

Zaire Threatens War On Angolan Communists

Washington

Zaire threatened yesterday to declare war on Communist-backed forces in neighboring Angola that have routed their rivals in the northern zone of the country.

The Soviet news agency Tass said units of the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) — said to be backed by the United States and Zaire — are “retreating in panic.”

Tass said Holden Roberto, leader of the FNLA, has fled north and sought sanctuary in Kinshasa, the capital of Zaire. Zaire's president, Mobutu Sese Seko, is Roberto's brother-in-law and a staunch supporter of the FNLA.

The Soviet-backed MPLA is fighting the FNLA-UNITA alliance for rule of the potentially rich West African nation, which received its independence from Portugal last November.

Mobutu's government announced it will protest to the United Nations “the bombings by Cuban troops” of the Zaire border

city of Dilolo Wednesday. While the government called the attacks “bombings,” there was no mention of aircraft. Previous reports spoke of shellings.

A statement issued after Mobutu returned from Dilolo said, “this is a casus belli (cause for war).” The statement warned the Soviet Union and Cuba of “the serious consequences to which any repetition of these acts of aggression against a sovereign country could lead.”

Dilolo is on the Kasai river opposite the Angolan city of Teixeira de Souza.

Zaire officials said the highway and railroad bridges across the river were destroyed by the Cuban attacks. They did not mention casualties, but said Dilolo's hospital, railway station and customs building were heavily damaged.

The Zaire officials denied MPLA claims that Zaire warplanes had bombed Teixeira de Souza, killing six persons. The officials said Zaire would welcome a United Nations investigating commission.

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