

U.S. OFFICIALS SAY ANGOLAN LEFTISTS WON KEY VICTORY

JAN 7 1976

Northern Drive Is Termed
Significant Gain Against
One of Rival Factions

NY Times

By DAVID BINDER

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Jan. 6

High-ranking American officials said today that the leftist Luanda-based faction in Angola had achieved "a significant victory" on the northern front over the weekend, but was still on the defensive elsewhere.

One official said the capture of Uige, a provincial capital, and the nearby airfield of Negage posed a threat to positions of the National Front, a faction backed by the United States, in all of northwest Angola, including the coastal cities of Ambriz and Ambrizete.

The American officials said it had become apparent that the strategy of the Luanda forces, which have Soviet support, was to concentrate on eliminating the National Front altogether and then perhaps make a deal with the National Union, a third faction, in southern Angola.

This was the interpretation they gave to the successful northward drive of Luanda units and Cuban soldiers equipped with Soviet T-34 tanks and rocket launchers.

Turning Point Seen

In Nairobi, Kenya, intelligence sources said the capture of Uige could prove to be a turning point in the Angolan civil war. Broadcasts from Luanda said the New Year's offensive had produced victories on nearly all fronts. [Page 3.]

In another development, Senator Dick Clark announced that the Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee on Africa, which he heads, would hold hearings later this month on the history of the United States' involvement in Angola.

The American officials commenting on the military developments said the assault on Uige was apparently confined to a single road and did not meet much resistance. They said the National Front was apparently counter attacking today.

The capture of Uige put the Popular Movement of Luanda in control of four of Angola's 16 provincial capitals. The others are Salazar's Malange and Henrique de Carvalho. The Luanda forces also control a stretch of the Atlantic coast from Novo Redondo, south of

Continued on Page 3, Column 1

Continued From Page 1, Col. 3

Luanda, to Catacanha, north of the capital.

According to intelligence reports reaching Washington, the Luanda forces, strengthened by what officials now believe to be 7,500 Cubans, are on the defensive elsewhere.

The officials said a combined force of the National Front and the National Union was driving northward toward Henrique de Carvalho and were contesting control of Teixeira de Sousa on the Zaire border.

The third major front, in the southwest, is relatively quiet, they reported, with the National Union in control of the Benguela Railway.

The intelligence reports show that none of the engagements that have taken place in the civil war since July, including the latest, qualify as major battles.

"They tend to bang away at a target until the opponents run away and then go in and seize an objective," an American analyst said.

The analyst said the largest force involved in any engagement so far numbered "no more than 500 troops" on one side.

Other military movements reported today included a National Front drive toward Malange and the Popular Movement's capture last week of Nambuanguo, east of Ambriz.

An American official said that, as far as could be determined, South African forces were not active in the fighting. Similarly, he said, Zaire had a total of 1,000 soldiers in several northern regions and at the port of Ambrizete, behind the battle zone.

Hearings Are Scheduled

At a news conference, Senator Dick Clark, an Iowa Democrat, said that according to briefings given him by the Central Intelligence Agency "there is an exchange of information" between South Africa and the United States on the Angolan fighting.

Mr. Clark was one of a number of Democrats who led a drive in the Senate to cut off covert assistance to the Na-

tional Front and National Union, the two factions opposing the Luanda forces.

He said his subcommittee had asked Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of Defense Donald R. Rumsfeld and William E. Colby, the Director of Central Intelligence, to testify on Angola in hearings starting the week of Jan. 19.

Senator Clark recalled that President Ford, in an interview yesterday with NBC, said that if the American people were aware of what was at stake in Angola, they would support Administration policy. The Senator commented: "The hearings will give the Administration the chance to tell the people to get it on the public record."

He said the hearings should establish whether the United States is recruiting mercenaries for use in Angola, whether the United States was cooperating with South Africa on Angola, what role Zambia and Zaire played in the conflict and what the struggle meant for détente with the Soviet Union.