

January 29, 1988

**Confidential Telegram from USINT Havana to
Secretary of State George Shultz, 'The Military
Situation in Angola -- Cubans Deny UNITA Seizure of
Strategic Town'**

Citation:

"Confidential Telegram from USINT Havana to Secretary of State George Shultz, 'The Military Situation in Angola -- Cubans Deny UNITA Seizure of Strategic Town'", January 29, 1988, Wilson Center Digital Archive, National Security Archive, SA02488. Included in "Southern Africa in the Cold War, Post-1974," edited by Sue Onslow and Anna-Mart Van Wyk. <https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/118170>

Summary:

A telegram from United States Interests Section in Havana to Secretary of State Shultz describing Cuban reactions to reports that UNITA captured the strategic Angolan town of Cuito Cuanavale, capital city of Cuando Cubango. Cuban press call such claims false and lies of the racist South Africans.

Credits:

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Original Language:

English

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Transcript - English

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TEXT OF TELEGRAM 88HAVANA000493

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CONFIDENTIAL

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FM USINT HAVANA
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C O N F I D E N T I A L HAVANA 00493

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PREL, MARR, AO, CU
SUBJECT: THE MILITARY SITUATION IN ANGOLA -- CUBANS
DENY UNITA SEIZURE OF STRATEGIC TOWN

1. (U) IN RESPONSE TO WIDELY-CIRCULATING REPORTS THAT
UNITA FORCES HAVE SEIZED THE STRATEGIC ANGOLAN TOWN OF
CUITO CUNAVALE, THE CUBAN MINISTRY OF REVOLUTIONARY
ARMED FORCES (MINFAR) HAS RELEASED A STATEMENT THAT
APPEARS ON THE FRONT PAGE OF THE JANUARY 28 EDITION OF
THE COMMUNIST PARTY DAILY GRANMA. USINT'S INFORMAL
TRANSLATION OF THE STATEMENT, ENTITLED "MINFAR GIVES
THE LIE (TO ASSERTIONS) THAT THE SOUTH AFRICAN RACISTS AND
THE BANDITS OF UNITA HAVE TAKEN CUITO CUNAVALE."
FOLLOWS:

BEGIN TEXT:

IN THE LAST FEW DAYS WESTERN MEDIA, INCLUDING THE ANTI-
CUBAN STATION THAT IS FINANCED AND CONTROLLED BY THE
GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES, HAVE ECHOED AND BEATEN
ON THE DRUM THE SUPPOSED SEIZURE BY THE BANDITS OF UNITA
AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN RACISTS OF CUITO CUNAVALE, CAPITAL
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CITY OF THE PROVINCE OF CUANDO CUBANGO, IN THE PEOPLES'
REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA ON THE 22ND OF JANUARY.

THE MINISTRY OF REVOLUTIONARY ARMED FORCES OF CUBA STATE
THAT, AS THE ANGOLAN AUTHORITIES HAVE ALREADY EXPRESSED,
SUCH ASSERTIONS ARE ABSOLUTELY FALSE AND THAT THE POSITIONS
OF THE PEOPLES' ARMED FORCES OF LIBERATION OF ANGOLA
(FAPLA) ARE BEING SOLIDLY MAINTAINED IN THE CITED PALCE
AFTER REPULSING THE UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS OF THE MIXED

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() GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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TEXT OF TELEGRAM 88HAVANA000493

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-
FORCE OF UNITA AND SOUTH AFRICAN RACISTS TO OCCUPY CUITO |
CUNAVALE.

-
ALSO ABSOLUTELY FALSE IS THE INFORMATION THAT THE ALLUDED
TO SOURCES HAVE PUBLISHED ABOUT THE SUPPOSED CASUALTIES
OF CUBAN MILITARY PERSONNEL IN SUCH ACTIONS.

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END TEXT.

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In response to widely circulating reports that UNITA forces have seized the strategic Angolan town of Cuito Cuanavale, the Cuban Ministry of Revolutionary Armed Forces (MINFAR) has released a statement that appears on the front page of the January 28 edition of the Communist Party daily Granma. USINT's informal translation of the statement, entitled "MINFAR gives the lie (to assertions) that the South African racists and the bandits of UNITA have taken Cuito Cuanavale", follows:

Begin text:

In the last few days, Western media, including the anti-Cuban station that is financed and controlled by the government of the United States, have echoed and beaten on the drum of the supposed seizure by the bandits of UNITA and the South African racists of Cuito Cuanavale, capital city of the Province of Cuando Cubango. In the People's Republic of Angola on the 22nd of January, the Ministry of Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba state that, as the Angolan authorities have already expressed, such assertions are absolutely false and that the positions of the People's Armed Forces of Liberation of Angola (FAPLA) are being solidly maintained in the cited place after repulsing the unsuccessful attempts of the mixed force of UNITA and South African racists to occupy Cuito Cuanavale.

Also absolutely false is the information that the alluded to sources have published about the supposed casualties of Cuban military personnel in such actions.

End text.