

Pro-West Angolan Group Says It Needs U.S. Arms

SILVA PORTO, Angola, Jan. 7 (UPI)—Leaders of pro-Western forces in Angola's civil war said here today that they desperately needed American weapons to combat a new offensive by troops of the Soviet-supported nationalist movement based at Luanda.

One senior military officer of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola told reporters that his group had arms and ammunition for only two months.

Officers of the National Union, which is in a fragile alliance with the National Front for the Liberation of Angola, confirmed reports that Luanda-based troops had opened a drive in the southern part of the country.

The new drive, they said, followed the fall of Uige, the National Front's headquarters in the north, to Soviet-supported troops of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola.

No American Troops

But no reporters were able to travel to any of the battlefronts to file direct dispatches on developments.

[In Washington, United States intelligence analysts said that the battlefield reports they were receiving conflicted to such a degree that they were unable to determine which side was winning or losing on any of the main Angolan fighting fronts.]

Jonas Savimbi, leader of the National Union, said here:

"We do not need American troops and we will not look for American mercenaries. The people of the United States are still too sensitive to this kind of issue after the events of Vietnam."

But Dr. Savimbi vowed to recruit mercenaries "from wherever I can, except the United States," if the Organization of African Unity endorsed the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola at a meeting beginning tomorrow in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Cubans Captured

The Popular Movement's offensive is generally regarded as an attempt to capture as much territory as possible before the O.A.U. can make its decision.

Dr. Savimbi expressed hope that the United States Congress would reverse the action it

had begun toward cutting off aid to Angolans facing Popular Movement troops equipped with Soviet-made tanks, helicopters and rockets and aided by 7,500 Cuban soldiers.

Meanwhile, three men identified as Cuban prisoners of war were made available for interviews here. National Union officials said their force had captured 16 Cubans, who were being held in various towns.

"I was told we were coming over here to fight mercenaries, that Cuba helped anyone in similar circumstances," a Cuban identified as 22-year-old Lieut. Selso Caldez, an infantry officer, said.

He said he was captured in November while in a hospital in Lobito that was abandoned by the Popular Movement at the time. He said Cuba was "definitely wrong to get involved" in what he described as an Angolan affair.

He and a man identified as Duesentes Rodriguez Garcia a private, said they had volunteered for the duty in Angola. The private said the Cubans had been told that they were going to help the Popular Movement. "We didn't know what that was," he added.

The third man, identified as Pvt. Jose Durudi, a 21 year-old mechanic said was not a volunteer but had been told he was being sent to Angola to liberate it. "I don't know what is going on here," he said.

All three were kept in separate cells in a small prison on the outskirts of this central Angolan town.

New Advances Reported

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa, Jan. 7 (UPI)—In radio reports monitored here, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola said today that its forces had captured the town of Gungo, 200 miles south of Luanda.

Pro-Western sources here said their information was that there was heavy fighting in the Porto Amboim, Gabela and Quibala areas, about 20 miles west of Gungo, and that Cuban reinforcements had been called in to defend Popular Movement positions.

The sources said also that a counter offensive was under way in the north to regain Uige and the nearby Ngage airfield, which fell to the Popular Movement Monday. Similar



The New York Times, Jan. 8, 1976

Aid requests were made in Silva Porto.

reports were also circulated yesterday.

2 French Journalists Held

LUSAKA, Zambia, Jan. 7 (Reuters)—Two whites who identified themselves as French journalists are being held in a military jail at Silva Porto, headquarters of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola.

Foreign correspondents spoke briefly with the two men when guards brought them, evidently by mistake, along with Cuban prisoners from cells to be photographed.

Later today, Dr. Jonas Savimbi, the National Union leader, said on a plane flying back to Lusaka, that he had not known the two Frenchmen were in the prison. He said that there would be an inquiry and that they would probably be freed.

The visiting journalists had no time to learn the names of the two detained men but one of them managed to say that they worked for the Gamma photo agency in France and had been held for about two months.