1980), p. 718.

upgrade their training.[23] Despite these problems, the demand for Cuban physicians abroad continues, particularly in countries with few native doctors.

Cuba is increasingly providing medical training to foreigners, both in Cuba and overseas. According to a 1984 report, 604 foreign physicians and dentists, representing 45 countries, have received their degrees from the Higher Institute of Medical Sciences in Havana. Sixty-five graduated from this institution in 1984 alone. Several hundred more foreign students have been trained in other national medical schools. In addition, many of the graduates have pursued advanced studies in the various medical specialties, including tropical

medicine.[24] To support these training activities and the quality of medical services by Cuban physicians abroad, the authorities have revitalized the national Institute of Tropical Medicine, in operation since the thirties.[25] In 1987, nearly 100 foreign students from Africa, Asia and Latin America were enrolled at Cuban medical schools.[26] In 1988, Cuban universities graduated 147 foreign physicians representing 45 countries.[27] This number is inconsistent with the reported number of medical students in 1987, however. Some of the reported graduates may have completed short-term, specialized postgraduate training.

Physician training by Cuban medical instructors abroad includes the establishment of a medical school in the Democratic Republic of Yemen, the first such school in that nation. The first class of Cuban-trained Yemeni physicians graduated in 1982. As of 1982, 101 Cuban doctors had taught at the largely Cuban designed and staffed school. At that time, the school had an enrollment of 500 students.[28] Cuba was also instrumental in the establishment of a medical school in Guinea-Bissau, the first university level institution in that country. Cuban physicians also serve or have served in the faculties of medical schools in Luanda (Angola) and Addis Ababa (Ethiopia).[29] Medical instruction is a routine activity of many internationalist Cuban physicians, but particularly strong training programs—aside from those already cited—have been conducted in Nicaragua,[30] Kampuchea,[31] and Vietnam.[32] In many instances, routine medical education activities involve imparting basic knowledge to low-level primary care health workers. Some features of the public health assistance programs in selected Sub-Saharan African countries are reviewed next.

Tanzania. Tanzania is one of the African countries in which Cuban medical assistance programs have been in operation the longest. According to press reports, Cuban medical teams worked in the Pemba islands as early as 1965–67. In March 1975, Cuban medical teams began to serve in Dar Es Salaam, Tanga and Arusha,[33] with services extended to other localities in later years.

Tanzania is typical of the situation many African countries face with regard to health personnel. When the first Cuban brigades arrived in 1975, the country only had 43 physicians to minister to the needs of a population of 14 million. The first Cuban medical brigade brought an additional 35 physicians plus 18 nurses and medical technicians, thus nearly doubling the physician stock. Since that time, and up to 1983, five other medical brigades have been dispatched to Tanzania.[34] More medical brigades are certain to have followed since.

By 1978, Tanzania was reported to have 380 physicians from countries as varied as India, Pakistan, the United States and several European countries,[35] many serving as part of foreign medical aid teams and others employed by the state. The presence of physicians from so many nationalities suggests that Cuba's involvement is part of a Tanzanian strategy to upgrade medical standards as rapidly as possible by reducing acute medical shortages. This approach has been followed by many African nations.

The accomplishments of the Cuban medical brigades in Tanzania have been many. The fourth brigade, for instance, is reported to have examined 320,000 patients, performed 4,950 surgical interventions, delivered 4,880 babies, and conducted in excess of 6,000 X-ray tests.[36] In addition, Cuban medical teams are reported to have carried out some of the most intricate surgical interventions ever attempted in Tanzania. In the late seventies, for instance, a Cuban medical team was responsible for the first cardiovascular intervention in the country. Before then, that type of surgery was only available to those who could travel to Nairobi or London.[37]

Another important function of the Cuban medical brigades is to provide training for Tanzanian doctors, medical students, nurses and paramedical personnel at the University of Dar Es Salaam Medical School and other facilities. More recently, Cuban medical teams have served in the more remote locations of Lindi and Pemba, where nearly all medical services around 1981 were provided by Cubans.[38] Cuban medical personnel serving in Tanzania at first did so for a one-year period. The period of service was extended to two years with the arrival of the Fourth Medical Brigade in 1979.[39] Presumably, the extension in length of service allowed the internationalist workers to better utilize the experience acquired in the country. A major consideration influencing the decision to extend the period of service may have been that language fluency improves with length of stay. Language is a major barrier with which Cuban assistance programs in Africa must constantly contend.

An important component of the medical assistance program is the training of health personnel in Cuba. In 1983, 25 Tanzanian physicians completed their schooling in Cuba and returned to their native country.[40] The number of Tanzanian medical students in Cuba today is likely to be higher since Cuba has continued to expand its physician training program for foreign students.

Angola. Angola constitutes the major Cuban commitment abroad in the public health area. In 1982, 30 percent of all Cuban public health personnel serving overseas were stationed in Angola.[41] In that

year, there were some 355 Cuban physicians in Angola.[42]

Cuba's public health involvement in Angola began in late 1975, on the heels of the Cuban military intervention, when a Cuban medical brigade began to work in Cabinda province.[43] Cuban physicians and other civilian internationalists have worked arm in arm with expatriate workers from other socialist countries like the Soviet Union and Poland.[44] However, Cuba has made the major commitment in terms of civilian collaborators.

Cuba's public health presence in Angola can be explained by many factors. What made the offer of Cuban assistance in this area most attractive, however, was the severe shortage of highly trained personnel Angola began to experience in the mid-seventies as centuries of colonialism came to an end, and as a chronic state of warfare led to the massive departure of Portuguese colonial settlers. In 1977, two years after independence, there were only 55 Angolan physicians in the country to serve a population of 5.5 million people.[45] This situation, however deplorable, is by no means unique to Angola, yet other African countries have not received equally generous Cuban civilian support.

Such a heavy civilian assistance program can only be understood with reference to the significant Cuban military involvement in Angola, where Cuban troops have served for nearly 13 years. There can be little doubt that some of the Cuban public health workers in Angola have as their main function watching over the health of Cuban military and civilian internationalists, although they also provide assistance to the Angolan population. Cuban medical personnel are involved in the practice of military medicine, including caring for those injured by the prevailing violence.[46]

As may be expected from such a large contingent, the scope of the Cuban public health assistance program in Angola is wide indeed. There is a Cuban public health presence in practically every Angolan province. Cuban doctors provide curative services and help organize and implement major preventive medicine programs, such as vaccination campaigns against polio and other infectious diseases.

The role of Cuban internationalists in training Angolan public health personnel is also very significant. According to a 1982 press report, 19 technical health schools in 15 Angolan provinces were operated fully or partially with a Cuban health staff. These schools provide basic training to paramedical personnel and health technicians.[47] They also help train, presumably, the primary health care workers, or "health promoters," that Angola badly needs. These workers are the first line of defense against disease in countries with

human and economic resource constraints as profound as those found in much of Sub-Saharan Africa. Earlier public health plans of the newly independent Angola called for the training of 14,000 of these health promoters.[48] The local training of public health personnel extends to physician training at the Americo Boavida medical school in Luanda.[49]

Many more Angolans have been trained in Cuba under the auspices of a program of scholarships established by the Cuban government. These scholarships provide for the training of physicians, dentists, epidemiologists, and medical technicians. Cuba has been instrumental in organizing annual Angolan-Cuban medical science meetings in Angola to help upgrade local medical standards. Cuba also facilitates the exchange of medical delegations and provides Angola with scientific equipment and medical literature.[50] In 1986, Cuba signed an agreement with Angola whereby up to 200 Angolan patients a year may go to Cuba to receive medical treatment. It was not reported if Cuba was to receive compensation for these medical services, but the nature of the agreement suggests that a commercial transaction is involved.[51]

Ethiopia. As in Angola, the medical assistance Cuba has provided to Ethiopia followed a major military intervention that began in 1977. And as in Angola, it helped filled a vacuum created by the departure of a significant number of expatriate physicians who had practiced in Ethiopia prior to the revolution. In this context, the Cuban public health presence must have had some positive impact on a country where medical and public health standards are among the most primitive in the world. Following the pattern first seen in Angola, the Cuban health assistance to Ethiopia has been wide-ranging. Cuban physicians and other public health personnel have provided some of the most basic public health services, assisted in the formulation of health plans, provided sophisticated curative services, and contributed to the training of Ethiopian public health personnel, in Ethiopia as well as in Cuba.

The end of the Somalian–Ethiopian conflict and the departure of thousands of Cuban troops, together with the gradual training of hundreds of Ethiopians, appear to have contributed to a gradual reduction in the number of Cuban public health personnel serving in Ethiopia. A repetition of this process may follow in Angola as Cuba begins the phased withdrawal of its military force as called for by the 1988 Angolan–South African–Cuban accord. At its peak, the number of Cuban public health personnel in Ethiopia exceeded 300, with the maximum number of medical brigades reported to be 29 in 1980–82.[52]

As early as 1979, 131 Cuban doctors were in Ethiopia, with their number declining to 90 by 1987. In the early eighties, Cuban physicians began to train Ethiopian doctors at the University of Addis Ababa. Eventually, a full medical faculty was established there.[53]

Ethiopia is one of the countries to have benefitted the most from the schooling opportunities offered by Cuba. Hundreds of Ethiopian students have received instruction in the Isle of Youth and many others have obtained advanced and specialized training in Cuban universities. Ethiopian graduates are reported to be working side by side with Cuban public health personnel in many Ethiopian health facilities. Their input is essential to Cuba's health assistance program since they help overcome a serious language barrier.[54]

Mozambique. As a self-declared socialist and front-line state, Mozambique has been a major beneficiary of civilian assistance programs provided by Cuba, including those in the public health field. In 1978, just a few years after Mozambique had attained its independence from Portugal, 25 Cuban physicians and several pharmacists were serving there. Cuban health teams have engaged in preventive and curative services and have helped train paramedics and medical technicians. A large number of Mozambican students have been educated in Cuba, a significant number of them in the health professions.

The accidental death of Samora Machel in 1986, the undisputed leader and president of Mozambique following independence, underscores the important role of Cuban physicians in the country: two Cuban military doctors, the personal physicians of the president, also died in the plane crash that took Machel's life.[55]

Other Countries. Cuban public health missions have seen, and continue to see, service in a number of other African nations. Changes in political winds have often preceded Cuba's aid, although in some cases (e.g., Somalia) Cuban aid programs have been terminated for the same reason. Some of the countries in which Cuban public health teams have operated or are currently active include Benin (Dahomey), Uganda, Cape Verde, Congo, Mauritania, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Burundi, Somalia and the Seychelles.

EDUCATION

Cuban internationalist activities in the area of education have taken two forms: 1) assignment abroad of teaching personnel, literacy

campaign specialists, educational organization experts, etc.; and 2) enrollment of foreign students in a range of Cuban educational institutions. More so than in any other area of cooperation, education is sensitive to language and cultural differences. To a large extent, the form and intensity of Cuban educational cooperation with other countries has been conditioned by the language and culture issue.

Cuban Education Personnel Abroad

In 1973, 40 Cuban teachers and technicians traveled to Spanish-speaking Equatorial Guinea (formerly the Spanish territories of Rio Muni and Fernando Poo) to work in secondary schools (teaching several academic subjects as well as physical education) and in other schools (teaching subjects related to agriculture and industry).[56] The mission to Equatorial Guinea was the first recorded instance of Cuban assistance to developing countries in the field of education.

Large-scale assignment abroad of Cuban educators began in the spring of 1978, with the arrival in Angola of the Che Guevara Internationalist Teaching Detachment, composed of 732 student-teachers. Members of the Detachment were last-year education students who volunteered to do the required one year of student-teaching in Angola.[57] Detachment members were assigned to teach intermediate-level courses in mathematics, science and social sciences, primarily in rural areas. Also dispatched to Angola in 1979 was the Frank Pais Contingent, consisting of 500 elementary school teachers.[58] Subsequently, university professors and other higher education instructors also went to work in Angolan institutions. During the academic year 1985–86, for example, about 60 Cuban full or assistant professors taught or conducted research at the "Agostinho Neto University" in Luanda; the number was expected to grow to 80 for the academic year 1986–87.[59]

In the spring of 1979, the first group of Cuban teaching personnel returned from Angola and their places were taken by the Second Che Guevara Detachment. Since then, Cuban educators in Angola—including elementary-level teachers of the Frank Pais Contingent—have been rotated several times. At least through the early eighties, the overall number of collaborators in education rose significantly. For example, during the school year 1982–83, reportedly nearly 2,000 Cuban teachers and student-teachers were working in educational institutions—from elementary school to higher education and professional training—located in 17 of Angola's provinces.[60] More recent data is not available, but it appears that the level of Cuban assistance

has remained high, although the number of educational personnel in Angola may have fluctuated from year to year. The length of assignment has been extended to 22 months, spanning two school years.[61] It appears that Cuba has made a policy decision to extend the period of assignment abroad of educators to two years, as elementary school teachers comprising the Augusto Cesar Sandino Contingent, assigned to Nicaragua since the school year 1979–80, reportedly also serve two-year assignments.[62]

Smaller-scale deployment of Cuban education specialists in several Sub-Saharan African nations has also been documented. For example, Cuban experts have assisted Mozambique in several areas, including curriculum development and teacher training,[63] and Ethiopia in efforts to improve the quality of teacher training, including serving on the faculty of several schools for teachers and assisting in the development of teaching media.[64] Several Cuban teachers have been reported in Tanzania.[65] In addition to teaching personnel, Cuba has also sent specialists to Angola to lend technical assistance in the field of education.[66] Cuban teachers and other specialists operate the Mito Vocational School in Ethiopia, a school whose student body is largely composed of children of soldiers who died in the Ogaden war; many of these students later receive scholarships to study in Cuba.[67]

Drawing on the experiences gained during the 1961 literacy campaign, Cuba has assisted Sub-Saharan African countries in similar efforts. In 1978, Cuban specialists advised Benin in organizing a literacy campaign; they were responsible for preparing documentation for the program and collaborated in the development of teaching materials.[68] Cuban instructors and advisers assisted the Congo in an adult literacy campaign conducted in the early eighties;[69] apparently, Cuban specialists also did the same in Ethiopia with respect to a country-wide effort that began in 1978.[70]

Although no official data on education-related personnel stationed abroad is available, fragmentary information suggests that their numbers increased very rapidly during the second half of the seventies and probably remain at high levels. As noted earlier, the first deployment abroad of education specialists was in 1973. A Cuban source has reported that in 1980 over 3,600 Cuban teaching personnel and education specialists were working in nine developing countries,[71] presumably also referring to 1980, another Cuban source has given the number of education specialists abroad at 3,000 deployed in 11 countries.[72] In 1984, reportedly over 4,000 teachers and education specialists were performing services in 20 developing countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.[73]

Foreign Students in Cuba

Foreign students have enrolled in virtually all types of Cuban educational institutions, from elementary schools to institutions of higher learning and professional schools. In mid-1987, according to Castro, 22,000 students from 80 countries were receiving scholarships from the Cuban government.[74] By far the largest share of students from Sub-Saharan Africa has been enrolled in elementary and secondary schools established by the Cuban government especially for foreign students. By comparison, enrollment of African students in higher learning institutions and professional schools has been modest, but the totals are quite significant, nevertheless.

Elementary and secondary schools

In 1971, Cuba established a system of secondary boarding schools in the countryside (Escuelas Secundarias Basicas en el Campo, ESBEC) combining study and agricultural work. ESBECs built in the early seventies were designed to house about 500 students, 250 males and 250 females. Typically, they consisted of several interconnected buildings containing classrooms, administrative facilities, separate dormitories and living facilities for male and female students, library, infirmary, kitchen and dining hall, laundry facilities, etc. By relying on prefabricated panels, construction could be accomplished quickly—in an estimated eight months by a brigade of 157 workers.[75] Capital costs were reported at about 700,000 to 1 million pesos per school.[76] Somewhat higher capital costs have also been reported: over 1 million pesos,[77] 1.2 million pesos,[78] and 1.5 to 2.0 million pesos.[79] Evidently, changes have been made to the design of the schools since the early seventies, as the capacity of the schools is reported at about 600 students per school rather than 500.[80]

By combining study and work, schools in the countryside were supposed to be self-financing. Schools were located in areas where there was a need for labor-intensive agricultural services which could be performed by 12- to 16-year olds: citrus groves, coffee plantations, fruit orchards; sugar cane and rice were not deemed to be suitable for cultivation by young people.[81] Each school was assigned the cultivation of approximately 500 hectares of crops. According to Castro:

> With our climatic conditions, 500 well-attended hectares of citrus fruit technically should produce enough to cover all the costs of this school—more than enough . . . We believe that the output of 500 hectares of citrus fruit, with a high yield, would be

> equivalent to 2 million dollars per year . . . Fifteen hundred schools with this level of productivity would be fabulous. Of course, one must not think that all products are as highly productive, but this is an example.[82]

Students are expected to attend three hours of classes daily and to work in the fields for a similar length of time. When time for meals, organized study, cultural and sports activities, etc., are taken into account, students at the schools in the countryside have a very demanding schedule: they begin their activities at six a.m. each day and end them at ten p.m.[83]

Citrus-producing areas have been the preferred location for schools in the countryside. In Jagüey Grande, one of the premier citrus-producing areas in the nation, 59 schools in the countryside with a combined student body of 28,600 were engaged in citrus agricultural activities in 1984;[84] students harvested 90 percent of the citrus crop and provided other agricultural services.[85] Similarly, students constitute more than 90 percent of the labor force that cultivates and harvests citrus fruits in the Isle of Youth; in 1981, 90,000 students participated in the citrus harvest there.[86]

Schools in the countryside for foreign students emerged in the second half of the seventies to deal with the educational needs of African countries. As Castro has explained,

> . . . this idea (special schools for foreign students) came up shortly after Angola's independence. What to do with the Angolans? How to help them train cadres massively, both military and technical cadres? How to do it? We did not have enough resources, but we did have new schools being built. And that is how the idea started—an idea later extended to Mozambique, Ethiopia and other countries.[87]

According to Cuban sources, foreign students at the special schools in the Isle of Youth are supported by scholarships granted by Cuba through government-to-government agreements, and all expenses—including a small monthly cash allowance in pesos for each student—are the responsibility of the Cuban government.[88] (The annual cost per student of operating a school in the countryside has been reported as 600 pesos per student in 1979[89] and 643 pesos in 1981.[90]) Transportation of scholarship students also appears to be the responsibility of the Cuban government. In 1978, the Cuban merchant marine acquired a passenger ship, the *Africa–Cuba*, which is used to transport students and personnel between Cuba and Africa. In its maiden voyage, in the summer of 1978, the *Africa–Cuba* brought

Table 3: Elementary and secondary schools for foreign students and enrollment: academic year 1983–84

Country	Number of Schools	Enrollment
Ethiopia	4	2386
Mozambique	4	2303
Angola	4	2183
Nicaragua	2	1196
Namibia	2	1180
Ghana	1	610
Congo	1	588
Democratic Saharan Arab Republic	1	580
People's Democratic Republic of Yemen	1	547
Guinea-Bissau	1	313
Sao Tome and Principe		29[a]
Total	21	11925

[a]Enrolled in same school as students from Guinea-Bissau.

Source: Ciro Bianchi Ross, "Mas allá de toda frontera," *Cuba Internacional* 16:177 (August 1984), p. 27.

1,260 Ethiopian children destined for schools in the Isle of Youth.[91] To stimulate performance by students and foreign teachers, the best four students and the best teacher in each school are entitled to spend their summer vacation in their home country at the Cuban government's expense.[92]

The organization, curriculum and teaching staff of the schools reflect deliberate efforts to maintain the language and cultural identity of the students. National groups are kept together by assigning entire schools to them. During the academic year 1983–84, for example, 21 schools in the Isle of Youth were assigned to 11,925 foreign students from 11 countries (Table 3). Ethiopia, Mozambique and Angola were assigned four schools each, Nicaragua and Namibia two each, and Ghana, Congo, the Democratic Saharawi Arab Republic (i.e., the Polisario Front), People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, and Guinea-Bissau one each. The system of assigning schools to students from a given country explains why, initially, scholarships to a given nation tend to be awarded in multiples of 500 to 600, since this is the capacity of a typical school. In subsequent years, as students graduate and return to their home countries or move to other educa-

tional institutions in Cuba, their places are taken by a new group of students from the home country so that the student body of the schools in the countryside remains at about 600 each.

In addition to the normal academic subjects, the curriculum in the schools for foreign students includes the study of the language, culture, history and geography of the country of origin of the students, taught by native instructors following work plans provided by their respective Ministries of Education.[93] Cuban instructors handle the rest of the subjects. Instructors from the home country are also responsible for imparting "political direction" to the students.[94]

Cuba does not publish official statistics on the population of foreign students in the special schools in the Isle of Youth. Relying on scattered information in the Cuban mass media, a very rough picture of the growth of this population has been put together (Table 4). Not only are there significant gaps in the information, but certain figures reported in the table appear to be erroneous, perhaps because they refer to another population of foreign students (e.g., all foreign students in Cuba). Figures that appear questionable in the light of other information are marked in the table with a question mark. It should be noted that the student population estimates in Table 4 refer to enrollment in institutions in the Isle of Youth at a given time. Estimating the number of students who have attended the special schools would require information on the distribution of students by school year, percentage of students who successfully complete their studies, etc. No attempt has been made to do this here, as the underlying data is not available.

The first four schools in the Isle of Youth for foreign students began operation during the academic year 1977–78. The student body for these schools came from Angola and Mozambique. Estimating the capacity of each school at roughly 600 students, it seems that about 2,400 foreign students, all from Africa, were enrolled in special schools in the Isle of Youth during the academic year 1977–78 (Table 4). By the end of the following academic year, approximately 6,000 African students were enrolled in nine schools; the largest contingents of students at that time were:[95]

Mozambique	2,300 students
Angola	1,200 students
Ethiopia	1,100 students
Namibia	600 students

In 1980, the number of African students in the Isle of Youth reportedly had grown to 8,000 and by 1984 it had reached over 10,000. The

Table 4: Number of schools for foreign students and enrollment

	Number of Schools		*Enrollment*	
Year	*Total*	*African Students*	*Total*	*African Students*
1977	4	4	2400	2400
1978	9	9	6000	6000
1979		10(?)		5000(?)
1980			9000	8000
1981	17		9000	
1982	23(?)		12000	
1983	21		12300	
			19604	
1984	21	18	11925(?)	10182
			22000	
1985		14(?)	22000	25000(?)
1986				15955

Sources:

1977: Schools—"A Few Days in the World of Tomorrow," *Granma Weekly Review* (3 September 1978), p. 6. Students—estimated on the basis of 600 students per school.

1978: Schools—Ciro Bianchi Ross, "Sonrisas africanas," *Cuba Internacional* 11:118 (September 1979), p. 17; and José Mayo, "La mejor toronja del mundo," *Verde Olivo* 20:3 (21 January 1979), p. 37. Students—Bianchi Ross, p. 14.

1979: Schools and Students—Basil Davidson, "The Human Face of Cuba's Aid to Africa," *The Guardian* (23 April 1983), p. 17.

1980: Students—Fidel Castro, "Discurso en la escuela 'Agostinho Neto' . . .," *Verde Olivo* 21:13 (30 March 1980), p. 15; and Armando López Rivera, "Contribucion a la amistad y solidaridad," *Verde Olivo* 18:14 (13 March 1980), p. 11. African students—Castro, p. 15.

1981: Schools—López Rivera, "Unidos por la sangre y la historia," *Verde Olivo* 23:11 (18 March 1982), p. 8. Students, low—López Rivera, "Unidos . . .," p. 8. Students, high—Lucas Correoso Pérez, "Students from Nicaragua and Cuba to Study on the Isle of Youth this School Term," *Granma Weekly Review* (19 September 1982), p. 8.

1982: Schools and Students—Correoso Pérez, p. 8.

1983: Schools—Victoria Brittain, "Cuba's Island in a Class of its Own," *The Guardian* (30 September 1983), p. 19. Students, low—Brittain, p. 19; Students, high—Javier Rodriguez, "Un modelo de relaciones entre los pueblos," *Cuba Internacional* 15:170 (January 1984), p. 60.

1984: Schools—Ciro Bianchi Ross, "Mas allá de toda frontera," *Cuba Internacional* 16:177 (August 1984), p. 27. Students, low—Bianchi Ross, p. 27; Students, high—"Cuba–Ghana: amistad y solidaridad," *Verde Olivo* 25:31 (2 August 1984), p. 16; African students—Bianchi Ross, p. 27.

1985: Schools—Manuel Entralgo González, et al., "Notas sobre la politica exterior de Cuba en Africa," *Estudios y Compilaciones* 4:2 (1986), p. 155. Students—Fidel Castro, "Intervencion durante la primera jornada . . .," *Granma* (18 September 1985), p. 5. African students—Entralgo González, p. 155.

1986: Marta Rojas, "Como una pequeña ONU," *Cuba Internacional* 19:212 (July 1987), p. 16.

most recent information available indicates that in 1987, nearly 16,000 African students from 21 nations were enrolled in 26 schools in the Isle of Youth.[96]

Angola. The first group of Angolan students bound for schools in the Isle of Youth arrived in Cuba in the fall of 1977. In 1979, 1,200 Angolan students were already enrolled in two schools in the Isle of Youth.[97] By 1984, the Angolan student population in the Isle of Youth had grown to 2,193 students in four schools.[98]

More recently, it has been reported that the Angolan student population in the Isle of Youth was almost 4,000 in 1987, the largest foreign presence in the island, comprising nearly one-fourth of the total foreign student population. Angolan students were broadly represented across all schools in the Isle of Youth: elementary schools, middle schools, college preparatory schools, intermediate-level polytechnic institutes and teachers' schools; Angolans were also enrolled in two military schools.[99] In 1988, the Angolan student population in the Isle of Youth was again reported at 4,000.[100]

Mozambique. During the academic year 1978–79, four out of nine schools for foreigners in the Isle of Youth were assigned to students from Mozambique. In that year, enrollment of Mozambican students was reported at 2,300, by far the largest national contingent and over one-third of the estimated 6,000 population of foreign students in the Isle of Youth.[101] The number of scholarship students from Mozambique has remained stable over time. In 1984, enrollment of 2,303 Mozambicans in four schools was reported.[102] In August 1988, more than 200 nurses and mid-level experts trained in Cuba in sugar technology, agronomy, irrigation, construction, drafting, statistics, planning, etc., returned to Mozambique to be assigned to various government institutions.[103]

Ethiopia. In July 1978, the first contingent of Ethiopian students bound for schools in the Isle of Youth, composed of either 1,211 students[104] or 1,260 students,[105] arrived in Cuba. Students were assigned to two schools: "Mengistu Haile Mariam," with an enrollment of 603 students in seventh through twelfth grades, and "Karramarra," with an enrollment of 608 students in second through sixth grades.[106] By 1982, the number of Ethiopian students in the Isle of Youth had grown to 2,300 in four schools,[107] and it remained at essentially the same level through 1984 (when enrollment was 2,386 students in four schools).[108]

Namibia. In October 1978, the school "Hendrich Witbooi," the first school for Namibian children in the Isle of Youth, was opened. Many of the students at the school were survivors of a May 1978 South

African raid on a Namibian camp inside Angola, at Cassinga.[109] A second school for Namibian students, the "Hosea Hutako," was opened shortly thereafter. Enrollment in the two schools has been reported at 600 and 527, respectively, for a total of over 1,100 Namibian students.[110]

Other Countries. For the 1979–80 school year, 601 Congolese children arrived in Cuba.[111] In September 1983, the "Khuame Nkrumah" school in the Isle of Youth began operations with an enrollment of 600 Ghanaian students.[112] Other Ghanaian students have arrived in Cuba since. Zimbabwe has sent students to Cuba and will continue to do so in the future. In March 1986, 25 Cuban teachers arrived in Zimbabwe to begin Spanish language lessons for prospective students slated to go to Cuba under a five-year teacher degree program.[113] Several hundred students from Guinea-Bissau have also attended Cuban internationalist schools.[114] In 1984, 29 students from Sao Tome and Principe were enrolled in a school in the Isle of Youth.[115] It has also been reported that in 1986, Cuba offered Burkina Faso 600 scholarships for high school students.[116]

Higher education institutions

Over the last 20 years, Cuba has significantlly increased its number of technical, professional and higher learning institutions. This increase has been particularly rapid since the mid-seventies. Thus, according to official Cuban statistics, during the academic year 1975–76 Cuba had 234 technical and professional schools, compared to 634 in 1986–87. Over the same time period, the number of university-level institutions grew from four to 35.[117]

Cuba has made its higher learning institutions available to foreign students, particularly to students from developing countries. The institutions with the largest enrollment of foreign students, and the careers pursued in each, are:

José Antonio Echeverría Higher Polytechnic Institute—engineering and architecture;
Higher Institute of Agricultural Sciences of Havana—agronomy, veterinary science, animal husbandry, irrigation and drainage, agricultural mechanization;
Victoria de Girón Institute of Basic and Preclinical Sciences—first two years of medical career (after graduating from the Institute, students enroll in teaching hospitals, where they combine theory and practice);

University of Havana—natural sciences, mathematics, economics, humanities, psychology;
Manuel Fajardo Higher Institute of Physical Education—physical education instructors, coaches.[118]

According to Cuban sources, foreign students attend higher learning institutions on scholarships offered by the Cuban government that cover room and board, clothing, books, health care and an allowance of 60 pesos per month. There is no tuition.[119]

Official data on the number of foreign students in Cuban higher learning institutions has been published since the academic year 1977–78 (Table 5). It is clear that African students (including some students from North Africa) have been by far the largest group of higher education foreign students in Cuba, accounting for close to one-half of the foreign student population. During 1986–87, the most recent year for which data are available, 2,687 African students were enrolled in Cuban higher education institutions: in that year, African students represented 66 percent of the total of 4,075 foreign students in such institutions.

Systematic information on the distribution of the foreign student population by country of origin, or by type of institution attended, is

Table 5: Foreign students in Cuban higher education institutions, by region of origin of student

Academic Year	*North America*	*Mexico, Central America, Caribbean*	*South America*	*Europe*	*Asia*	*Africa*	*Total*
1977–78	7	97	203	25	223	856	1411
1978–79	38	176	407	200	297	913	2031
1979–80	16	255	375	161	292	592	1691
1980–81	15	469	376	165	391	1114	2530
1981–82	15	567	377	176	400	1352	2887
1982–83	14	608	362	157	354	1335	2830
1983–84	13	630	377	146	460	1552	3178
1984–85	11	597	355	151	485	1836	3435
1985–86	7	479	238	72	399	1966	3161
1986–87	7	441	372	149	419	2687	4075

Sources: Anuario Estadístico de Cuba (La Havana: Comité Estatal de Estadística, 1986), p. 529.

not available. Fragmentary information suggests that the distribution of African students by country probably corresponds quite closely to the distribution of elementary and secondary school students in Cuba, particularly since some of the foreign students who graduate from schools in the Isle of Youth continue their education in Cuban higher education institutions. For example, in 1979, when the total number of foreign students in higher education institutions was around 900, Cuba agreed to take 200 Angolan students for enrollment at such institutions;[120] in 1982, 178 Ethiopians were studying medicine at Cuba's Universidad de Oriente.[121]

Since 1974, Cuba has been offering scholarships to students from developing countries under the aegis of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) Scholarship Fund. During academic year 1981–82, 89 CMEA scholarship holders from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean were enrolled in Cuban higher learning institutions. The following Sub-Saharan African nations were represented in this group of students: Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Nigeria, Somalia, Tanzania and Ethiopia. During 1981–82, seven students—six from Ethiopia and one from Somalia—completed their studies in veterinary medicine, engineering and agriculture.[122] In subsequent years, the number of CMEA scholarship holders rose to as high as 111 in 1983–84, as students from Mali, Burundi, Angola, Zimbabwe and Ghana, among others, also came to Cuba.[123]

CONSTRUCTION

Vietnam and Peru were the first beneficiaries of the internationalist assistance provided by Cuba in the construction sector. In May 1970, Cuban workers were involved in the construction of six hospitals in Peru following a devastating earthquake,[124] and aid to Vietnam was begun in late 1970. At the time, Peru was ruled by a leftist military junta with friendly ties to Cuba, and U.S. military involvement in Vietnam was at its peak.

In the following years, Cuban internationalist construction efforts increased rapidly. By 1980, 7,000 Cuban construction workers were employed overseas, and the Cuban government projected that their number would nearly triple by 1981. These projections failed to materialize, however, since in 1983 only about 8,000 construction workers were stationed abroad. Cuban builders have seen service in 17 African, Asian and Latin American countries.[125] During the period 1981–86, Cuban builders completed 158 projects abroad in four

continents.[126] They have built roads, schools, housing, medical installations, agricultural facilities, airports and industrial plants. In the early eighties, some of the most important construction assignments were in Libya in North Africa, Nicaragua and Grenada in the Western Hemisphere, and Angola and Ethiopia in Sub-Saharan Africa. Cuban construction brigades had also been dispatched to Iraq, Tanzania, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Yemen, Jamaica, Sao Tome and Principe and Laos, among others.

As in other sectors, construction assistance has been provided on the basis of ideology as well as a means to earn foreign exchange. In the latter case, countries with financial resources and political ideology coinciding with Cuba's have been willing to pay for construction services. Libya is a case in point. With the windfall of the OPEC-induced oil price increases, for several years Libya was capable of rewarding its political friends while embarking on a major domestic infrastructural build-up. Cuba was contracted to build highways, apartment buildings and several schools. Algeria also engaged Cuba in for-pay construction activities. Iraq did the same until oil prices fell and its resources were drained in its fratricidal war with Iran.

Angola provides the broadest example of collaboration in construction activities. Construction assistance appears to have been provided both as a form of aid to Angola, and as a commercial service pursuant to contracts through which Angola pays Cuba for services rendered.[127] Ideological and political factors have played a determining role in the award of these contracts since, from a strictly commercial perspective, it is doubtful that Cuba could have competed with major Western European, American and Asian construction firms. Angola may even express its gratitude to Cuba through these contracts and assist Cuba in covering some of the expenses it incurs by its presence in Angola. It is claimed, however, that Cuba's construction bids are more competitive than those of Western contractors.[128] In at least some instances, however, Cuban construction projects are said to have had large cost overruns.[129]

Regardless of the reasons that Cuba received the construction contracts, during the late seventies and early eighties, Cuba regarded foreign construction contracts as a potentially major earner of foreign exchange and took the necessary steps to take advantage of the opportunities offered by these foreign markets.[130] The Cuban government established a specialized unit within the Construction Ministry to market and execute foreign construction projects. This unit, the Union de Empresas Constructoras Caribe (UNECA), was also given the capability to assist in the design of projects, provide technical

assistance, and train foreign nationals in different facets of construction work.[131] Construction abroad also stimulates export of Cuban construction materials such as cement, reinforcing steel bars, marble, etc.[132]

Another interesting characteristic of Cuban construction work abroad is that these services are frequently included as part of a broader aid package in which other Eastern bloc nations are involved. This is the case in for-pay contracts as it is in concessional projects. In several of the latter projects, Cuba has even acquired—and later donated to the host country—heavy equipment purchased from capitalist economies. In these instances, it is likely that other Soviet bloc nations provided Cuba with some financial assistance. A brief review of some of the major construction activities in selected Sub-Saharan Africa countries follows.

Angola. The Angolan government began to receive construction assistance from Cuba shortly after independence, while the first rounds of the civil war were being fought. The earliest construction efforts evidently had military applications, since they involved the repair and construction of bridges which were often under military threat by the factions opposing government forces. The first Cuban construction technicians arrived in Angola in early January 1977, accompanied by the first pieces of heavy equipment—some sent from Cuba, some newly purchased abroad—and additional construction workers arrived in March. Construction activities were initiated in April.[133] This original effort called for the construction of 16 bridges over a 12-month period. The goal was exceeded, with the Cuban construction brigades completing 23 structures in 16 months,[134] despite exceedingly difficult working conditions: several internationalist construction workers perished in attacks carried out by insurgent forces.

By the end of 1982, over 10,000 Cuban construction workers had seen service in Angola, generally for an average period of 18 months,[135] although the period of service was later extended to coincide with the completion of a given project.[136] Construction projects had been completed, or were underway, in the capital city of Luanda and in several other parts of the country such as Saurimo, N'Gunza, Luena, Bie Benguela and Huambo. In 1984, a car bomb explosion resulted in the death of 14 Cuban internationalist workers and wounding of 66 others in Huambo,[137] another indication of the high price revolutionary Cuba has paid for its Angolan presence. While Cuba has claimed these workers were engaged in civilian projects, the evidence suggests that at least some were actively supporting the military effort.

Their work building bridges has been noted, but the Cuban workers at Huambo had also completed a military school with a capacity for over 300 students located seven kilometers from the city.[138]

Between 1977 and 1982, Cuban construction brigades completed about 50 bridges in the country; delivered some 2,000 dwellings in Luanda; assisted in the expansion of the Kinfangondo aqueduct supplying water to Luanda; finished the Luanda military school; helped construct, or restore, parts of three important industrial enterprises, including a textile mill and a paper factory; built a sports complex; and were engaged in the expansion of the Luanda port and the construction of a major hydroelectric project.[139] In addition, 2,000 new dwellings in secondary cities of Angola were in the drawing boards in 1983.[140] Cuba also helped repair two sugar mills and other smaller industrial facilities.[141]

The reconstruction of the Golfe "museque," or slum, in Luanda is instructive of how Cuba, in advancing its internationalist goals, takes advantage of the experience it has accumulated domestically. Another good example is the repair and upgrading of sugar mills, an area in which Cuban internationalist workers have participated in many countries, and in which Cuban workers have a great deal of experience. In Golfe, the Cubans have transplanted the national prefabricated construction system stock and barrel. The system includes setting up plants where the prefabricated components are manufactured and assembled;[142] using the same type of dwelling design (in this case, the E-14); and utilizing a comparable physical layout (including similar infrastructural facilities as found in Cuban urban developments, such as schools and polyclinics). This approach is efficient since it permits a relatively small number of Cuban technicians to direct the labor of a large contingent of unskilled Angolan workers. In Golfe in 1977 and 1978, for example, 20 Cuban technicians were directing the work of 1,600 Angolan workers. Among the Cuban technicians were some of the most experienced Cuban construction workers, including some who had worked for years in the development of one of the biggest and better known Cuban urban developments: Alamar, East of Havana.[143]

There is limited evidence that suggests that not all has gone well with Cuba's construction activities in Angola. Occasional claims by Angolan opposition sources abroad suggest that the Cuban construction standards are not up to international norms. The durability of the projects seems rather poor (this is consistent with the poor quality of construction reported in Cuba itself), cost overruns are frequent, and some contracts experience delays. The improvements to the Luanda

port, for instance, took over two years longer than originally planned, and reportedly at a cost three times higher than quoted by a Western firm.[144] Shoddy construction is also said to affect the housing units built by Cuban workers in Luanda and other Angolan localities.[145] These same sources report continuing and serious problems with Luanda's water supply; these difficulties have been attributed to structural defects in two water reservoirs built with Cuban assistance.

Ethiopia. Ethiopia, one of the world's poorest nations, has received a considerable amount of Cuban aid in the construction sector. Ethiopia certainly does not have the means with which to pay for these services, suggesting that Cuba has donated most, if not all, of its aid. It is likely, however, that the Soviet Union and other Eastern bloc nations have subsidized a portion of Cuba's civilian assistance program, just as they supported the Cuban military presence financially and logistically during the Ethiopian–Somalian conflict. As in Angola, the civilian aid program began shortly after a major Cuban military involvement in the country.

Cuba's construction activities in Ethiopia have taken maximum advantage of the experience gained by Cuba in various economic sectors and are consistent with Ethiopian priorities. Representative of this assistance is the aid Cuba provided in the development of water resources, an urgent need in a country as dry and as prone to droughts as Ethiopia. Cuba has assisted with the construction of several major dams—at the Berbela and Wedecha rivers—and has built a series of mini-dams, similar to those commonly constructed in Cuba. Irrigation systems are generally part of the dam projects.[146]

Cuba has also contributed to the development of the basic Ethiopian road infrastructure, having completed two mountain roads extending over 100 kilometers. Both of these roads were begun in 1980 and completed by May of 1982, at an approximate cost of $6 million. The heavy equipment used in the construction of these roads was purchased from Japan and donated by Cuba to Ethiopia once the roads were finished. The roads, from Metu to Alge and from Mizan to Tepi—located Southwest of Addis Ababa, near the border with Sudan—will help open an extensive coffee-producing area of Ethiopia to commercial agriculture.[147]

The crowning achievement of Cuba's construction activities in Ethiopia is the New Mugher cement plant, located some 100 kilometers from Addis Ababa. This plant, with a rated capacity of 312,000 tons of cement per year, is capable of producing as much cement as the combined output of Ethiopia's other three cement plants. It is reported to be the first major industrial facility built by Cuban work-

ers abroad, a joint venture between Cuba and the German Democratic Republic. The latter designed the facility and provided the equipment as well as technical assistance in construction. The Cubans were in charge of supervising the civil construction phase of the project, and were responsible for constructing the required supporting infrastructural facilities (e.g., power and telephone lines and a water reservoir). As many as 400 Cuban workers participated in the project. This plant, incidentally, is similar in design to one built in Cienfuegos, Cuba, with the assistance of the East Germans. The Cubans, thus, had some experience in this type of project.[148] Cuban workers also helped build a sugar mill in Ethiopia.[149]

Other Countries. Guinea was the first African country to host Cuban construction projects. This type of collaboration began in the early seventies. Cuban technicians helped in the construction of two poultry farms (one in Ratoma in 1971, the other in Kaporo in 1978), and have participated in road and airport construction projects.[150] Cuba has also provided design or construction assistance to other countries, including the Congo, Tanzania, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique.[151]

THE FUTURE

The nature of future Cuban activities in Sub-Saharan Africa is, of course, difficult to anticipate. But in the Gorbachev era, and with Cuba agreeing to phase out its military activities in Angola, it is more than likely that Castro will place added emphasis on civilian cooperation. Demand for many of the services Cuba can provide remains strong, and the international climate for Cuban military ventures in the area is no longer propitious. The forthcoming independence of Namibia, in addition, may signal an end to the national liberation struggles—with the obvious exception of South Africa. On the other hand, the potential for armed conflict remains high in many of the ethnically fragmented African countries. The worldwide swing toward increasing reliance on market mechanisms to run national economies may, nevertheless, limit the opportunities and usefulness of some of the assistance Cuba has been providing in the region. This will be particularly so if Castro, despite considerable domestic economic difficulties, continues to stubbornly uphold orthodox Marxist management policies.

5/Cuba's Angolan Operation

Olga Nazario

INTRODUCTION

In July 1991, when the last Cuban soldier leaves Angola per agreements signed on 22 December 1988 between South Africa, Cuba and Angola, Cuba's military contingent will have spent 16 years in Angola. During that long period of time, Cuba's experience in Angola evolved and changed; the initial successful operation turned into an extremely complex conflict in which Cuba became deeply involved but in which its influence gradually decreased.

Cuba's Angolan operation has proven to be a "wasting political resource." In a convincing essay, Jorge Domínguez argues that military success overseas grants the major actor, here Cuba, "the most influence at the time of the military victory," but this "influence over the recipient country is likely to weaken over time."[1] Among the factors that make the major actor lose political influence are: the increasing demands made by the recipient country, the risk of getting dragged into internal conflicts, the inability of the major actor to change the host country's policies without threatening the internal order, and changing international circumstances. True to the historical experience of other countries that have deployed troops in foreign lands over long periods of time without attaining a decisive military

Opinion, views and conclusions expressed or implied in this article are solely those of the author and do not represent the views of the Radio Martí Program, the Voice of America, the U.S. Information Agency, or any other government agency.

victory, the Angolan conflict dragged Cuba into a war of attrition.

The Angola conflict may have significant consequences for the Cuban leadership. Fidel Castro's drive to maneuver in international politics is intrinsic to his leadership style. Cuba's reach toward Africa in the sixties and seventies granted Castro greater latitude between the superpowers and enhanced his leadership role domestically and internationally. In Angola, however, Castro has seen his leverage reduced by the failure to obtain a decisive and timely military victory, by Angola's engagement in talks with the United States and South Africa in which Cuba did not participate until January 1988, by the Cuban command's subordination to Soviet military strategy and policies, by lack of regional and international support for Cuba's willingness to remain in Angola until the end of apartheid, and by shifts in Soviet policy toward regional conflicts.

This paper examines how and why the Cuban government became burdened by the Angolan operation. First, it will review the initial intervention before discussing the military quagmire and the efforts to achieve a negotiated political solution. Finally, it examines possible consequences for the Cuban leadership.

THE INITIAL OPERATION

The Angolan operation marked a watershed for Cuba's foreign policy. It signaled a dramatic shift from the role Cuba played in Africa in the sixties. From its not always successful support of liberation movements and brief deployments of small contingents abroad, Cuba suddenly became a decisive actor in the installation of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA—Movimento Popular para Libertação de Angola) in power in 1975. Following a series of setbacks at home and abroad, the victory in Angola constituted the highest achievement in Fidel Castro's foreign policy initiatives, adding momentum to his power domestically and highlighting his role in international politics.

Cuban troops were sent to Angola in 1975 to support the MPLA, one of the liberation movements that had fought Portuguese colonialism. The Cuban contingent, composed first of advisers and later of combat troops, arrived prior to the date set by Portugal to grant independence to its colony. In fact, an unstable international environment at the time gave Cuba a good opportunity to exercise its internationalist foreign policy.[2]

Plans for granting independence to the Portuguese colonies in

Africa developed only after an unexpected military coup, led by army officers tired of unsuccessful African campaigns, forced Lisbon's long-standing dictatorship out of power on 25 April 1974. In January 1975, three main groups were engaged in a power struggle in Angola: the MPLA, the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA—Frente Nacional para Libertação de Angola) and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA—União Nacional para Independencia Total de Angola). That month, all three signed the Alvor Agreement, which set the date of Angolan independence for 11 November 1975, established a coalition transitional government, and called for legislative elections prior to independence.[3] The agreement, however, was never enforced and civil war among the three groups ensued, each one supported by various regional and international powers. The United States, Zaire, Zambia and South Africa backed the FNLA and UNITA. The Soviet Union, Cuba and the Portuguese Communist Party dispensed the material, human and tactical support that enabled the MPLA to gain power. China, an earlier contender on the Angolan scene, had practically disappeared by then.

The Western world was caught by surprise by events in Angola. The provision of Cuban troops and Soviet military equipment to the MPLA was taken as an indication that the Soviet Union, under the leadership of Leonid Brezhnev, was willing to contest the policy of detente with the United States developed during the Nixon administration. Apparently, the Cuban leadership calculated correctly that the United States, evidently weakened by the Vietnam conflict, had very limited options with which to respond to the arrival of the Cuban contingents in Angola.

In fact, U.S. options were drastically reduced by the October 1975 South African invasion of Angola, in support of the FNLA and UNITA. A few months later, Congress passed the Clark Amendment banning covert aid to the Angolan insurgents. The United States implicitly accepted the predicament in Angola, yet refused to recognize the MPLA government.

The South African invasion also legitimized the role of Cuban troops in Angola in the eyes of most African states and cushioned regional reaction to their arrival. While foreign forces are not necessarily welcomed in the continent, Cuba was perceived by most African leaders as protecting a newly independent nation from South Africa's belligerence. Nonetheless, some African states, such as Nigeria, warned the Cubans not to overextend their reception.

The benefits Cuba derived from its initial participation in Angola

by far exceeded its costs. The Cuban regime was strengthened domestically when the Angolan operation stirred nationalistic pride, as "little" Cuba began playing a big role in world affairs. Castro claimed that the Angolan operation was an "African Girón," another victory over imperialism. Generally speaking, the Cuban population and the armed forces were proud of Cuba's socialist solidarity with Angola.[4] Colombian novelist Gabriel García Márquez wrote in "Operation Carlota" that, after a series of setbacks at home and abroad, Angola gave the Cuban population "the gratification of the big victory they needed so much."[5]

The most significant benefit for Cuba was felt in its relationship with the Soviet Union. The Soviets viewed Cuban intervention as a reinforcement to their strategic interests in the region. As a pro-Chinese Marxist explained, with the MPLA victory in Angola "the Soviets essentially established a foothold in an area that was, and is, of vital importance to U.S. imperialists."[6] The Angolan operation therefore increased Castro's leverage with the Soviets who found a valuable Third World ally in Cuba. Shortly thereafter, the Soviets furnished Cuba with new, sophisticated military equipment and granted Castro economic rewards.[7]

For Cuba, the cost of the initial Angolan operation was minimal. While many argue that it created economic dislocations domestically, others believe that becoming involved in Angola gave Castro an outlet for reducing employment pressures and that it actually brought economic benefits.[8] During the early stages of Cuba's involvement the human cost was low. According to Castro, "fewer Cuban soldiers were killed in action over four months of fighting in Angola than in three days of fighting in Girón."[9] Costs for Cuba did not begin to mount until the early eighties, as Angolan insurgents regained strength.

In fact, the initial success of the Angolan operation heralded a period of Cuban prominence in international affairs.[10] Between 1975 and 1979, Cuba's assistance was a key element in determining the outcomes of the struggles in Angola, in Nicaragua, and in the Ethiopian-Somali dispute over the Ogaden. Concomitantly, new independent African countries whose liberation movements Cuba had supported emerged in Africa, as Portuguese and British colonialisms came to an end in western and southern Africa. All these new states—Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, and Zimbabwe—established friendly relations with Cuba and eventually welcomed Cuban civilian and military advisers. At the

same time, revolutionary movements had triumphed in Grenada, Vietnam and Kampuchea. Finally, in 1979, Castro was elected chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Castro's series of foreign policy successes, however, have gradually eroded.[11] Ironically, the decline began at the 1979 summit meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement held in Havana when Castro did not condemn the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, while other members opposed that action. Of harsher consequences was the refusal of Cuban internationalists to follow Castro's order to fight to the death against U.S. forces in Grenada in 1983. And finally, the sweet taste of early victory in Angola turned sour.

THE MILITARY QUAGMIRE

During the eighties, Cuba's situation in Angola changed. The initial successful intervention in support of the MPLA developed into a long stalemated guerrilla conflict. By 1981, South Africa stepped up its incursions into Angolan territory and increased material support for UNITA substantially. By 1985, Angola was expending over 60 percent of its foreign exchange, mainly from oil, for defense. Its potentially prosperous economy was devastated by the war effort and by the destabilizing tactics used by the insurgency. Between 1976 and 1986, Angola acquired over $4 billion in Soviet armament.[12] Still, military offensives systematically carried out against UNITA failed to break the military stalemate.

As long as casualties were low, it was to Cuba's advantage to remain in Angola to secure then President Agostinho Neto's leadership against attempts to overthrow the government. The MPLA and Cuba showed little concern over the potential threat of UNITA in the south, far away from Luanda and far from Angola's main resources—oil in Cabinda, diamonds in the northeast. Eventually, the FNLA was crushed and the group that operated in Cabinda, the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC—Frente para Libertaçao do Enclave de Cabinda), was neutralized through political tactics. By 1976, Fidel Castro declared that, "the FNLA and UNITA are completely demoralized and will never again be back on their feet."[13]

Underestimating the guerrillas

The inability of the Cuban forces, which gradually increased from a few thousand in 1976 to at least 50,000 in 1988, to defeat UNITA in Angola perplexes many observers. Although in later years Cuba has said that fighting UNITA had not been part of its mission in Angola, the demand for more Cuban soldiers was directly related to the threat posed by UNITA to the MPLA government.[14]

Castro clearly underestimated UNITA military strength. Trained in guerrilla warfare in China, UNITA's leader Jonas Savimbi is recognized as the "African adapter of methods and procedures of the modern Far Eastern insurrectional wars."[15] After his defeat in 1975, Savimbi retreated to Angola's southeast border with Namibia, a corner of no economic importance to the MPLA. Gradually UNITA extended its operations to the west, and after 1982, to the north, operating along two tracks that cross at the center of Angola. UNITA's ground-based transportation and communications network has been compared to the Ho Chi Minh trail during the Vietnam war.[16]

Cuban forces and the Cuban-trained Angolan army (FAPLA—Forças Armadas Populares de Libertação de Angola) failed to respond effectively to UNITA's tactics. Bernard Expèdit aptly described the problems in FAPLA, Cuban and Soviet war strategy:

> Their methods, identical to those used in Vietnam against the Viet Minh and the Viet Cong, consisted of trying to keep the roads open and, from time to time, with Cuban help, launching major operations with support from armored vehicles, aircraft, and helicopters. But these methods were ill-adapted to the terrain and UNITA's light infantry. This infantry, by its very nature, was much more at ease in the African bush, where there are almost no roads.[17]

Back in Cuba, the regime used the domestic media to compare the campaigns against UNITA to those against anti-Castro rebels in the Cuban mountains of El Escambray in 1961. However, the regime failed to point out essential differences: that the Cuban forces were operating in a foreign country and on a different terrain; that the rains determine who will have the field advantage for half of the year; that UNITA was able to attack far away from its headquarters and could then retreat safely to the Namibian border, which it could then conveniently cross if necessary. Also omitted was that, contrary to the situation in El Escambray, the rebels in Angola were supported by a regional power across the border, namely South Africa. Nonetheless, Cuba boasted that UNITA's days were numbered.[18]

Instead, however, UNITA gained strength. By 1983, UNITA occupied parts of the southeastern provinces of Cuando Cubango and Moxico and operated freely in the central part of the country. Counterinsurgency operations conducted by the Cubans in the late seventies and early eighties had proven unsuccessful in eliminating the guerrillas. Nonetheless, in 1985, a Cuban official indicated that, "If we had decided to fight UNITA, they would have been out of business long ago."[19] By then, in order to avoid high casualties, Cuban forces were no longer directly fighting UNITA; instead, they were in charge of protecting Angola's main cities in order to free FAPLA to fight UNITA.[20] Cuban forces were to engage in direct confrontation with UNITA only in exceptional cases. But by the time UNITA became a significant force, direct confrontation with the guerrillas would have meant even higher Cuban casualties. It could also have led to a possible confrontation with South Africa, which entered Angola every time a major offensive threatened UNITA's survival.

Cuba also underestimated UNITA's political ability to secure regional and international support. During the anticolonial struggle, UNITA had been the least effective of the Angolan liberation movements in projecting itself abroad. Also, it had been left on its own when South African forces retreated from Angolan territory in March 1976 and when the United States passed the Clark Amendment, cutting aid to Angolan insurgents. Eventually, however, UNITA attained a mutually beneficial relationship with South Africa. Angolan and Cuban army operations against UNITA strongholds in the south of Angola were made virtually ineffective by South Africa's commitment to UNITA. Ground operations met swift reprisal from the South African air force. In addition, South Africa intervened in Angola frequently on the pretext of carrying out "hot pursuit" operations against SWAPO forces. In 1981, South Africa invaded Angola, occupying a 24,000 square mile zone in the southern part of the country.[21] In 1983, South Africa again penetrated more than 150 kilometers of Angolan territory. In late 1987, South Africa had between 3,000 and 9,000 soldiers in southern Angola. Both Angola and Cuba claimed that it was South African aggressions that impeded the withdrawal of Cuban forces from Angola.

UNITA also succeeded in obtaining political and military support from the Reagan administration in Washington. In July 1985, in a reversal of U.S. policy toward Angola, the U.S. Congress repealed the Clark Amendment, lifting the ban on covert aid to UNITA. Shortly after, Congress approved a $15 million military aid package,

including Stinger missiles, for Savimbi's group. The resumption of U.S. assistance to UNITA enhanced Savimbi's military capability and represented an additional military risk for Cuba.

Subordination to Soviet Military Strategy

Cuba repeatedly increased the troops it deployed in Angola, while the Soviets provided the armaments and outlined the strategy for the military operations against UNITA. Despite the poor results of Cuba's counterinsurgency operations against UNITA in the late seventies, former chief of the Cuban Air Force in Angola, Brigadier General Rafael del Pino,[22] argues that military offensives against UNITA often failed because of the poor Soviet strategy that the Cuban command was subordinated to. Although substantial evidence on differences between Soviet and Cuban military tactics is lacking, del Pino cites the 1985 offensive as evidence of the discrepancy between Soviet and Cuban strategy.

The 1985 offensive, directed by the Soviets, was a three-pronged operation against UNITA's main bases in the northeast and against Mavinga in the south. The Cubans had favored a massive strike against Mavinga rather than simultaneous attacks on various fronts. The operations succeeded in pushing UNITA out of its sanctuaries in Cazombo in the northeast, but not in the south. As expected, South Africa came to UNITA's rescue and the offensive, as Angolan President José Eduardo dos Santos put it, "finished more or less a draw."[23] But, according to del Pino, "the outcome was an immense defeat" because of poor guidance by Soviet advisers.[24] Angolan government forces failed to break South Africa's protective shield over UNITA in the south, nor did they succeed in curtailing UNITA's guerrilla activities to the north or its frequent attacks throughout the country.

Shortly after the 1985 offensive failed, London's *The Observer* reported that the Cuban leadership was seeking Soviet approval to declare war on South Africa in an effort to bring the crisis in southern Africa to a head. This unconfirmed information, allegedly provided by a "senior government official in Havana" could very well have reflected Cuba's rationale and reading of the situation. The report, which indeed appeared to be a leak, claimed: that Cuba's main objective was to remove South Africa and its proteges from Angola, Namibia and Mozambique; that open war with South Africa would likely be fought in Angola and provided enough Soviet hardware, the Cuban were confident they could win; and that even if Moscow rejected a full-scale war, it might authorize and even pay for a

substantial increase in military operations against UNITA rebels in Angola and the guerrillas in Mozambique, as well as increase aid to SWAPO.[25]

Del Pino claims that Castro, who was personally involved in directing Cuban activities in Angola from Havana, had been frustrated by Soviet strategy failures.[26] Perhaps Cuba was using the apparent leak to apply international pressure in order to force the Soviet Union to become more committed in Southern Africa, or Castro may have been attempting to regain Cuban military initiative in Angola by threatening to escalate the levels of confrontation. But there was no indication of Soviet interest in launching a "holy war" against South Africa. "The Soviets may support the war in Angola and the defense of the Marxist government there," South African professor Deon Fourie stated, "but a full-scale war does not rationally fit into the pattern of the conduct of Soviet foreign policy."[27] Moreover, in March 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev became General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, bringing with him an economic agenda that was soon to conflict with Castro's own. Thus, it was not clear how supportive Gorbachev would be of his predecessor's policies toward Cuba or how appreciative he would be of Castro's initiatives in the Third World.[28]

1985 was a crucial year in the Angolan conflict. It became evident that future offensives against UNITA would not succeed unless there was the political and military will to confront the South Africans. It was also in 1985 that the United States lifted the ban on military aid to Angolan insurgents (the Clark Amendment) which augured that aid to UNITA could begin to flow in the near future. Futhermore, up until the time that the Clark Amendment was lifted, the MPLA had been involved in sporadic negotiations—in which Cuba did not participate—with the United States and South Africa. All these factors reduced Cuba's leverage in Angolan affairs. Uncertainty over the policies of the new Soviet leadership further complicated matters for Cuba's internationalism.

Nevertheless, in 1986 another offensive was launched just before Congressionally-approved U.S. aid to UNITA began flowing. The offensive had difficulties becoming operational, in part because of the usual problems of conducting an offensive, but also because UNITA and South Africa cut off Angolan supply lines.[29] In the fall of 1987, another major offensive was launched against Mavinga. It was apparently coordinated in Moscow during the annual Soviet-Cuban-Angolan tripartite talks, held in March 1987.[30] Despite more and better Soviet equipment, months of preparation and the leadership of

a Soviet general, the 1987 offensive against UNITA failed to break the military stalemate.[31] South Africa entered Angola to ensure UNITA's survival and, for the first time, publicly acknowledged that its forces had been directly involved in repelling the MPLA offensive. South Africa remained in Angola for several months, supporting the UNITA post-offensive seige on Cuito Cuanavale.

In his 26 July 1988 speech, Fidel Castro publicly conceded the failures of the 1985 and 1987 offensives. Concurring with del Pino's statements, but without directly blaming the Soviets, Castro stated that many errors had been made in Angola. But, he stated, the Cubans were not responsible for them.

For the Soviets' part, while government officials have not yet addressed the issue of who is responsible for not achieving a decisive military victory in Angola, Moscow's *Krasnaya Zvezda* has attempted to clear the Soviet record. Explaining why a political solution was the only alternative left to resolve the Angolan conflict, the Soviet magazine explained:

> The combat operations on the southern border of Angola have been waged for many years now. So far success has eluded the South African racists and their UNITA henchmen. However, the People's Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola have not been able either, even with Cubans' help, to decisively defeat the enemy and drive him out of the country's territory. The result, frankly speaking, was an impasse.[32]

Regaining the Military Initiative

Cuban elite troops commanded by General Arnaldo Ochoa—a veteran of the initial Angolan operation and of the Ogaden conflict—arrived in Angola beginning in November 1987. The fresh troops moved south from the Namibe-Menongue deterrence line, occupying open spaces in southwest Angola, until they had nearly reached the Namibian border. According to Castro, the purpose of the Cuban operations into southern Angola was not to seek a military victory, but "a just political solution to the conflict." For Castro, the result was that South Africa agreed to meet with officials of the Cuban, Angolan and United States governments in London because they had "met with an unprecedented Cuban force."[33]

Castro argued that during both the 1985 and 1987 "Angolan military operation," FAPLA forces had concentrated in an area far away from the end of the strategic line that the Cubans defended (Namibe-Menongue line) for an offensive against UNITA. This provoked

South Africa's intervention. The Angolan forces, suffering numerous casualties, had been left without food, fuel or ammunition near the Lomba River and had begun to retreat, followed by the South Africans up to Cuito Cuanavale. According to Castro, thousands of Angolan soldiers were on the verge of being annihilated by the South Africans, which would have meant a disaster for Angola and a threat to the security of the Cuban forces. "It was necessary," Castro continues, "to reinforce our forces, because that type of operation cannot be done halfway. It was necessary to change the correlation of forces."[34]

As the unprecedented Cuban operations in southern Africa developed, the western media speculated that these operations had been opposed by the Soviets. Evidently, the Cubans took the initiative and Cuban generals were in command. Special Cuban television programs broadcast in mid-June 1988 emphasized that Castro was directing the operations in Angola from Havana. It seems, however, that the daring Cuban initiative did not oppose Soviet interests. In fact, it appears that the Soviets may have agreed to allow Castro to regain the military initiative in Angola. In the midst of a process of political negotiations, in which the Soviets seem to have been very influential in convincing the Cubans to accept a negotiated settlement, one may speculate that the Soviets agreed that Castro needed, for domestic and international purposes, a military victory against the South Africans in Angola before Cuban troops were sent back home.

According to African diplomats who attended a closed meeting in Havana on 30 May 1987, during which Castro explained Cuban operations in southern Angola, Castro sought a confrontation with the South Africans to show that the Cubans did not "lose their shoes on the battle field." These diplomats interpret the Cuban military activities in Angola in 1988 as a way of avoiding the feeling of frustration and the "Vietnam syndrome" among the 40,000-plus men returning to their country after 13 years of war.[35]

Cuba's Diminishing Political Leverage

Over the years, Cuba's political influence in Angola was substantially reduced. While the impact of the sheer number of Cuban forces in Angola should not be underestimated, Cuba could not determine the course of events. The deployment of Cuban forces in Angola had provided Fidel Castro with a bargaining chip in dealing with the United States as well as with the Soviets. The troops could have been

part and parcel of any negotiation with Castro as broker. But after 1981, the search for a negotiated political solution began without Cuba's participation. Castro often opposed and frequently attempted to derail the process of negotiations.

Exclusion from Talks

The withdrawal of the Cuban forces in Angola became the main focus of the Reagan administration's southern African policy.[36] Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Chester Crocker proposed a "constructive engagement" policy to persuade Angola and South Africa to establish a dialogue for the withdrawal of the Cuban troops and the independence of Namibia. Constructive engagement intended to:

> . . . blunt Soviet and Cuban influence in southern Africa by promoting a process of dialogue and reconciliation between South Africa and the independent black-ruled states in the region that provided sanctuary to the African National Congress (ANC) . . . By addressing Pretoria's security concerns, it was argued, the government of President Pieter W. Botha could be coaxed into agreeing to an international settlement in Namibia, detente with its neighbors, and internal change that would address the fundamental political concerns of its black population.[37]

Despite the MPLA's dependency on Cuban forces, Angolan president José Eduardo dos Santos followed a course of action that did not always meet with Cuban approval.[38] After 1981, dos Santos accepted U.S. offers to mediate between Angola and South Africa in finding a political solution to the Angolan conflict. Angola implicitly accepted linking the withdrawal of Cuban troops with the independence of Namibia, although the MPLA has denied that it agreed to that arrangement. Military operations, however, were also maintained as part of Angola's two-track policy. Apparently, in some cases dos Santos engaged in talks with the United States with the purpose of delaying proposals pending before Congress to either supply military aid to UNITA, cut economic aid to Angola, or impose restrictions on U.S. oil companies doing business in Angola. Cuba was not invited to participate in any talks with the United States regarding the withdrawal of Cuban troops until January 1988. Frequently opposing the talks, Cuba hardened its position each time talks resumed.

In February 1982, in what seemed an attempt to curtail Angola's

latitude while it was holding talks with the United States and South Africa, Cuba invited Angola to sign a joint declaration establishing the conditions required for the withdrawal of the Cuban troops. On 4 February 1982, the Joint Statement of the Governments of the People's Republic of Angola and the Republic of Cuba was signed by Angolan foreign minister Paulo T. Jorge[39] and Cuban foreign minister Isidoro Malmierca in Luanda. The statement explained why Cuban troops were still in Angola and established the conditions for their withdrawal: independence of Namibia based on implementation of UN Resolution 435/78; total withdrawal of South African forces beyond the Orange River; and cessation of acts of aggression against Angola.[40]

In March 1984, shortly after Angola signed the Lusaka Agreement[41] with South Africa, Cuba asked Angola to sign another joint statement. This second declaration, signed personally by dos Santos and Castro in Havana, expanded the conditions for the withdrawal of the Cuban forces beyond those outlined in the 1982 joint statement. The March 1984 declaration demanded cessation of any direct aggression against Angola from South Africa, the United States and their allies; and cessation of any assistance to UNITA by South Africa, the United States and their allies.[42]

During this time, Angola continued to engage the United States in sporadic talks despite many obstacles. These talks dealt with setting a timetable that would be acceptable to South Africa for the withdrawal of Cuban troops and Namibian independence. In a November 1984 Platform, Angola proposed a gradual withdrawal of Cuban forces over a period of three years. Negotiations collapsed when South Africa demanded that Cuba pull out its forces over a period of three months. In April 1985, the United States proposed a timetable for the withdrawal of Cuban troops over a period of two years in an effort to break the deadlock. Boycotting the negotiations, South Africa announced that it would install an interim government in Namibia by August 1985. In May, in another attempt to derail the negotiations, South Africa launched a commando attack against Cabinda.

Angola, however, continued scheduling talks with U.S. officials, and Cuba hardened its position. Fidel Castro charged that the Reagan administration was an ally of South Africa and therefore unfit to mediate for Angola. Castro asserted that not a single Cuban soldier would be withdrawn from Angola until all conditions outlined in both Angolan-Cuban joint declarations were met. Furthermore, he offered to send even more Cuban troops if needed.[43]

In July 1985, when the U.S. Congress repealed the Clark Amend-

ment lifting the ban on covert aid to UNITA, the MPLA immediately suspended all contacts with U.S. officials. Cuba hailed Angola's decision, and used the opportunity to denounce Angola's previous "excessive flexibility" in its negotiations with South Africa on the withdrawal of Cuban contingents. For Cuba, Angola's decision to suspend talks strengthened the MPLA's political prestige among African nations and provided much needed internal unity within the MPLA.[44]

Despite Cuba's criticism, by November 1985, following the failure of that year's military operations against UNITA, Angola resumed contacts with the United States. This round of talks, however, was broken by Angola in February 1986 when President Reagan welcomed Jonas Savimbi, the leader of UNITA, to the White House, and shortly thereafter, the U.S. Congress approved $15 million in military aid to UNITA. Dos Santos accused the United States of interfering in Angola's internal affairs. He agreed with Castro's earlier assessment that the United States had lost its credibility as a mediator in finding a solution for the problems of southern Africa, thereby indicating that the United Nations should take complete responsibility for the course of the negotiations. A statement issued by the Angolan government further asserted that "the Angolan people had no option other than armed struggle."[45]

Castro supported Angola's more militant position and offered to stay in Angola "one hundred years more, if needed." In March 1986, when dos Santos attended the celebration of the 27th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, the Soviet leadership reiterated its solidarity with the prolonged struggle of the Angolan people. With Castro also in Moscow, the Soviet Union, Cuba and Angola held their annual tripartite talks regarding the situation in southern Africa. All parties concerned appeared to agree on a military solution. In May 1986, dos Santos was back in Moscow, and Mikhail Gorbachev asserted that no one should doubt the Soviet Union's firm and unswerving commitment to Angola.[46]

Hardening Cuba's position still further, after mid-1985 Fidel Castro and other Cuban officials insinuated that the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola should be linked to the end of apartheid in South Africa and not to the independence of Namibia. This proposition was made explicit at the summit meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement held in Harare, Zimbabwe, in September 1986. Fidel Castro declared that at least 10,000 Cuban soldiers would remain in Angola until the end of apartheid, regardless of the course of future negotiations.

Not surprisingly, Angola was the first to react to Castro's state-

ment. At the same meeting, dos Santos indicated that Angola was prepared to resume a dialogue with South Africa. The MPLA indicated a desire for peace in Angola, even before the end of apartheid in South Africa, despite its commitment to that struggle. Castro's statement seems to have been perceived as violating Angola's sovereignty, since none of the joint statements signed between Cuba and Angola have ever included the end of apartheid as a condition for the withdrawal of Cuban forces.

African nations who refused to link Namibian independence with the withdrawal of Cuban troops also reacted negatively to Castro's plan to prolong Cuba's presence in Angola. These nations urged Angola to reinstate talks with the United States. In early 1987, Colonel Denis Sassou-Nguesso, President of Congo and then Chairman of the Organization of African Unity, offered to host the first encounter between Angolan and U.S. officials held in eighteen months.

Indeed, by March 1987, Angola had again notified the United States that it was prepared to undertake a new round of talks. In April, Chester Crocker held preliminary talks with Angolan officials in Brazzaville, Congo. Then on 14 and 15 July, official Angolan-U.S. talks were held in Luanda. But, at the conclusion of the Luanda meeting, Crocker stated that the talks had been a waste of time. He argued that the MPLA leadership was divided and under pressure from the Cubans and Soviets, who instead preferred to continue military operations aimed at wiping out Savimbi. Coincidentally, Cuban Politburo member Jorge Risquet, in charge of Angolan affairs, traveled to Angola while Crocker made two trips to Luanda.[47] And, indeed, Soviets and Cubans were preparing the 1987 offensive at the time.

Crocker's statement, however, pressured dos Santos into clarifying that there were no divisions within the MPLA, and into stating that Angola was committed to seeking a political solution. Then, on 24 July 1987, just weeks before that year's military offensive was launched, at a meeting of the Southern Africa Development Coordinating Conference (SADCC) in Lusaka, Zambia, dos Santos declared that a military victory would not be attained by any of the parties in the South African and Namibian conflicts. "We believe," dos Santos stated, "that the time is right for the negotiation of a just political solution."[48] Following a brief trip to Havana in late July, dos Santos presented a General Accord to the United States. It called for the withdrawal of Cuban troops deployed south of the Thirteenth Parallel over a shorter time period and in larger numbers. The Accord would be signed by South Africa, Cuba, SWAPO and Angola.

A communique issued at the conclusion of dos Santos's talks with Castro indicated that Cuba acknowledged, for the first time, that regional conflicts demanded a political solution reached through negotiations. Angola and Cuba were prepared to assume a more flexible position. Still, Cuba insisted that only those troops south of the Thirteenth Parallel were subject to discussions. The remaining troops in the north would be withdrawn only through bilateral agreement between Angola and Cuba. Furthermore, the communique stressed that Cuba should sit at the negotiation table.[49]

Cuba did not explain why it had decided to be more flexible. There are at least two plausible explanations. Dos Santos may have assured Castro that Cuba would participate in future negotiations, and/or Castro had accepted the Soviet resolve to end all regional conflicts through negotiations.

Overpowered by the Superpowers

Gonzalez and Ronfeldt point out that in the late eighties, "Castro faces an international environment that is virtually the reverse of what it was a decade ago."[50] The Reagan administration's support to insurgencies fighting Marxist governments increased the cost of Soviet involvements in regional conflicts. It also represented a threat to many of Cuba's commitments abroad and created an ambiguous environment in which Cuba had to act.[51] Cuba was unable to anticipate how far the U.S. administration was willing to go in challenging Cuban interests in Grenada, Nicaragua, Angola or elsewhere. In fact, Cuban Vice President Carlos Rafael Rodríguez declared that during the Reagan administration, Cuba–U.S. relations went through their most difficult period.[52]

African and West European nations have also become increasingly involved in denying Cuba and the Soviet Union the possibility of increasing their military presence in Africa. Concerned about the direction that the internal turmoil in South Africa might take and the complexity of the regional conflict, Western Europe suddenly became interested in responding to Mozambique's and Angola's economic, as well as military, needs. The United Kingdom, France, Sweden, Belgium, Italy, Spain, West Germany, and even Portugal have expanded and strengthened their links with Angola, Mozambique and other African nations. Some of these nations have made overtures to Savimbi, and all of them supported Angola's stated commitment to finding a negotiated solution to the war.

As more actors became concerned with the deterioration of the

Angolan conflict and as dos Santos urged African nations to become more involved in finding a negotiated political solution, the possibility arose that a regional solution, an African solution, supported by the European nations, could be sought. Such an alternative could, once again, reduce Castro's influence in the solution to the southern African conflicts.

In addition, Gorbachev's arrival to power in 1985 changed the status quo for Cuba. Gorbachev's domestic reforms, namely his *perestroika* and policy of *glasnost*, contradicted markedly with Castro's insistence on keeping Cuba a heavily centralized and closed society.[53] In foreign policy, Gorbachev's "new thinking" placed emphasis on reducing tensions with the United States as a mean of allocating military resources for domestic needs. Similarly, Gorbachev showed interest in bringing regional conflicts to an end.

While initially refusing to accept the U.S. proposal for discussing regional conflicts at summit meetings, Soviet officials eventually engaged the United States on talks regarding Angola. Beginning in 1985, USSR Deputy Foreign Minister Anatoly L. Adamishin met repeatedly with Chester Crocker to discuss southern Africa. While expressing skepticism over the outcome of the Angolan–U.S. talks held in 1987, Adamishin later became more enthusiastic about prospects for a negotiated solution. In March 1988, Adamishin shuttled from Washington to Havana and then to Luanda, discussing the Angolan conflict and referring to Angolan contacts with the United States as "useful." In Luanda, Adamishin declared Soviet support for Angola and Cuba in their stand in the talks with the United States, indicating that it was necessary to terminate all outside interference in Angola and that the internal problem (i.e. UNITA) could be resolved by the Angolan people themselves.[54] In June 1988, during the Gorbachev–Reagan Moscow Summit, Soviet officials indicated that Angola was the next regional conflict to be resolved.[55]

The meager information yet available on the Soviet decision to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan may throw some light on the Soviet position on Angola. Within a month after rising to power, Gorbachev began to seek a way out of Afghanistan, first militarily and then diplomatically. In July 1985, General Mikhail Zaitzev was placed in charge of an intensified effort to defeat the Afghan resistance. Simultaneously, Gorbachev approached the United Nations representatives to explore a negotiated solution. A major offensive was launched in 1986. Once the offensive failed to break the stalemate, Gorbachev opted for a diplomatic solution; a United Nations-sponsored agreement on Soviet troops withdrawal was signed by

Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Soviet Union and the United States in Geneva on 14 April 1988. The Soviets have favored a national reconciliation policy in Afghanistan and have indicated a willingness to accept a nonaligned Afghan government.[56] A similar Soviet attitude has been expressed toward the regional conflicts in Central America and in Southeast Asia.

Like Afghanistan, Angola had become a stalemated war by 1985, and Gorbachev supported the military option at first, and then the diplomatic one when subsequent offensives failed. Unlike Afghanistan, however, in Angola there are Cuban—not Soviet—troops. The need to provide an honorable exit for the Cuban troops from Angola may account for Soviet restraint on policy statements regarding Angola. Still, after more than seven years of frustrating talks between Angola and the United States, the breakthrough seen in the negotiations since early 1988 may have resulted primarily from Gorbachev's apparent determination to disengage from Third World conflicts.

Toward a Political Solution

In January 1988, Cuban officials were finally invited to join the Angolan delegation for talks with U.S. representatives in Luanda. Unexpectedly, at the first meeting held on 28–29 January, the Cuban delegation, headed by Jorge Risquet, offered to remove *all* 40,000-plus Cuban troops stationed in Angola.

Cuba's willingness to negotiate the withdrawal of all its troops from Angola marked a dramatic departure from earlier positions. No longer would Cuban troops stay in Angola for one hundred years, nor stay there until the end of apartheid. Furthermore, Cuba no longer refused to include Cuban troops deployed north of the Thirteenth Parallel in the negotiations. Moreover, by June 1988, Cuba had made another concession: U.S. aid to UNITA would no longer be a condition for the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola.

Throughout this negotiating process, Castro portrayed Cuba as Angola's protector in talks with the United States. In a February 1988 interview with NBC's Maria Shriver, Castro said that when Angola negotiated alone it was deceived by the United States and that Cuba's participation in the talks could help Angola find a solution that would not deceive anyone.[57] The perception that Cuba could facilitate a prompt solution to the Angolan conflict and that it might also secure the independence of Namibia may compensate for the domestic and international prestige that Castro lost during Cuba's long involvement in a no-win situation in Angola.

Indeed, considering the escalation of conflict in southern Angola that took place during the first few months of 1988, the many rounds of talks moved with surprising ease. On 9, 10 and 11 March 1988, a Cuban–Angolan delegation met with U.S. officials in Luanda. On 14 and 15 March, Chester Crocker met South Africa's Foreign Minister Roelof (Pik) Botha in Geneva to discuss the negotiations with Angola. This was their first meeting in almost two years. On 17 and 18 March, further talks were held in Luanda between a Cuban–Angolan delegation and U.S. representatives. On 23 March, Crocker met in Washington with Soviet Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Adamishin to discuss the status of the negotiations. On 25 March, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze discussed the Angolan situation in Lisbon with his Portuguese counterpart, stating that Lisbon was "a valuable interlocutor" in discussions affecting Angola because it maintained relations with all sides (including UNITA) involved in the conflict affecting that country. On 31 March, more talks were held between U.S. and South African officials, this time in Washington.

Perhaps the most significant round of talks took place in London in May 1988. There, for the first time, representatives of the governments of Angola, Cuba, the United States and South Africa sat together to discuss a negotiated political solution for Angola and Namibia. This meeting signaled that the process of negotiations had indeed gained momentum. All external participants in the 13-year-old Angolan conflict agreed on a political solution. And Cuba, sitting across its two archenemies—the United States and South Africa—agreed that Angola needed peace *before* the end of apartheid.

The London talks were followed by more quadripartite talks in Cairo, New York, Geneva and Brazzaville. Angola, Cuba and South Africa agreed on a sequence of steps to achieve peace in southwestern Angola. The first step was an agreement that their forces should observe an immediate ceasefire in Angola, effective 8 August 1988. Subsequently, South Africa completed the withdrawal of its forces from Angola by 1 September 1988. Finally, on 22 December 1988, in New York, two separate but interrelated agreements were signed by South Africa, Cuba and Angola concerning the independence of Namibia and the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola. Implementation of U.N. Resolution 435—granting independence to Namibia—was scheduled to begin on 1 April 1989. The phased, total withdrawal of 50,000 Cuban troops from Angola should be completed over a period of 27 months, ending in July 1991. Neither UNITA nor

SWAPO took part in any of the talks nor were they signatories of the agreements.

The detente between the superpowers has facilitated the political resolution of regional conflicts, including the Angolan one. Despite the denial by Cuban officials that the Soviet Union had any influence over the course of the Angolan negotiations, Soviet officials present a different view.[58] Vice-Minister Adamishin stated that Soviet officials did play a role, and not a passive one at that. Furthermore, the view of Soviet assistance to Angola—and the results of such assistance—has changed. Yevgeny Tarabrin of the Soviet Institute for African Studies explained that the Soviet Union has already spent enough money on military assistance to Angola, far more than the United States has provided to UNITA, and that some of this Soviet money must be applied to other areas.

Domestic Implications of Cuba's Angolan Operation

Over the years, Cuba has seen its political and military leverage in Angola substantially diminished, and it was caught in the same trap that other armies in foreign lands have been: it could not win and it could not leave without putting the host government in jeopardy.[60] While Cuban forces helped sustain the MPLA government's power, Angola virtually collapsed all around.

Essentially, the Cuban leadership failed to anticipate and substantially influence the course of events in Angola. Despite the domestic and international prestige obtained at the outset, Castro failed to either win the war, curb the expansion of UNITA's operations, elegantly withdraw the troops on time, deter South African incursion into Angolan territory, or influence Soviet military strategy. Still worse, while Cuba claims that the 1975 deployment of Cuban forces in Angola was a Cuban decision, the withdrawal of the forces seems to be strongly influenced by changes in Soviet policy. Furthermore, Castro has publicly recognized the Cuban command's subordination to Soviet strategy in the offensives of 1985 and 1987.

The Angolan war is unique in Cuban history, and thus has significant domestic consequences. It represents the first time in the country's history that Cuban youth have been drafted under the aegis of "internationalism" rather than in the name of nationalist aspirations and to defend Cuban territory. Despite Castro's effort to put the Angolan operation in a cultural context by proclaiming that Cuba is

an "Afro-Latin" country, the Cuban population has not assimilated African political and military affairs as part of its social experience. Angola is a war that is basically alien to the Cuban society. As long as casualties were low, this attitude—as well as the omission of news on Angolan military activities from the Cuban media—may have contributed to a delayed awareness of the futility of Cuban involvement. As the war dragged on, however, fear of serving in Angola increased among the youth, resulting in an unprecedented rate of draft dodging in Cuba. More recently, the tendency among sectors of the Cuban population to associate the spread of AIDS in Cuba with the deployment of Cuban forces in Africa furthered increased domestic concern over Cuba's involvement in Angola.

In addition, domestic economic burdens borne by the Cuban population have been exacerbated by Cuba's ongoing involvement in the Angolan war. Many question the allocation of scarce resources where Cuban national interests are not clearly defined.[61] The war reached most Cuban homes through the large number of Cubans—300,000 by Castro's own 1988 account—who have served in Angola. Casualties are already estimated at 10,000,[62] a number large enough to cause serious domestic discontent even after the conflict comes to an end. In fact, in an unprecedented statement by the Cuban Catholic Church, Monsignor Carlos Manuel de Céspedes referred to the Cuban government's commitment to internationalism as "the root of so much pain and of many personal and family crises."[63]

Despite the triumphalism that the Cuban leadership has displayed over the return of the troops, only time will tell if Cuba's population will view the entire Angolan involvement as worthwhile, and if the veterans of the Angolan war feel that their efforts were satisfactorily compensated. The experience of other countries that have deployed troops abroad over time without obtaining clear military victories has been shattering. Still, democratic systems have offered channels for ventilating popular frustration following a military defeat—e.g. France after the Algerian crisis and the United States after Vietnam—but dictatorial regimes have repressed popular discontent without offering opportunities for gradual national reconciliation. In the case of Portugal, for instance, the defeat in Africa prompted the downfall of the Caetano dictatorship: "Portuguese officers acknowledging the futility for a lost cause," according to an African writer, "were educated, in the battle, in the need to rid their country of oppression."[64]

With a settlement finally reached, Castro is faced with finding some redress for withdrawing Cuban troops from Angola. Indeed, the troops may not have lost their character as a bargaining chip for

Castro. He may still be able to reach a compromise with the United States or the Soviet Union by which Cuba would be economically or politically compensated for withdrawing its troops from Angola. Such a concession, however, might still not satisfy the Cuban military or the Cuban population.

At this stage in the Cuban Revolution, Castro faces enormous domestic difficulties. Perhaps none is more serious than the consequences of Cuba's entanglement in Angola. While the relationship with the Soviet Union is undergoing realignment and new alternatives are sought to handle Cuba's economic problems, the Angolan war may become a catalyst in Cuba's domestic and foreign policy. Cuban troop withdrawal following Namibian independence may serve to diffuse domestic discontent over the prolongation of the Angolan conflict, or it may lead to a more profound questioning of the validity of Cuban internationalism in Africa.

6/The Domestic Attitude Toward Internationalism: Evidence from Emigre Interviews

Juan M. del Aguila

One of the unexamined aspects of Cuba's policy of proletarian internationalism is the extent of its domestic support. Changes in individual attitudes effected by structural transformation over a 30-year period are assumed to be supportive of the revolutionary regime's foreign policy goals, but it is practically impossible to either validate or reject this assumption as long as the Cuban government prohibits scholars and others from carrying out surveys and public opinion polls on internationalism and related subjects.

Determining the public attitudes of closed societies poses serious methodological problems, some that stem from the lack of access and others that come from reliability and scope. The Cuban and other totalitarian regimes manage information in ways that accentuate the positive and silence criticism, so one needs to use unconventional tools in order to determine public support for certain policies, and subsequently judge the degree to which a regime's public claims stand up to some empirical scrutiny. In this case, I attempt a first approximation at determining the degree to which segments of the Cuban population support the policy of internationalism, but do so aware of the limitations of such an undertaking.[1]

Sending thousands of civilian, military, technical and professional cadres to many Third World nations in Africa, the Middle East and Latin America is for Cuba a key asset that supports prized foreign policy goals. In particular, Cuba's military missions in Angola and Ethiopia, its support for national liberation movements like the Afri-

can National Congress (ANC) and the Southwest Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), and links to insurgents in Central and South America evince intrusive propensities and impressive commitments in regional flashpoints. In addition, Cuba provides educational, technical, military and ideological instruction for thousands of youths from the Third World in Cuba itself, hoping to reap payoffs when cadres reach future positions of leadership. This long-term investment in human capital can bring substantial payoffs, as the Nicaraguan case illustrates, and should SWAPO ever come to power in Namibia. In one way or another, these obligations stem from the policy of proletarian internationalism.

The policy of internationalism has won plaudits for Cuba and brought it a measure of prestige, but its domestic impact has seldom been examined. The regime holds that there is nearly universal support for the policy, but never subjects that claim to scrutiny, much less popular consultation. Institutions like the National Assembly consciously stay away from serious discussion of foreign and security policies in general and internationalism in particular, and neither monitors the policy's execution nor demands accountability. In other words, the regime's declaratory support for internationalism and its assumed popular support is never questioned by the Communist party, the National Assembly, the mass media, or any other institution or organization. If there are doubts regarding its wisdom, these are probably expressed in secret deliberations of the party's Political Bureau, or in discussions in the top ranks of the armed forces. Consequently, no full accounting of the costs of internationalism is available, nor have reports been issued regarding its impact on resources, institutions or public opinion.

Totalitarian regimes need not take public attitudes into account when they commit themselves to military ventures abroad, but neither can they avoid escalating domestic costs of waging what have appeared to be wars without end. Pamela Falk points out that Cuba's "foreign policy choices in Africa are taking a heavy toll on its domestic economic health," and that the mounting costs of the Angolan involvement in particular are "creating unprecedented pressure on Cuba to reevaluate its program and thus its policy."[2] Through control of the mass media and the security services, the regime hides the human and psychological costs that stem from casualties, family dislocation and fear, as well as the losses in equipment, military hardware and other associated developmental costs.

On the other hand, a growing body of evidence suggests that the population's revolutionary zeal and ideological fervor is very low,

and that social cynicism and alienation are evident. Such manifestations of "poor revolutionary conduct" are found among the youth in particular, but probably stem from a growing sense of political apathy and disillusionment. The "campaign of rectification" launched in 1985 is partly designed to restore the people's will to build socialism *correctly* after three decades of building socialism incorrectly, and to revive ideological militancy and *conciencia*, but the likelihood of its success is very dubious.[3] With little doubt, the failures of Marxist-Leninist doctrine and a growing dissatisfaction with austerity and stagnation generate negative social consequences, and as the leadership itself points out, labor absenteeism, juvenile delinquency, poor workmanship, political laxity and a host of other social ills have not been remedied.[4]

Finally, if in addition to unresolved problems the policy of internationalism is viewed cynically, lacks mass support and produces few tangible political benefits, that would be worrisome for a regime facing multiple difficulties at home and abroad. At a minimum, it would raise more doubts about the "revolutionary unity" that allegedly binds the people to the system and its leaders, or it could demonstrate that the social costs of military adventures abroad produce resentment and various forms of resistance.

Internationalism as a Continuation of Domestic Politics

Statements by President Castro and others in the leadership suggest that Havana's pursuit of internationalism is essential in order to sustain a revolutionary image at home and abroad. Internationalism in various forms reinforces values that the leadership deems to be crucial for the stability of a strong revolutionary society, such as altruism, selflessness, commitment to service, and risk in defense of a worthy cause. The regime claims that internationalism stems from idealism and morality, and that its execution reveals just how far Cuba is willing to go in order to fulfill self-imposed moral obligations. The Cuban constitution of 1976 speaks of the necessity of carrying out internationalist service, and how every revolutionary must be ready to answer the call. For instance, President Castro told the Brazilian friar Frei Betto that:

> Cubans work abroad as teachers, doctors, engineers, technicians and skilled workers, and are ready to do so in tens of thousands, in hundreds of thousands, in the most difficult

> conditions and at times at the cost of their own lives, demonstrating a supreme sense of solidarity out of loyalty to their principles, [in doing so] I believe that they express the practical application of respect, consideration and love for others.[5]

Not mentioned here (and seldom elsewhere) are the rigors of war for combat soldiers, nor how military internationalism advances Cuba's geopolitical interests. The president maintains that through internationalist service, Cubans "pay their debt to humanity," and that they have an overriding obligation to build roads, promote literacy, and kill bandits and counterrevolutionaries in order to advance the communist cause. In Castro's mind, there is a clear linkage between a socialist revolution at home and internationalism, because through the latter revolutions elsewhere are strengthened. For him, the true internationalist brandishes an AK-47 proudly, ever ready to make the ultimate sacrifice on behalf of humanity. As a revolutionary state with much experience in these matters, Cuba must play a leading role in the global struggle against imperialism and reaction, consistent with its resources and capabilities.

The regime believes that in order to maintain its commitments overseas, Cubans will have to serve abroad for the foreseeable future. In the case of Angola, President Castro had said in 1986 that the troops could stay for "ten times eleven years," but this was before negotiations for their withdrawal forced him to revise the calendar.[6] Even if combat troops are withdrawn, thousands of Cubans will stay behind and face the dangers of life in a chronically underdeveloped nation wracked by a savage civil war, so the internationalist commitment is to be kept.

The population is not consulted by its leaders on the wisdom of such capricious commitments of manpower and resources, because once an obligation is assumed, there is no turning back. If the decision is made to fight wars in Africa, then to Africa one goes; should other societies beckon, then so be it. In speeches by the leaders and in the mass media, internationalism is linked with peace, social justice, the advancement of socialism worldwide, and even Christian virtues. In his report to the Third Congress of the Communist party, President Castro pointed out that the masses need to be educated in an internationalist spirit, and not so much on how to improve the society's living standards. Said he:

> If the masses are educated only on the ambition of the standard of living, then they will never have an internationalist consciousness . . . because all that one gives others takes away

> from what one has . . . We would not have tens of thousands of individuals abroad in civilian and military missions, because an individual that thinks of money is incapable of solidarity and internationalism.

In sum, internationalism is one of the deepest expression of revolutionary consciousness, and it is seen as a moral contribution from the haves (Cuba) to the have nots—Angola, Ethiopia, Nicaragua and other struggling societies where Cubans serve.

The normative dimension of internationalism, namely the link between revolution at home and service abroad, is as important as the fact that Cuba earns several hundred million dollars from the work of its personnel abroad. The exaltation of internationalism provides a justification for making money from services as well as from the stationing of combat troops abroad. Angola has been paying several hundred million dollars per year to Cuba for its assistance, but the regime fails to divulge the nature or magnitude of this transaction. It prefers to glorify internationalism as a kind of global public service, rather than to explain it as a business that brings in needed revenue.

It is perfectly clear that President Castro is the intellectual force behind internationalism in general and the war policies (until recently) in particular, and he has repeatedly stated that Cuba will not retreat. The President evidently believes that "a camaraderie of the oppressed" exists among Third World peoples, and that in part it is Cuba's duty to rally these forces and propel them toward liberation. It is conceivably a task without end, a Castroite reinterpretation of the notion of "an international civil war against imperialism," but there is reason to believe that the domestic impact of such a crusade is not going unnoticed.

To reiterate, the regime promotes internationalism as an extension of revolution at home, and insists that good revolutionaries must also be willing internationalists. Such a messianic outlook makes internationalism a political imperative at home and something resembling a foreign policy crusade abroad. If politics is but the waging of war through other means, internationalism is but the extension of revolution on many fronts.

THE SELLING OF INTERNATIONALISM

For a generation, the most exalted symbol of internationalism has been "Ché" Guevara, forever immortalized in revolutionary mythology as "The Heroic Guerrilla." Guevara's exploits on behalf of the

"oppressed" in Africa and Latin America shape the substance of internationalism, and youths are encouraged to imitate Ché's selfless devotion to proletarian revolution, and defend those that have no voice. In films, essays, speeches and texts, Guevara is depicted as the pure revolutionary warrior—Sir Galahad with a beret—seeking social justice through martyrdom. One of the slogans of the Young Pioneers is *Seremos como el Ché* (We will be like Che), an indication that the socialization process is partly designed with internationalism in mind. President Castro told Frei Betto that Guevara always wished to go on internationalist missions once his work in Cuba was finished, and that he considered Guevara to be "one of the great figures produced by this generation of Latin Americans." Neither the president nor his sycophantic interviewer mentioned Guevara's scathing criticisms of Soviet foreign policy, his failed adventures in Africa and Latin America, his beliefs in violence and class hatreds, or his demonstrated incompetence as an economist and administrator in Cuba during the early sixties. For the regime, the value of Guevara's misshapen legacy lies in his martyrdom and ideological commitment to "revolution without borders," rather than in his pathetic failure as guerrilla leader.

The creation of a romantic legacy around Guevara and its manipulation and dissemination by propagandists speaks well for Cuba's image makers, and it illustrates how ignorance of Guevara's life and meager accomplishments leads many to be fascinated by him. The selling of Guevara as a living symbol of Cuban internationalism has been effective, and his superficial ideas on *The New Socialist Man* now shape the Campaign of Rectification Against Errors and Negative Tendencies. Having been buried by technocrats and market-oriented planners a few years ago, Guevara has been dusted off and is now to be taken seriously as a creator, a thinker and a moral guide. In his work on *Castro, Cuba and the World*, Edward Gonzales notes that the aberrant idealism associated with recurring campaigns about *The New Man* is linked to internationalism, because it "which amounts to a radicalizing exposure to political spaces much larger than Cuba has become increasingly essential to creating 'the new Cuban man' and sustaining revolutionary consciousness."

Internationalism has greater appeal when defined in terms of values in the political culture, and on terms familiar to most Cubans. Guevara fits perfectly into that conception because memories of his disastrous policies have been exorcised, and his life transmogrified. In effect, he personifies the normative foundation between revolution at home and sacrifice abroad, because he carried the torch beyond

Cuba even if he failed to reach "our great strategic objective, the total destruction of imperialism via armed struggle." In sum, Guevara's message is really a simple one: one serves humanity by serving the Revolution either at home or abroad, because its defense demands vigilance on both fronts.

On the other hand, it is clear that moral urgings were insufficient for the recruitment of internationalists, and that material incentives are used in recruitment. Apparently, serving abroad as a soldier, teacher, doctor or construction worker still brings some privileges, though on a much lesser scale than in the seventies. From the interviews, one gathers that there were cases of *internacionalistas* obtaining housing when it was extremely difficult to do so, and of getting access to goods not available to others. These incentives created expectations of material benefits in exchange for services, but economic difficulties now make these transactions less certain. With little doubt, many serve(d) abroad not because they viewed themselves as participants in a revolutionary crusade, but because they wanted to improve their living standards once their service was completed. Other instances involve promotions for soldiers showing unusual valor, and Generals Arnaldo Ochoa and Abelardo Colomé were named Heroes of the Republic partly due to their success as commanding officers during campaigns in Africa. In short, in order to recruit *internacionalistas*, the regime provides some material incentives as well as a subtle combination of political pressure and moral urgings, and completion of service has brought material and symbolic rewards to many *internacionalistas*.

It is probable that serving on internationalist missions (especially in noncombat roles) is something of a novelty for many Cubans, since it is quite difficult for individuals to travel abroad. Cubans are known to feel isolated from trends and events in the outside world, so opportunities to break through that isolation may be welcome. Living conditions are likely to be wretched in less than glamorous places like Addis Ababa, Maputo or Matagalpa, but that demonstrates that genuine *internacionalistas* are not deterred by the prospect of not having running water. In effect, as long as the costs of serving abroad were not intolerably high, and with the expectation of material rewards present, internationalism became a vehicle through which unsatisfied desires could be realized. But the point is that altruism and dedication were not (and are less and less) the principal reasons behind someone's decision to become an internationalist, contrary to what the regime claims.

One must keep in mind that internationalist service covers a lot of

ground, and that *internacionalistas* carry out different tasks and are consequently exposed to varying degrees of risk. The dangers associated with the job, as well as the country to which one is sent, bear on an individual's reaction to go abroad. To put it differently, the known risks facing a raw recruit in war-torn Angola are markedly higher than those encountered by planners and technicians living in special housing in Managua. Front-line troops in southern Angola are more vulnerable than their civilian comrades in Luanda, and from the interviews one gathers that civilian and technical personnel are better protected.

Fear of the consequences of going to Angola for two years affects recruitment, and there is evidence to suggest that combat units in Angola include mostly young and inexperienced recruits. The regime has difficulty meeting manpower quotas, and uses various pressures to induce reenlisting and sign up. Since motivation is low, training often inadequate, and fear a factor, it is not surprising that Cuban troops perform less than credibly in Angola and that the overall quality of the troops has declined. In addition to the evidence found in the interviews, information provided by Brigadier General Rafael del Pino who defected to the United States in May 1987 supports the conclusion that Cuba did not send its top officers or troops to Angola during the latter stages of the war and that the performance of younger soldiers in particular left much to be desired.[7]

To summarize, despite ongoing efforts by the regime to glorify internationalism, there is reason to believe that the gloss is wearing off the image of the selfless combatant doing his duty on behalf of devotion to the revolutionary cause. Reality set in, particularly among the young and those eligible for military service, for many of whom going to war was not a pleasant prospect. This is a fact that the regime does not publicize, and an image that it would just as soon not like to see created. But, in fact, segments of the population no longer perceive internationalism to be a worthy cause, and see it as a waste of manpower and resources for reasons that are not clearly understood. Official platitudes are no longer taken at face value, and long before the withdrawal was announced, many viewed the war policy in particular with a quiet sense of rage.

THE DOMESTIC REACTION

From a military standpoint, Cuba's involvement in Angola's civil war produced neither victory nor defeat. Prior to the negotiations,

President Castro had suggested several times that Cuban troops would remain in Angola until apartheid disappeared from South Africa, and such a long-term commitment was bound to have domestic repercussions. A combination of military setbacks for Cuban and Angolan forces, acceptance by Angola, South Africa and Cuba of linking a troop withdrawal to the independence of Namibia, and improvements in U.S.-Soviet relations enhanced the prospect of a regional settlement.

During 1987 and 1988, Cuba maintained some 50,000 combat troops in Angola, in addition to hundreds of technicians and paraprofessionals involved in a variety of development projects. This represented a considerable commitment in manpower and resources which could not be effectively reduced until either the threat to the Angolan regime subsided, or negotiations allowed Cuba to phase out its presence without losing face. Since the contemplated withdrawal schedule is drawn out over nearly three years, Cuba still faces the prospect of servicing a huge contingent in Angola, assuming that the ceasefire does not break down and each government keeps its part of the bargain.

Cuba fought a war of attrition without vanquishing its guerrilla enemy. Episodic offensives designed to capture territory from UNITA seldom achieved their objective, and the guerrillas extended the war to central and southern Angola. The oil-rich enclave around Cabinda, thought to be safe from guerrillas operations, was penetrated and sabotages carried out in other areas thought to be under the control of Luanda's Marxist regime. In the late eighties Western material assistance to UNITA bolstered its military capabilities and sustained its will to fight, so that it was able to continue to pressure the regime and its Cuban allies.

Cuba's propaganda machine has depicted Savimbia as a "stooge of Western imperialism and the South African racists," but much evidence suggests that Savimbi is a courageous leader who has the loyalty and admiration of his indigenous troops. Interviews with Cuban soldiers who once served in Angola but eventually came to the United States indicate that they speak highly of Savimbi, and believe him to be much superior to the average FAPLA commander. Cuban generals realize that Savimbi knows the bush better than they do, and every offensive hurled against his headquarters at Jamba has failed. UNITA controls nearly one-third of Angola's territory, and has demonstrated that the performance of some units of the Cuban Armed Forces (FAR) when tested in combat left much to be desired.

UNITA's strategy of escalating the pressure on multiple fronts

brought pressure to bear on Cuban contingents stationed in central and northern Angola, forcing them to engage in combat. This "required the Cuban military to replace the Angolan military units in the battlefields of the south," partly because the Cubans handle Soviet equipment better than FAPLA forces.[8] UNITA's belief that escalating the war would produce more Cuban casualties and force Havana to pay attention in earnest to the domestic consequences of its war policy may have underestimated Cuba's resolve, but Cuba did adopt a defensive strategy during the latter stages of the conflict. Savimbi himself stated that "when enough Cubans are returned to Cuba in coffins, Castro must face the wrath of his own people. Already we learn from Cuban prisoners of war that the war in Angola is unpopular in Cuba."[9] There is little doubt any more that the war in Angola was unpopular among many Cubans, and that it was viewed in the context of a war without end, or as the interviews suggest, *la guerra que no se acaba*. This is particularly the case among the young, who faced the prospect of going to Africa to fight in a war whose objectives were less and less clear. Estimates of the dead, wounded and missing range from 10,000 to 12,000, or roughly 1000 casualties for each of the 12 years of Cuban military involvement in the conflict. Cubans not only face combat dangers, but also the perils of being perceived by pro-UNITA nationalists as intruders if not mercenaries. Two years ago, a residence housing Cubans was bombed in Huambo and some 60 persons were killed. The guerrillas have attacked convoys as well as installations, and these attacks would certainly rise if the fighting were renewed.

In very powerful interviews, Brigadier General del Pino corroborated the accounts that were previously available only through confidential interviews. The General was familiar with the situation in Angola, traveled there frequently, and had access to some of the intelligence handled by top FAR officers. He spoke candidly of discontent in the officer corps regarding how the war was being waged, of dissent between the military and the political leadership, and of the fact that only the Castro brothers believed the war could still be won.[10] In short, the war produced serious strains not only in the top ranks of the FAR, but more critically between it and the political leadership. This may have been an additional factor influencing Cuba's decision to negotiate.

More important for this study is what General del Pino believes was the impact of the war at home, particularly because the Cuban government has little to say on the subject. The regime values the image of a nation united behind its leaders, and of a people that

unequivocally supports internationalism and war-making. The reality, according to General del Pino, is quite different, insofar as the war policy is deepening social divisions in Cuba, and creating a sullen sense of rage and hostility towards the regime in some sectors of the population. For instance, when asked to comment on the domestic impact of the war, the General said:

> Angola is a dead end . . . But I believe that, at least, I have spoken to officers at my rank and there is a total realization that there is no way out of Angola, that it is lost and that our presence there is creating a great problem for our people, [inflicting] very grave wounds and our people already suffer from the Angolan syndrome.[11]

In effect, the General recognized what the regime refused to acknowledge, namely that the war seared the society and produced disaffection and divisions. He also provided evidence of the fact that the regime manipulates information in order to suit its purposes. This creates the false impression that all is going well in Angola and that more sacrifices are necessary on behalf of a worthy cause.

The secretiveness with which Havana treats any information about casualties reveals not only the contempt felt by the leadership towards its own war dead and their families, but also the great reluctance to admit that its war policy has been a monumental miscalculation. Despite the fact that it is not difficult for a totalitarian regime (unaffected by *glasnost*) to maintain a monopoly on how sensitive information is handled, the failure to render an accurate account of how someone dies in part reveals the bankruptcy of the war policy itself. Gone are the days when the dead were hailed as heroes and martyrs for the cause of revolution or liberation. As the conflict extended into the late eighties, efforts to force the regime to come clean with the facts about how its young died abroad were viewed as counterrevolutionary and could therefore bring on punishment.

Evidence compiled from several sources suggests that the manner in which information about casualties is handled has become a festering social issue. Since the war is publicly a non-subject (the regime does report on the progress of negotiations), practically nothing about the real conditions in the field such as defeats, morale or desertions is published or broadcast. Little public discussion of the war takes place, except when internationalism is glorified. It is not a subject that interests the National Assembly of People's Power, but its deputies are very concerned about dirty beer bottles and the youth

dropout rate. The Commander in Chief is never asked about his war policy in Africa, or if he takes pride in a strategy that has failed to produce a significant conquest in the last ten years. More importantly, could the failure to win the war conceivably be reason for his removal? or is it just that the "objective conditions" were never ripe for a victory? In sum, when it comes to public discussion, Angola was largely a phony war, the skeleton in Cuba's foreign policy closet, the subject that if fully ventilated could lead one to shallow graves in Africa where the bodies are buried.

From the interviews, one establishes that the war and its consequences are a latent topic of discussion among Cubans, and that if there is such a thing as a *modal* opinion of the war, it is a negative one. The latency of the subject as well as the strength of popular feeling against the war are probably a function of its duration, its open ended nature, and its ongoing consequences. It is clear that a growing number of Cubans have known that the war could not be won, that it was a losing proposition all around, and that the troops continued to be victimized by an arrogant and obstinate political leadership.

Many of the interviewed subjects speak of a growing but still largely silent consciousness against the war, and of opposition moving beyond the families of those affected by the war. There are accounts of mothers being consumed by the thought that their sons could die in Africa, and of violent reactions against those who bring notification of a death to families. Families with males eligible for military service often live in fear that they will be sent abroad, and of not knowing where a young man will end up.

The manner in which the regime notifies families of those who have died in Angola is a key source of resentment against military internationalism. In the typical case, the family is given few details about how its member actually died. Many families believe that they have been deceived for political reasons, because those that bring the news provide little comfort and insist that the circumstances surrounding the person's death are murky. The families are told that for reasons of state they should not divulge any information, nor should they publicly lament the loss of a relative. In short, these are matters that are best kept under wraps, because to do otherwise could raise eyebrows and subject one to harassment.

Speaking of precisely the policy of secrecy surrounding the war dead, General del Pino says:

> But what hurts the most in this situation is that those boys die and are buried there and the family never receives the body.

> And nobody has the right to dispose of someone's remains arbitrarily, dispose of them after they are dead . . . Of course, there has been talk, there is talk that these remains will return to Cuba after we have left Angola. All of that is false.[12]

Despite its solemn warnings, the regime has failed to silence the relatives of the dead. Word of notification spreads rapidly through neighborhoods and soon everyone knows that someone else has died in the war. Since the bodies are buried in Angola, most likely at the Cuban cemetery in Luanda (at times, bodies have not been recovered and are left behind in the field), the family cannot mourn its relative. In some households, candles are lit before a picture of the deceased and this takes the place of a funeral. Families blame the government for not returning the bodies for a decent burial, and many hold Castro personally responsible for their tragedy. But often anger simmers away and turns into feelings of hopelessness and impotence.

It is impossible to determine how large this body of opinion is, or if it approaches representativeness. The war is evidently unpopular among the young and others eligible for military service, and there have been cases of members of the Young Communists Union (UJC) turning in their identification cards because they refused to volunteer for military duty. This suggests that individuals are willing to risk political disenfranchisement in order to avoid military service, and that negative feelings about the war may exist among those who are politically committed. Interviews conducted in late 1986 reveal that many believed that the worst was yet to come, and had little understanding of why more soldiers were being sent to fight. A few viewed the entire situation as an Angolan problem, of no concern to Cuba, suggesting that they reject the notion of internationalism and feel no kinship towards "the Angolan people."

The unpopularity of the war affected recruitment, even if the tour of duty was two years rather than the three for regular military service. The number of volunteers has declined precipitously from 1979–1980 levels, and coercion and intimidation have been used in order to force young men to sign up. Some military units have been dispatched to Angola without prior notification given to the troops, partly to avoid potential resistance to the decision but also because the system whereby troops are replaced suffers from severe irregularities. There is no doubt that recruitment was affected by the tales of horror brought back from Angola, and this adds to the fear among some youths. The very concept of military service as part of one's revolutionary duty may fall into disrepute as a consequence of the

failure in Angola, because the war had nothing to do with defending Cuba itself.

Resistance to the idea of military service could prove to be quite troublesome for a proud institution like the FAR that must always sustain the image of a victorious army. In Angola, the FAR could not claim victory, and its performance will be criticized. There is reason to believe that discipline in the ranks in general is not what top FAR officers expect, and that a military career is losing some of its prestige. Finally, resistance to serving in Angola was particularly marked among recruits entering the General Military Service (SMG), probably because these cohorts are forced to carry out tasks that would otherwise be carried out by volunteers.

An additional source of discontent about military internationalism stems from the regime's failure to grant privileges to those coming home. Over 200,000 individuals, or nearly two percent of the population, have seen some form of internationalist service, and for some time now the regime has been unable to guarantee anything special for returning *internacionalistas*. In a society where austerity is the norm and where personal sacrifices are demanded, it is not easy to grant unusual material benefits to all those that return from abroad. The 1986–1990 economic plan is very tight, and resources are channeled away from consumption. This means that less rather than more will be available for *internacionalistas*, and having risked one's neck in Angola will no longer allow an individual to buy his dream house ahead of others.

In effect, incentives may be needed in order to recruit individuals for future internationalist service, but the system's ability to satisfy consumer needs is very limited. The dedicated internationalist cannot expect special treatment, so the system's failure to meet material desires becomes a disincentive for internationalism. This will become a greater problem when and if thousands of troops return to Cuba from Africa, and find that they are neither hailed as heroes nor afforded the creature comforts that warriors expect.

The regime's credibility is further affected by the knowledge that the Angolan government pays Cuba a specific sum of money for each *internacionalista*. In the early eighties, Angola paid Cuba $1,000 per month for each soldier; $2,000 per lieutenant; and $5,000 per colonel. In turn, the Cuban government pays the person's salary at home in pesos, which means that Cuba earns hard currency. To state it differently, Cuba made money from the Angolan war, and these transactions were perceived by segments of the public as little more

than a cruel business. The payments make it clear that there is a very profitable side to internationalism, and undermine Havana's claim of providing assistance out of feelings of solidarity and socialist brotherhood. This knowledge further strips away the fraudulent symbolism of the Angolan war, placing it in an entirely different light. Socialism is apparently not averse to profiteering and commerce via warfare.

Armies that are paid for serving foreign interests are generally regarded as mercenaries, and the FAR's military mission in Angola is so regarded by individuals in its top ranks. In addition, there is word among military circles in Cuba that the Angolan regime is corrupt and incompetent, and that it does not serve Cuba's interests to continue supporting a clique of avaricious mandarins. For instance, General del Pino asserted that:

> There is talk in our military circles that we are a mercenary army, that we are supporting an elite that is stashing away fabulous wealth in foreign and European banks; that spends their vacations in France and London at the people's expense . . . That is, that our troops have become mercenaries supporting a fabulously wealthy elite with fortunes in foreign banks, and our young men are dying to support that.[13]

It is estimated that this adds up to nearly $500 million for Cuba annually (before the decline in oil prices), a considerable sum that makes up in part for lower earnings from Cuba's traditional exports. For young persons in particular, the idea that the regime is profiting from their hardship is hard to accept, so the financial gains may have an unintended social cost.

Some recent arrivals who served in Angola speak of how unsanitary conditions, poor health care and rare diseases common in a torrid environment affect the troops' health and morale. Field hospitals in combat zones often lack adequate facilities for treating the wounded and medicines are scarce. Soldiers have picked up strains of hepatitis unknown or eradicated in Cuba, as well as rare diseases of the skin that produce abnormal swelling and irritation. Ailments of the eye are common among returning *internacionalistas*, as are various types of infections and illnesses due to parasites. These afflictions have been contracted by individuals in several African countries, and there are rumors that AIDS was introduced in Cuba by persons returning from Africa. Deaths have occurred as a result of these illnesses, which are not technically combat-related but nonetheless are part of the cost of maintaining several thousand cadres abroad.

When stories are told of the horrible conditions that can be encoun-

fered if one serves abroad in chronically underdeveloped countries, they tend to produce fear and alarm. Many know that internationalist service is not glamorous, that it is often dangerous, and that one will face severe hardship. In some cases, the local population resents the presence of foreigners in their midst, so the notion that Cubans are able to establish common rapport with people in other cultures is open to question. For instance, there is friction between Cuban soldiers in Angola and FAPLA troops, and the former have little regard for the fighting ability of the Angolans. The level of training in some FAPLA units is appalling, and unskilled cadres have ruined much Soviet-made equipment. Cubans do not view FAPLA forces as reliable allies and , in fact, the latter are often routed in combat. Some Cuban soldiers think that the Angolans are little more than illiterate cowards.

In his account, General del Pino speaks of mistrust between the Cubans and the Angolans, and of the fact that Angolans perceive the Cubans as arrogant foreigners. Cuba has had a military and advisory presence in Angola for over 12 years, and it has worn the population's sensibilities thin. According to del Pino:

> The people resent us; I would say not so much with resentment, the people no longer want the Cuban presence in Angola. We feel badly. Angolan officers and soldiers no longer want our presence, because they have realized just how poorly qualified our troops really are.[14]

This view of relations between two allegedly close and fraternal allies is quite different from the official one. Officially, soldiers are recognized for their valor and given medals, and generals are praised as strong and invincible leaders. Cuba's honor and dignity has been reaffirmed once more, and the enemy now knows the mettle of our people. In reality, the war produced divisions in the FAR itself, sowed grief and social discontent, and raised serious questions regarding President Castro's generalship.

To sum up, the domestic costs of the war policy become less painful if negotiations lead to a phased withdrawal of Cuban troops, but their redeployment to the homeland at a time of severe economic difficulties creates new burdens and possibly friction. Due to casualties, desertions and low morale, the FAR has been damaged and its reputation tarnished, and it may be much more reluctant in the future to go along with the objectives of the political leadership. Its task now is to rebuild itself. Cuba's war in Angola lasted longer than The Ten Years War, and its legacy is yet to be fully assessed.

The evidence that I have reviewed strongly suggests that popular hostility towards the war in Angola was strong, affecting various social strata. Few believe that internationalism is a worthy cause, and young men in particular were terrified at the prospect of dying in a desolate battlefield for an unappealing cause. It is a natural reaction, but it is also deeply at odds with the values of a militarized society that promotes the unflinching valor of its dedicated youth. Nothing could be further from the truth, and the regime may be incapable of dealing rationally with a growing problem. President Castro's rhetoric is no longer convincing, and one source holds the admittedly extreme view that "Angola has provided a lesson. It has convinced Cubans that their leaders are criminals and assassins."

The Costs of Resisting

In a totalitarian state where individual behavior is carefully monitored and personal attitudes towards the system are known by the authorities, it is extremely difficult to engage in either passive or active resistance to specific policies with which one disagrees. The notion of an anti-war movement in Cuba is ridiculous, not because there are few people who dissented from the war policy, but rather due to the risks involved in expressing such dissent. Still, there are ways in which dissatisfaction has been expressed, since dissent and open opposition to the war policy was prohibited. Systemic forces and the values in the political culture induce restraint and passivity, rather than dynamic social action. In short, spontaneous manifestations of anti-war feeling were rare, and there is no evidence at all that latent opposition to the war policy (or to military internationalism) led to organized anti-regime activity.

The institution most directly affected by the war is the FAR, and there is now credible evidence that some in its top ranks pushed for a disengagement from Angola. Information provided by General del Pino makes it clear that dissatisfaction with the war grew in military circles and had the potential to divide the armed forces. This prospect may have contributed to changes in policy and emphasis on diplomacy and negotiations, but in one's estimation improvements in East–West relations and pressure from Moscow proved to be more decisive.

One reason for lack of movement in the FAR could be that officers are personally responsible to the Castro brothers for their conduct, and open dissent could be equated with treason. President Castro

himself would never contemplate a pullout from Angola because his generals told him the war could not be won, because that would mean defeat. For him, the war became a personal enterprise, involving resolve and national honor. It is not farfetched to believe that relations between the President and his generals resembled those of Hitler and his General Staff in the latter stages of World War II, when the dictator was convinced that victory was still attainable. In any case, it is now evident that some of Cuba's top military officers knew that the situation was rapidly deteriorating, but were incapable of forcing a change in policy until Moscow reversed itself.

Information revealed by another defector to the United States, Major Florentino Azpillaga, once the top counterintelligence officer in Czechoslovakia, suggests that elements in the security and intelligence agencies (and probably in the FAR) conspire against the regime.[15] Azpillaga asserts that there are anti-Castro factions in the intelligence and security services and that officers are contemptuous of President Castro's opulent lifestyle and egomania. From Azpillaga's standpoint, dissatisfaction with the war policies is not a major factor behind these conspiracies, but his account indicates that the Castro brothers are apparently surrounded by influential enemies who may at some point force a showdown with the political leadership.

To recapitulate, top FAR officers dissented from the regime's war policy, and this may continue to shape their conspiratorial activities involving their brethren in the security and intelligence agencies. The FAR and the Ministry of the Interior are controlled by Castroite loyalists, but contact among individuals of each branch cannot be eliminated. Ending the war and bringing the troops home would alleviate institutional strains, but may lead to an institutional debate regarding the wisdom of the war itself. The official line will be to glorify the efforts of Cuba's valiant internationalists, but the popular reaction is bound to be jaded and cynical.

On the other hand, there is little likelihood that anyone on the outside could reliably determine what final impact the opposing camps in the FAR regarding the war policy could have on the Castro regime. The Castro brothers are aware that they move among potential Brutuses. A successful conspiracy that leads to a Bonapartist outcome cannot be ruled out, especially if the economic crisis deepens, the agreements break down, and the Kremlin decides that its unreformed client is becoming less and less useful.

For a generation, the propaganda machine, the educational system, other agencies of socialization and the Communist party itself

have all emphasized social unity as an absolute value. Conformity with the policies of the central government and obedience to the Commander in Chief are deemed to be social virtues; independent political action is punishable. There is no adversary culture from which opposition has grown, largely because writers and intellectuals are often themselves incapable of serious criticism of either domestic failures or foreign adventurism. No deputy to the National Assembly is going to confront President Castro and tell him his policy failed, because that would be politically fatal. In theory, the entire nation supported the war and is behind its leaders, but this stretches one's credulity. The passivity of groups and individuals in the face of a war that drained human, physical and emotional resources from a society worn out from utopian experimentation is a historical aberration, but it leaves little doubt that the system can still suppress most manifestations of independent thought and action.

Conclusion

The domestic reaction to the regime's policy of internationalism is mostly reflected in a growing body of opinion that was decidedly hostile to the war in Angola, but less coherent when it came to the different forms of internationalism. Many were aware that the war was not justifiable from the standpoint of Cuba's interests, and that it produced resentment and division. Serving abroad is not as attractive as it once was, but it is difficult to pinpoint why this is so. The changing structure of incentives was clearly a factor, as was knowledge of the risks that one would confront. Interviewees seldom spoke in ideological terms, and did not associate service abroad with the justifiable expansion of Marxist-Leninist principles.

Second, the regime was insulated from popular pressures that could have pushed for a reduction in military commitments in Africa, so the policy was sustained without having to fear overt reaction to it. Individuals would have had to assume tremendous costs and confront high risks if they vented hostility towards internationalism in general and the war policy in particular, so dissent and opposition was expressed in subtle forms. Through the interviews one finds a sullen feeling of rage and impotence among those most directly affected by the war, but little idea of how to proceed from that. Anti-regime pressures failed to coalesce around the anti-war issue and did not produce major social eruptions. The society's threshold of pain failed to break through the political passivity that still charac-

terizes individual and group behavior. The perception of impotence, the fear of retribution and the control over damaging information which the regime maintained probably combined to defuse potential anti-war and anti-regime protest.

For the regime, internationalism has value and brings financial and political dividends, though in declining quantities. The regime does not worry about the perception that it is cynically profiting from the war because it need not account for its conduct. The strategic elite most affected by the war shows signs of division and uneasiness, but the political leadership apparently asserts itself and pre-empts uncontrolled factionalism.

Finally, if the negative costs of military internationalism rise (this is less likely if the settlement holds), even those sectors that supported the policy most fervently could be affected. The process whereby one goes from being a supporter of the system to becoming apathetic, and ending up in opposition to it is complex, but an accumulation of grievances could produce attitudinal and behavioral changes. By the same token, intra- and inter-elite struggles will moderate if the war ends, but new sources of tension will arise once the troops return.