

2001**Anatoly Adamishin, 'The White Sun of Angola'
(excerpts)****Citation:**

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Summary:

Anatoly Adamishin explains the crucial role that Cubans played in the Angolan conflict. Through large scale Cuban involvement, the cost for South Africa to continue its involvement in the conflict became too high and led to peace talks. However, the author still underlines the fact that it was Soviet arms that the Cubans were using in their fighting.

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...their [the US] 'programme-maximum' at the talks included not only the settlement of the main core of the problem (withdrawal of both South Africans and Cubans from Angola, and the independence of Namibia), but 'an additional prize' as well, that is "bringing Savimbi to power or at least power-sharing. Finally Americans lowered their stakes. To us it was easier in this sense. We always proceeded from the point that what is advantageous for our friends will be suitable for us as well. We said, we would not ask for anything above it. And we did not ask, having kept this line to the end. And, what is important, having preserved in Angola a government friendly to us and having not spoiled relations with Cubans (this happened later, but fortunately not for a long time).

...If we hadn't come to the assistance to the MPLA, seven thousand kilometres from our borders [in 1975], who would have benefited from it? Little doubt, it would be South Africa. Has not it interfered in Angolan internal affairs? South African columns were stopped in a near proximity to Luanda. What were they doing there? They were bringing to power their protégé Savimbi. On what basis? What would be further developments in the region, if the racist South Africa had grabbed Angola in addition to Namibia? How many more years would its domination by force over the region continue? For how many more years would apartheid survive?

And 13 years later, in 1988, South Africa, still fundamentally racist would hardly have left Angola of its own will, had it not faced the dilemma: to wage a large-scale war against the Cubans, to declare total mobilisation, to risk a lot of whites' blood or to settle for a compromise...

Cubans drastically raised the price South Africa would have to pay for a military option, forced it more attentively to look to advantages of a peaceful solution and finally to lean towards it. It is clear that the Cuban factor was not the only one; the RSA government had all the time to look back at the situation in the country [South Africa]. But the Cuban military pressure brought about equilibrium on the battlefield, which was a certain forerunner of the talks to follow.

However, the Cuban role became efficient only owing to our support, including first of all, supplies of arms.