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AM-CUBA-ANGOLA
CUBAN OFFICIAL REFUTES SOUTMAN MINISTERS STATEMENT
HAVANA, MAY 16, REUTER - THE FACT THAT CUBAN TROOPS ARE NOW OPERATING IN SOUTHERN ANGOLA NEAR NAMIBIAN SHOULD NOT HAVE ANY EFFECT ON NEGOTIATIONS FOR PEACE IN THE REGION, A CUBAN OFFICIAL TOLD REUTERS ON MONDAY.

THE OFFICIAL, WHO SAID HE WAS NOT SPEAKING FOR THE GOVERNPWAS COMMENTING ON A CHARGE BY SOUTH AFRICAN DEFENSE MINISTER MAGNUS MALAN THAT CUBA WAS UNDERMINING ANGOLAN PEACE TALKS BY MOVING TROOPS CLOSER TO PRETORIA-RULED NAMIBIA.

"WE ARE OPERATING WITHIN ANGOLAN TERRITORY AT THE REQUEST OF THE ANGOLAN GOVERNMENT BUT SOUTH AFRICA ADMITTEDLY HAS TROOPS IN SOUTHERN ANGOLA AGAINST THE SOVEREIGN WILL OF THE ANGOLAN GOVERNMENT," THE OFFICIAL SAID.

MALAN SAID HE TOLD THE ANGOLANS AT A MEETING IN BRAZZAVILLE LAST WEEK THAT UNLESS THE CUBAN TROOPS MOVE FROM AREAS CLOSE TO ANGOLAS FRONTIER WITH NAMIBIA, "DISCUSSIONS MADE NO SENSE."

THE CUBAN OFFICIAL SAID THAT "FURTHER TALKS DO MAKE SENSE BECAUSE THEIR ESSENCE IS TO FIND WAYS IN WHICH SOUTH AFRICA WILL STOP ITS AGGRESSION AGAINST ANGOLA AND WILL ABIDE BY THE U.N. RESOLUTION WHICH CALLS FOR NAMIBIAN INDEPENDENCE."

THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED PUBLICLY ON MAY 2 THAT ITS NORMAL LINES OF DEFENSE IN SOUTHERN ANGOLA HAD BEEN MOVED SOUTHWARD AND THAT ITS TROOPS WERE NOW CARRYING OUT MILITARY ACTIVITIES CLOSE TO THE ANGOLAN-NAMIBIAN FRONTIER.

ON THAT DAY, GRANMA, THE OFFICIAL CUBAN COMMUNIST PARTY NEWSPAPER, SAID THE DECISION "WAS DUE TO THE PIGHEADEDNESS OF THE SOUTH AFRICANS AND THEIR IRRATIONAL DECISION TO MAINTAIN THE OCCUPATION OF PART OF ANGOLAN TERRITORY."
REUTER 2202
