1988 CUETO CUANAVALE

RR-88-103

UU ISA LEN BAS FBA CAW
AM-CUBA-ANGOLA
CUBANS SAY UNITA, SOUTH AFRICANS REPELLED IN ANGOLA FIGHTING
HAVANA, MARCH 18, REUTER - THE CUBAN ARMED FORCES MINISTRY ANNOUNCED THURSDAY NIGHT THAT ANGOLAN TROOPS WITH SUBSTANTIAL AID OF CUBAN GROUND AND AIR FORCES HAVE REPEATEDLY REPELLED UNITA AND SOUTH AFRICAN ATTEMPTS TO TAKE THE TOWN OF CUETO CUANAVALE IN THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF ANGOLA NEAR THE FRONTIERS OF NAMIBIA AND ZAMBIA IN SEVERAL MONTHS OF FIGHTING.

THE COMMUNIQUE, PUBLISHED ON THE FRONT PAGE OF FRIDAY'S GRANMA, SAID THAT [+SOUTH AFRICA HAS SIMPLY BROKEN ITS TEETH AGAINST THE IRON-WILLED RESISTANCE OF CUITO CUANAVALE WHOSE CAPTURE HAD BEEN ANNOUNCED BY THE ENEMY ON JANUARY 23, ALMOST TWO MONTHS AGO.+]

THE CUBAN STATEMENT SAID THAT THE FIRST CUBAN ADVISORS WERE SENT TO THE TOWN LAST DECEMBER AFTER INFANTRY FORCES OF THE ANTI-GOVERNMENT UNITA, CONTINGENTS OF THE TERRITORIAL FORCES OF NAMIBIA AND REGULAR UNITS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN ARMY TRIED TO TAKE CUITO CUANAVALE.

THE TOWN IS SITUATED 200 KM TO THE SOUTHEAST OF THE CITY OF MENOGUE WHICH IS ON A LINE NORMALLY DEFENDED BY CUBAN TROOPS, THE COMMUNIQUE SAID.

IN JANUARY, IT SAID, CUBA REENFORCED ITS AIR FORCE IN ANGOLA WITH ITS MOST EXPERIENCED PILOTS AND BEGAN SENDING MECHANISED INFANTRY UNITS, TANQUE AND ARTILLERY TO THE CUITO CUANAVALE AREA.

[+SINCE THE BEGINNING OF DECEMBER UNTIL MARCH 17, ALL ENEMY ATTACKS HAVE MET WITH UNYIELDING ANGOLAN-CUBAN RESISTANCE,+] THE CUBAN ARMED FORCES COMMUNIQUE SAID.

IT SAID THAT DURING THIS PERIOD THE SOUTH AAFRICAN TROOPS HAD BLASTED THE CUITO CUANAVALE AREA WITH MORE THAN 20,000 155MM ARTILLERY SHELLS. IT ADDED THAT ANGOLAN FORCES HAVE SUFFERED +HUNDREDS OF CASUALTIES+ AND THAT CUBAN FORCES SUSTAINED 39 CASUALTIES, DEAD AND WOUNDED, DURING THE MONTHS OF FIGHTING

[+EVERY AATTEMPT OF SOUTH AFRICAN TROOPS AND THEIR ALLIES TO OCCUP7Y CUITO CUANAVALE HAS BEEN MET WITH A RAIN OF ARTILLERY FIRE AND AIR STRIKES,+] THE COMMUNIQUE SAID. IT PRAISED [+THE BRILLIANT AND HEROIC ROLE+] OF THE +CUBAN-ANGOLAN+ AIR FORCE IN THE DEFENSE OF THE AREA.

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