

Interview with UNITA Commander

INTERVIEW WITH LIEUTENANT COLONEL ANTONIO VAKULAKUTA, MEMBER OF THE UNITA POLITICAL BUREAU AND MILITARY COMMANDER OF THE SOUTHERN FRONT. VAKULAKUTA DENIES CO-OPERATION WITH SOUTH AFRICAN TROOPS

CHAKA:

Paulo Jorge, Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of Angola, spoke at the United Nations in July, and accused UNITA of making raids into Angola from bases in South African occupied Namibia. Other Angolan government spokesmen have alleged that UNITA soldiers are being trained by the South African army at Grootfontein Military base in Namibia. What is the military situation along Angola's border with Namibia? Are there contacts between South Africa forces and UNITA?

VAKULUKUTA:

This Paulo Jorge needs the South Africans to explain why 20,000 Cuban mercenaries remain in Angola and kill patriots. UNITA does not need the Boers to train us. What do they know about guerilla warfare? We rely on our own commanders trained in People's China, in Zambia and Tanzania, by the Portuguese, and even by the Russian social imperialists themselves. UNITA has others who fought the guerilla war since 1966.

CHAKA:

Some months ago, the Western press reported a massive movement of refugees across the Angolan border into Namibia. What triggered this mass exodus?

VAKULUKUTA:

The peasants were running from Cubans, FAPLAS, and SWAPO, because they were being killed, the women raped, and cattle and other things stolen. UNITA guerillas are fish and the people water. The Russian lackeys tried to kill the fish by destroying the water and forced the people to seek refuge with relatives across the border in Namibia. This is not new. When the Portuguese made offensives in Angola and Mozambique, the people ran away to Zaire, Zambia and Tanzania. Today the Cubans, FAPLAS, and SWAPO are like the Portuguese colonialist, only more brutal and worse.

CHAKA:

The South West African Peoples Organization (SWAPO) was closely allied with Unita in the past. Why are external SWAPO spokesmen attacking UNITA with such vigor and venom? What has been the historical relationship between SWAPO and UNITA?

VAKULUKUTA:

The problem with SWAPO is stupidity and opportunism. They can't tell friends, like UNITA, from enemies, like the Social Imperialists. From 1967 to 1975, UNITA gave SWAPO bases in Angola, medicine, some weapons and training. We guided them to Namibia and the Angolan people gave them food. Now, they kill the same people and they will pay. We understand that they need MPLA support, but we will never accept them killing Angolans like savages and fighting UNITA, because we suffered for them. Now they fight us in Angola more than the Boers in Namibia.

CHAKA:

Are UNITA activists working in the towns and cities of the far South of Angola as well as in the countryside? What is the nature of this work?

VAKULUKUTA:

Clandestine work goes on in the towns. UNITA has eyes and ears there and political mobilization takes place right under the noses of the Russian puppets. Also, there are attacks on towns. In the South, we attacked and occupied for a time Cuangar, Colai, Dirico, and Caiundo. The MPLA officers ran to Namibia. In July, we shot down a plane with rocket launchers.

CHAKA:

In early 1976, Angolan government troops and Cuban officers met with South African officials at Oshikango on the Namibia-Angola border. What took place at this meeting? Have contacts between South African and Angolan government officials continued?

VAKULUKUTA:

The Oshikango talks between Boers, Cubans, and MPLA were criminal. It meant MPLA and the

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Cubans accept the Boers as the government in Namibia. This talking continues. They talk about the Cunene Dam and Diamang diamond company that are owned by South African interest. They talk about their common border post. They can talk. They have a lot in common.

CHAKA:

What effect has the war had on the life e.g. agriculture, education, health, religion, etc. of the people in the South?

VAKULUKUTA:

UNITA has almost total support in the South and all UNITA supporters are in danger from the Russian lackeys of Neto, Castro and Nujoma. The MPLA offensives made people leave villages where they lived for very long. We have begun a new life in the bush, but there is always danger and schools, churches and families are disrupted by the war. But the people would rather be with UNITA in the bush and suffer than live under the Cubans and MPLA in villages and the towns.

CHAKA:

How many Cuban soldiers would you estimate are operating in the far South? What is the total number of government troops in the area and how are they equipped?

VAKULUKUTA:

There are 1,000 Cuban mercenaries in the far South and 2,000 FAPLAS. There is a difference between MPLA and the mercenaries. The Cubans have good uniforms, boots, houses and

food. The FAPLAS lack shoes, and sometimes uniforms. They sometime suffer hunger. This causes conflict between the two and some FAPLAS come over to Unita.

CHAKA:

How many troops are under your command? What is their level of training and equipment?

VAKULUKUTA:

We have 1,000 guerillas under our command. They are armed with the small arms that we received during the civil war and what we have captured since. Rocket launchers, small mortars, and mines are our best weapons. The level of training for guerilla warfare is high. Our troops are fighting for a sacred cause and are politically motivated. This and the masses support assures our victory.

CHAKA:

It appears as if SWAPO, which is presently opposed to UNITA, will come to power in Namibia in the not-so-distant future. What effect will this have on UNITA's ability to continue the war against the Luanda government?

VAKULUKUTA:

This will not effect our struggle. Namibia is Namibia and Angola is Angola. We only hope SWAPO will stop being Soviet puppets and not kill the Namibian people like they are killing Angolans for the Russian imperialists. If they do, the Namibian people will rebel.

