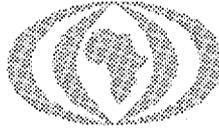


THE SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

National Headquarters:

JAN SMUTS HOUSE
P.O. Box 31596
Braamfontein
(Johannesburg)
2017 Transvaal



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(not for publication)

EAST GERMANS IN ANGOLA

Recent press reports that a 1 500-strong regiment of East German paratroops has been transferred from a base on the island of Ruegen in the Baltic to Southern Angola lend credence to earlier claims by the leader of the West German opposition party (CSU), Dr. Franz Josef Strauss, that there are up to 3 500 East German troops based in Angola.

In July this year, rumours of the presence of East German troops in Angola were enjoying a wide circulation in South Africa. Indeed, one news magazine said they had been placed there with a view to a possible invasion of SWA/Namibia. South African defence experts considered this highly improbable, and the feeling was that any airborne or conventional assault south of the Kunene River was an untenable proposition given the logistical and administrative support required. The SABC thought it not unlikely that the stories of an East German build-up were being deliberately spread by the KGB's department of disinformation so as to destabilize the situation in SWA/Namibia still further. This interpretation is not as far-fetched as might be supposed, since the so-called "Directorate A" (the KGB's disinformation section) was suspected of attempting to dissuade President Kaunda of Zambia from making a recent diplomatic trip to the United States and the United Kingdom by planting rumours in Lusaka that a coup against the President was imminent.

Whether or not this was true at the time, there appears to be little doubt that there is an East German presence in Angola and that they are there for a purpose. Given their proximity to the SWA/Namibia border (they are reportedly stationed at Pereira d'Eca), it is thought most probable that the primary purpose of the "Afrika Korps" is to deter South African hot pursuit raids into Angola, aimed at SWAPO forces. It is regarded as very unlikely that the East Germans would spearhead an "invasion" into SWA/Namibia since this would, apart from being logistically impracticable, invite massive South African retaliation which could pose a real threat to the stability of the Luanda régime.

It should nevertheless not be forgotten that the USSR is capable of demonstrating a remarkable airlift capacity in Africa, if necessary, and although East Germany has only one airborne battalion, the Soviet experience in Ethiopia has demonstrated that airborne forces can be rapidly deployed after the capture of strategic airfields and landing grounds.

The experience in Ethiopia was a salutary lesson for the West - in seven months an estimated 61 000 tons of military equipment, including 400 tanks, 600 artillery pieces and over 60 MIG-21 aircraft were largely airlifted into Ethiopia. At the same time, large quantities of military hardware were being airlifted to Angola, Mozambique, Libya and Syria, while almost 25 000 Cuban troops were airlifted into Ethiopia and many thousands more Cuban and Soviet bloc personnel were brought into the rest of the continent.

A massive Soviet logistical effort by air in Southern Angola is therefore clearly not beyond the capability of the Soviets, and it is in this context illuminating to hear that several officers of high rank have recently arrived in Angola from the USSR, including General Tchakanovitch. Another senior Soviet officer in Angola is General Karpov, who is stationed in Luanda, while General Shredin is apparently stationed at Lubango, the MPLA's military HQ for the southern district. At Bie (formerly Silva Porto), where UNITA forces are said to be active, General Tchuropov is said to be based. General Gubin is the Soviet general reportedly stationed nearest to the Kunene, at the village of Rocadas (approximately 70km from the SWA/Namibia border). It would be reasonable to assume that East German troop contingents in Angola would fall under the command of these officers.

THE RHODESIAN RAIDS INTO ZAMBIA - KAUNDA'S MUTED RESPONSE

Last week, for the third time in a month, the Rhodesian airforce launched a pre-emptive strike into Zambia. Earlier strikes, which lasted from 19 October to 22 October, reportedly caused immense damage to Mr. Joshua Nkomo's army and the action provoked much international condemnation.

But what surprised most observers about the Rhodesian raids was the Zambian leader, Dr. Kenneth Kaunda's, muted response.

Several reasons have been advanced to explain his reticence in the matter. In the Rhodesian press, for instance, it was thought that President Kaunda may have deliberately ordered his air force to remain grounded during the strikes and ordered Lusaka air control to co-operate with the Rhodesian air force. It was felt that he may have welcomed the Rhodesian attack on Mr. Nkomo's army, which now reportedly outnumbers the Zambian army by two to one, because he considered himself "threatened".

Another reason given is that Zambia was afraid to jeopardise the fragile and newly-opened rail link with South Africa by provoking the Rhodesians who might have retaliated by wounding the Zambian economy through destruction of the line.

Indications are, however, that a more accurate explanation would be that Dr. Kaunda feared the Rhodesians would enter his country in force sooner or later to deal with Mr. Nkomo's army. He accordingly sought assurances in advance that in the event, Zambia be provided with the necessary defensive capability. In return for such support, it is argued, Zambia would continue to play a positive role in Western backed efforts to achieve a settlement. Dr. Kaunda's muted response would thus have been in keeping with attempts to create a climate in which all-Party talks could be convened and no purpose would have been served by hurling threats and invective at the heads of the Rhodesians.

The undertaking by Britain to supply Zambia with ground to air missiles in the event of a Rhodesian attack may well have been given by the British Prime Minister, Mr. James Callaghan, during his talks with the Zambian Head of State at Kano earlier this year. It is known that the Kano talks were concerned with healing the breach between Britain and certain Third World countries that had arisen as a result of disclosures of sanctions busting by the Bingham

Commission, and undertakings by all sides were therefore probably the order of the day.

That President Kaunda expected an attack from Rhodesia is certain. In early September there was much press speculation that a raid would take place and Mr. Nkomo went on record as saying the Rhodesian Government would launch air strikes against his camps in retaliation for the Air Rhodesia Viscount which was shot down. The Zambian Foreign Minister, Mr. Siteke Mwabe, tried to get the British Government to forestall the anticipated attack. It was also apparently felt in Zambian Government circles that the departure of the entire Rhodesian executive abroad had been with a view to allowing the strike to take place in their absence, thereby absolving them of any proximate responsibility.

Whether the Rhodesians attacked solely because of the Viscount episode, though, is an open question. It is more likely that the attack was planned in advance of the Viscount episode in response to a large build-up of arms and trained men in Zambia, where the increase in quantities of Soviet military hardware had become noticeable towards the end of 1977 already. Soviet manufactured military equipment, including 82mm mortars, AK 47 assault rifles, anti-personnel RGD-5 grenades, Simonov rifles, Tokarev and Makorev machine pistols, RPG-7 rockets, SAM-seven strela ground to air missiles, Dushka 12,7mm heavy machine guns and crates of ammunition, were reported to have been transported from Angola to Zambia by Russian military vehicles destined for ZAPU camps. The vehicles were apparently accompanied by ZAPU guerillas who had completed their initial training in Angola under Cuban and East German instruction.

In June and July this year, Mr. Nkomo is understood to have reinforced his camps in Zambia with 2 000 men trained in Angola. These forces are believed to have been deployed in new camps along Lake Kariba north of the Rhodesian border and around Lusaka itself. While guerillas continued to operate from three major centres (where it is also believed some Cuban instructors were stationed), namely Feira, Siavongo (close to Kariba) and a grouping of camps north-east of Lusaka, and various small bands of insurgents never ceased to enter Rhodesia, it was nevertheless thought that Mr. Nkomo was keeping the bulk of his forces in reserve for a major strike into Rhodesia at the end of the year. The Rhodesian pre-emptive airborne strikes therefore made sound military sense and must have severely tested Mr. Nkomo's efforts to consolidate and prepare his army for the anticipated "total onslaught".

SOUTH WEST AFRICA/NAMIBIA : THE ELECTIONS AND INTERNATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Within the Territory attention is currently focused on the elections to be held from 4 to 8 December, designed to form a Constituent Assembly to draft a constitution for independence. Internationally, the Security Council's drawn-out deliberations on the Namibian question, following the visit to Pretoria of the Western Foreign Ministers, are the subject of concerned attention. The five Western members have been engaged in efforts to prevent any drastic decision by the Security Council, which might close the door to renewed negotiations with South Africa after the December elections.

The S.A. Government has given assurances to the Western Five and to the U.N. Secretary-General that the elections are an internal matter to clarify the question of leadership, i.e. who can legitimately speak for the people, and that South Africa

will still control future decisions on the Territory's status. These assurances have been given in spite of the announced purpose of the elections (a Constituent Assembly), and the Western Governments are no doubt grasping at these assurances as their last hope of achieving the implementation of the Western-sponsored U.N. plan for an internationally acceptable settlement. In the meantime, the Western Governments are trying to ignore the elections and to persuade the African states that the U.N. plan could still be implemented next year.

However, the elections remain a very important element in the development of the Namibian situation - even though they will be a rather one-sided affair, with the DTA and AKTUR the only meaningful parties involved. (The other two important parties, SWAPO and the NNF, are exhorting their followers to boycott the elections.) If there is a low percentage poll, say below about 45% (in spite of the high estimated registration of over 90% of eligible voters), the results will be interpreted as a serious setback for both DTA and the South African Government, whose negotiating position will then be considerably weakened. If, on the other hand, the percentage poll is high, say over 55%, then the Government's approach will be largely vindicated by this demonstration of a rejection by a reasonable majority of the UN demands and of SWAPO. In addition, if the DTA emerges with a clear majority in the Assembly, this will create the necessary confidence among DTA leaders and in the S.A. Government to enable them to contemplate, with less uncertainty and mistrust than previously, the prospects of a further UN-supervised election. A widespread boycott would instead reinforce the reluctance to risk a future U.N. role.

Success for the DTA in these limited elections, and thus for the S.A. Government, will by no means remove the problem of international demands and increasing Western pressures, because there is little doubt that the elections will not be accepted internationally as having been fair to all parties. But at least a high level of participation will create a better chance for further international negotiations - provided there is a serious determination to achieve an international agreement on the part of both the South African Government and the African states directly concerned (whose views have a decisive influence on the West and the Security Council).

What are the chances of a high percentage poll in the December elections, in spite of the boycott by SWAPO and the NNF? It is impossible to give a clear answer to this in view of the unpredictable factors which include: the degree of committed SWAPO support (as distinct from the number who might vote for SWAPO under different circumstances); the degree of support for the NNF (which has so far not been able to demonstrate any wide popular support); the political influence of the Churches (which have a very large Black membership, and whose leadership is opposed to the elections); the influence of DTA-supporting traditional leaders (Chiefs and Headmen) in Owambo especially (with 46% of the population) over their people; the means of intimidation which SWAPO may employ; the effect of the presence of the S.A. army which will of necessity have to provide protection at polling booths; etc. Those concerned with arrangements for the election are fairly confident of a high percentage poll, and their confidence is based mainly on the high level of registration. There is also confidence in the DTA's wide support among all groups of the population. However, some observers still maintain that SWAPO can count on at least 40% support, and the NNF may have influence over a further 10 to 15%. Another problem for the DTA, if the poll should be lower than expected among Blacks, is that AKTUR is considered to have the support of at least 50% of the Whites, with some observers estimating the support to be as high as 70% (although many potential AKTUR voters did not qualify for registration, as they had not been in the Territory for as long as 4 years).

This Brief Report has been compiled by members of the Institute's staff: Messrs D. McClure, D. Willers and J. Barratt

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