

SOUTH AFRICANS SAID TO PULL OUT

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Angola Move Is Seen as Bid to Cause a Withdrawal by Cuban Forces

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KINSHASA, Zaire, Jan. 25—

South African troops are withdrawing from frontline positions across the center of Angola, a well-placed official of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola disclosed here today.

The official said the retreating South Africans were leaving in the hands of the National Union troops fighting alongside them important items of material, such as artillery pieces and communications equipment.

The official said the National Union had been given to understand by foreign quarters that support the pro-Western movement that the withdrawal was to encourage a similar retreat on the part of the Cuban military units spearheading the forces of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola.

But he said the National Union had received no assurance that such a mutual withdrawal of foreign forces had been agreed upon. If the Cubans do not withdraw, the official said, "we will have been abandoned." He declined to say

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what foreign sources had informed his organization of the expectation of a Cuban withdrawal, but suggested it might have been American.

The official said that the South African troops were not leaving Angola but were remaining on alert in "nonoperational areas." This raised the possibility that they might return to the front if their withdrawal is not matched.

In a meeting with journalists, the top National Union official here, Ruben Chitacumbi, said that he had no precise information on the South African move. But he referred questioners to a statement by the organization's Foreign Minister, Jorge Sangumba, in Lusaka, Zambia, that the South Africans were leaving the front.

Mr. Chitacumbi reported on the basis of information just received from Silva Porto, the National Union's military head-

quarters, that the civilian population had been evacuated last week from the town of Novo Redondo, on the Atlantic Coast south of Luanda, the M.P.L.A. capital. But he denied M.P.L.A. claims to have captured the town.

"Our forces are firmly established there," Mr. Chitacumbi said. He placed the northernmost position of the National Union on the coast at the town of Gangula, between Novo Redondo and what he called the southernmost M.P.L.A. strong point, Porto Amboim.

Mr. Chitacumbi also denied a Popular Movement claim to have captured the town of Cela, a focal point of attack farther inland. He said National Union troops remained in the town. However, another source in the union singled out Nova Redondo and Cela as towns from which South African troops had withdrawn.

Mr. Chitacumbi conceded that the position of the union's forces in Novo Redondo and Cela was "very, very difficult." But he said that its troops were still operating north of Cela, which lies on the road linking Luanda with the National Union capital of Huambo. He said the pro-Communist forces had not captured the town of Quibala, north of Cela, although it stands empty.

At the other extreme of the front, on the eastern border with Zaire, Mr. Chitacumbi said Cuban and M.P.L.A. forces had been driven from the railhead town of Teixeira de Sousa but the town had not been occupied by forces of the union because the bridges east and west of the town had been blown up by the pro-Communist troops.

Teixeira de Sousa is the terminus of the Benguela Railroad, whose inability to operate to the border is causing great quantities of copper from Zaire and Zambia to back up, severely straining the economies of both countries.

Mr. Chitacumbi said National Union troops had occupied the towns of Cassai and Nova Chaves in that region. The permanent representative here of

Troops Reported in Central Angola



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Forces fighting Luanda Government were said to be entrenched northward beyond Novo Redondo and to have driven their foes from Teixeira de Sousa.

the union faction, who is a member of its political bureau and central committee, said that its troops retained the initiative at the embattled town of Luso along the Benguela Railroad.

Soviet and Cuba Are Warned

LUSAKA, Zambia, Jan. 25 (Reuters)—The Soviet Union and Cuba will find themselves in a Vietnam-type situation if they try to take enemy strongholds in the Angolan civil war, the leader of the rival National Union for the Total Independence of Angola said today.

Dr. Jonas Savimbi, the organization's leader, said it would be impossible for the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola to establish control of southern and central Angola.

"If the M.P.L.A. and their supporters, the Cubans and Russians, come into our area it will be like the Americans going into Vietnam," he told reporters in Silva Porto. "We will fight with all the means at our disposal and if necessary it will be guerrilla warfare." He added:

"We have experts trained in China concentrating on the development of our guerrilla tactics. The rockets of the Russians have given the Cubans to use will then be ineffective."

Dr. Savimbi's remarks were relayed to Lusaka by one of his associates.