

Angola Pullout

Kissinger Pleased By Cuban Promise

London

Secretary of State Henry Kissinger expressed guarded satisfaction yesterday over Cuba's announced intention to withdraw 200 troops weekly from Angola.

He insisted, however, that the United States would not recognize the Angola regime or even consider resuming relations with Havana until all Cuba's combat forces are gone.

Kissinger called the Cuban pledge "a positive development."

It is clear that Kissinger believes the Cubans are beginning or have begun to remove some of their forces, estimated at about 13,000. The central question for him is how far will the process go.

Cuban Premier Fidel Castro disclosed his intentions in a letter

sent several days ago to his Swedish friend, Premier Olof Palme. Palme in turn read the letter to Kissinger when they met Monday.

It said the Cubans are not 20th century crusaders, will not send troops elsewhere in Africa or Latin America and are removing 200 soldiers a week.

How many soldiers Castro has in Angola and how long the removal process will continue are unclear. But the letter did say half would be out by the end of the year. Assuming the pullout began in mid-May, this implies a total of 13,000.

Kissinger said he reads the message to mean that all the troops would eventually be withdrawn. At a 200-a-week rate, this suggests the pullout would be completed in the summer of 1977. A high official on the Kissinger plane calculated that the letter meant a timetable of "roughly" one year.

The United States has been

using a figure of 12,000. The high official said this has now been raised to 13,000 to 15,000 and that the Swedes give "a somewhat higher" estimate.

Kissinger had ordered a Central Intelligence Agency "study" to monitor the Cuban departures. The high official said the CIA is always two weeks behind an event and thus has not yet determined whether any troops have left.

In addition, the high official said, another two weeks are needed to establish the pattern of incoming and outgoing flights and thereby assure that troops are leaving. In sum, according to this official, it takes the CIA four weeks after the fact to find out that troops have gone.

Reports from the Angolan capital of Luanda suggest that the ruling Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola has no intention of seeing all the Cuban soldiers go. Kissinger, however, left the door slightly ajar for some maneuvering. He emphasized that all combat troops must leave before the Popular Movement would be recognized. But his high official indicated that if a limited number of military advisers remain that would not be inconsistent with Kissinger's demand.

Even a complete pullout, Kissinger emphasized, is only a "precondition for (renewing) Cuba-U.S. relations."

Washington contends that the Popular Movement came to power on the strength of Cuban arms and is not legitimately in control until the Cubans leave. Kissinger has also feared that Cuba was acting as a puppet for the Soviet Union, now gaining a foothold in Africa.

Kissinger was repeatedly asked why he thought the Cubans have now decided to pull out. The high official on the Kissinger plane first said, "They had no intention of keeping combat troops in Angola."

Then he suggested that Castro understood "he has gone beyond

the pale as far as we are concerned." "I was not too surprised. We had indications from other sources that such a move was being contemplated. We have been bringing a lot of pressure, as you know."

In public, Kissinger found a smoother formula to express the idea that his pressure had forced the Cubans to move.

"We believe the policies we have pursued," he said, "together with support by African nations has contributed to this."

The Cuban question dominated a characteristically frantic Kissinger day. He flew from Stockholm to Luxembourg yesterday morning for talks with Premier Gaston Thorn. Officials in that small coun-

try are unhappy with the string of politically connected women that Washington sends as ambassadors. The Kissinger visit aimed to soothe some ruffled feelings.

Last night Kissinger flew to London for a meeting of the Central Treaty Organization which starts tomorrow.

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