

Red-Backed Forces Claim Big Victory

Johannesburg

The Soviet-backed Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola said yesterday it has captured the headquarters of the rival FNLA movement in a major offensive on the northern front of the Civil War.

An army communique broadcast by MPLA-controlled Luanda Radio and monitored here said its troops captured the FNLA headquarters town of Uige — formerly Carmona — after storming and occupying a number of FNLA (National Front for the Liberation of Angola) positions last weekend.

The MPLA offensive had been predicted by intelligence reports here and was thought to be aimed at gaining the maximum territorial advantage before African leaders meet in Addis Ababa next weekend to seek an end to the Angola fighting.

The loss of Uige would be a

catastrophic blow to the FNLA, already demoralized and put in disarray by constant barrages of Soviet-made missiles launched from vehicles under the control of Russian advisers.

Uige, capital of the Uige coffee-growing province, has come to be regarded as the spiritual home of the FNLA. Apart from the military implications, its fall would be a major psychological setback to FNLA leader Holden Roberto and his men.

It would also leave them with little except villages and bushland as a fall-back position.

The MPLA communique said its forces destroyed two American aircraft on the airport runway at Uige and "recovered" hundreds of tons of war materiel including armored cars and transport vehicles. It gave no further details.

An earlier communique said



HOLDEN ROBERTO
An anti-Soviet leader

the MPLA, in its weekend offensive, captured the important airbase at Negage, 165 miles northeast of Luanda, cutting off the airlift of arms and equipment to the FNLA.

The army said that the towns of General Frierre, Vista Alegre and Nambuanguongo had also fallen.

On the eastern front, heavy fighting was raging around the town of Luso, recently captured by forces of the FNLA and its civil war ally, the UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) movement. The second MPLA communique said Luso had been "invaded by a South African armored column."

"In the central southern front, where the main body of the regular South African forces are concentrated, the situation remains stationary," it added.

Although South Africa has never formally acknowledged that its forces are engaged in the civil war, the capture of South African troops deep inside Angola has reinforced reports that it is supporting the UNITA and FNLA armies. Unofficial estimates are that it has between 1000 and 6000 troops in Angola.

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Recruiting of Americans for Angola Is Over, Paper Says

Boston

The recruiting and training of Americans to serve as mercenaries in the civil war in Angola has ended, the Christian Science monitor said in yesterday's editions.

However, American funds continue to be used in Europe to recruit participants for the war, the newspaper said.

The Monitor reported last week that Central Intelligence Agency-sponsored training of American ex-servicemen as mer-

cenaries took place at Ft. Benning, Ga.

Recruitment activities have shifted to Europe, where "certain African embassies in West European capitals are quietly recruiting Europeans, using American and other funds," the newspaper said.

Sources close to the CIA were quoted as saying, "Operations of the 300 or so American mercenaries already in Angola" apparently have not been halted.

Associated Press

Reuters