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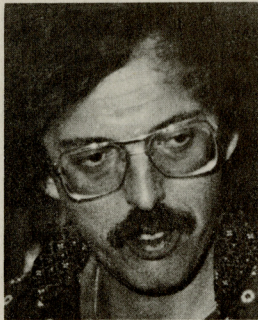


### ANGOLA: NATION UNDER SIEGE

After weeks of media speculation about the substantive content of rumored negotiations between the Popular Republic of Angola, South Africa, and the United States, the three nations announced on February 16, 1984, that a ceasefire agreement had been reached. South African troops would begin a phased withdrawal from occupied Angolan territory in exchange for Angola's commitment to restrict SWAPO's activities within southern Angola, and the two countries would participate in a joint commission to monitor the disengagement process. The communique also provided that at the request of the parties, American representatives could play a role in the activities of the commission, and the U.S. quickly moved to open a monitoring center in Windhoek, the Namibian capital.

Many supporters of African liberation and anti-apartheid activists have questioned the motivation behind Angola's decision to enter talks with its long-time adversary, the value of such an agreement between a radical Black nation and the illegitimate apartheid regime, and the legitimacy of a U.S. role in the disengagement process.

This ISSUE BRIEF explores the circumstances surrounding Angola's disengagement agreement with apartheid South Africa by analyzing the external pressures and domestic obstacles confronting Angola. The analysis is preceded by an interview with Dr. Gerald Bender, a noted American expert on Angolan affairs and an Associate Professor in the School of International Relations at the University of Southern California at Los Angeles.



Gerald Bender, Associate Professor, University of Southern California at Los Angeles.

**ANGOLA'S NEGOTIATIONS WITH SOUTH AFRICA DO NOT REPRESENT EVEN MINOR CHANGES IN EITHER THE PRINCIPLES OR THE MODUS OPERANDI OF THE MPLA GOVERNMENT.**

**What significance should one attach to the negotiations between Angola and South Africa?**

**BENDER:** Certainly, these negotiations do not represent a breakthrough. Angola and South Africa have been holding direct, bilateral talks since 1976. The bottom line for South Africa and the U.S. has always been that Angola sign a calendar agreeing to a phased withdrawal of Cuban troops. Until that calendar is signed, there will be no implementation of UN Resolution 435 by South Africa. That is understood in Washington and in Pretoria. Thus far, there is no indication that the Angolans are prepared to sign such a calendar given the present state of their security concerns.

**What changes, if any, are likely to occur in southern Africa as a result of these negotiations?**

**BENDER:** One should not be totally cynical about what is transpiring. Doubtlessly, a significant change in atmosphere has occurred. Certainly, Assistant Secretary of State Chester Crocker and others—both inside and outside the administration—hope that this new atmosphere will lead to positive conclusion of an agreement to send Cuban troops home and to South Africa's implementation of UN Resolution 435.

It is difficult to say, however, whether or not a new change in atmosphere and environment will lead to that. Clearly, things were going nowhere before. Now, with all the parties talking to each other on a regular basis, the time is more propitious for a settlement than before. Nonetheless, one cannot assume that success is imminent.

**Would the removal of Cuban troops necessarily mean that the South Africans would implement UN Resolution 435?**

**BENDER:** The favorite game of "Southern Africa Watchers" is speculating on Pretoria's intentions in Namibia. One of the things that makes this game both interesting and difficult is the fact that it is not clear that Pretoria knows what it wants to do. There are some signs that down the road South Africa has laid further conditions beyond Angolan agreement to remove the Cuban troops. Some senior South African officials have suggested privately that they may require an agreement for an MPLA/UNITA reconciliation before South Africa withdraws from Namibia. The Director of the Pretoria Strategic Studies Center has indicated that South Africa would demand further conditions once the Cuban troops problem is solved.



The history of South African negotiations over Namibia is filled with examples of excuses by Pretoria to hold up negotiations. One day, they will stop offering excuses and actually get out of Namibia. The question is whether that is now or some time in the future.

**Does Angola's willingness to negotiate with Pretoria reflect any fundamental change in MPLA policies or principles?**

**BENDER:** Angola's negotiations with South Africa do not represent even minor changes in either the principles or the modus operandi of the MPLA government. Talks between the two countries, which have become more public in the last few years, have been conducted on an ad hoc basis ever since Angolan independence in 1975. Certainly, the agenda for these talks has broadened from solving very concrete, specific problems to discussing much wider, less specific issues. The Angolan government has said all along that it wishes to have normal relations with all governments regardless of ideology, economic system, or alignment as long as those governments respect Angolan sovereignty. That includes the Soviet Union, the United States, Cuba, and South Africa. The problem has been on the South African side. The Pretoria regime does not recognize the government in Luanda, and has tried to destabilize—if not overthrow—that government both directly and indirectly. It is difficult to carry on normal relations with a neighbor that behaves this way. Therefore it is perfectly reasonable for Luanda and Pretoria to talk with each other as they are doing now. Both countries have considerable mutual interests, and the first round of negotiations has advanced each country's interests. In this case both countries win.

These talks do not affect Angola's relationship with Cuba in any way, however. If this is a preliminary step toward a settlement in Namibia that would ultimately lead to a reduction in the number of Cuban combat troops, then it would indirectly have some effect on Angola's relations overall—not just with Cuba. I would assume that the Cubans would be encouraging these negotiations, but I doubt that Angola consulted Cuba. Angola knows its best interests and would pursue them even if Cuba's perception were different. But I doubt that there is any difference on this issue.

**Does the current situation constitute evidence that the Reagan administration's policy of "Constructive Engagement" is working?**

**BENDER:** Well, it is too early to tell whether or not constructive engagement is working. It is certainly not possible to say that it has been successful. One needs to recall that constructive engagement as spelled out is a policy that says that in exchange for better relations with the United States, South Africa had to make progress on two fronts: one, move away from apartheid internally, and two, accept UN Resolution 435 and get out of Namibia. Now they certainly have received warmer relations and material gains from the United States, as well as understanding and assistance in international forums and so forth. The U.S. has delivered its side; what is not clear is whether or not South Africa will deliver its side of the bargain. On the South African domestic front, the key change that has occurred since Reagan is the new constitution which brings Coloreds and Asians into the political process. There are two ways to read that. Not unexpectedly, the Reagan administration reads that positively. Those who oppose the administration's South African policy, particularly constructive engagement, read it negatively, which of course is my own reading. Other than that we have seen growth in repression and little indication that the South African government is closer to moving away from apartheid in 1984 than it was in 1981. So constructive engagement has failed on one side—the South African side—of the bargain.

Most attention has been focused on the Namibian side. In fact many people seem to have forgotten about the requirement to move away from apartheid. We cannot claim successes at this point, and I am sorry to see that Secretary of State George Schultz has claimed a breakthrough. He ought to know that there are many difficult decisions down the road, the most important being the question of the Cubans, over which there has been no breakthrough.

**Is there anything you want to add to sum all this up?**

**BENDER:** It is disturbing to pick up an American newspaper like the *Washington Times* in early 1984 and see Holden Roberto described as a great Angolan leader, as a great hope for United States interests in Angola. One not only has a feeling of *deja vu* with a character like Roberto re-emerging, but also a heavy heart. It shows once again that when Americans do take notice of Angola, it is often for very selfish reasons that are detached from reality and have little to do with the Angolan people's well being. I fear that this new American attention to Roberto will do the Angolan people more harm than good. That is one reason why I personally hope that the present series of negotiations will be successful. Hopefully, there will then emerge a situation whereby with the withdrawal of the South Africans, the Cubans and any others, Angolans will for once be able to take charge of their own destiny. □



## RESTRUCTURING ANGOLA

While the process of social reconstruction is never easy, the tasks which the Popular Republic of Angola face are particularly complex. The elements of internal difficulties reflect the legacy of its 500-year history as one of the most brutally exploited nations on the African continent.

Angola was the principal African supplier to the slave trade, and that genocidal era has resulted in Angola currently being underpopulated. Although twice the size of Texas and the second largest sub-Saharan nation, UN officials have estimated its national population to be no more than some seven million. Several of its governmental districts are virtually uninhabited, and the geographical isolation of various ethnic groups has inhibited the development of national unity. The decimation of Angola's population makes adequate defense of its vast territory almost impossible and leaves the country vulnerable to outside attacks and prolonged occupation.

As the least developed colonial power, Portugal was forced to invite foreign multinational exploitation of its colonies' resources. Most of the Portuguese settlers were themselves illiterate and unskilled, so that even the most menial jobs were traditionally filled by the newest arrivals, not Africans. Education was never a governmental priority, so churches played a primary training role. No more than 3 percent of the land was ever cultivated during the colonial era when the agricultural sector was geared to the production of export commodities, not nutritional self-sufficiency. Coffee alone accounted for 34.5 percent of all export income. Except for petty manufactures like beer, soda, and processed food, there were virtually no industries in Angola during colonialism, for the Portuguese settlers were content to use revenues from oil and diamond exports to import almost everything. Foreign multinationals were allowed to effectively administer states within a state in their areas of control and establish their own security regulations and labor practices. The central colonial government did little but maintain an infrastructure that met the needs of foreign investors and supervise the brutal contract labor system which allowed investors in both the agricultural and industrial sectors to reap great profits. Angola still suffers from the legacy of Portugal's backward rule.

Upon winning independence in 1975, the MPLA government attempted to develop an industrial sector and to end the country's reliance on imports, but has faced severe problems. Most of Angola's infrastructure was devastated during the anti-colonial struggle and subsequent South African/UNITA invasions. Since the Portuguese had never allowed Africans to gain technical, managerial, or administrative skills, the massive flight of Portuguese settlers after independence left inexperienced Angolans to cope with all the country's economic and security problems. Not surprisingly, diamond and on-shore oil production fell drastically in the years immediately following independence and has not fully revived since then. However, by 1982 offshore petroleum drilling approached the 1969 maximum pre-independence levels. By that time, however, falling world prices for Angola's primary exports had wiped out any advantages which might have been recovered. Although Gabon and Nigeria are the only sub-Saharan nations that produce more oil than Angola, Angola's trade balance deteriorated from \$471 million surplus in 1980 to a \$5 million deficit in 1981. Although 1983 oil production rose approximately 30 percent, this gain was partially offset by falling prices and the doubling of long-planned investments in new oilfields and offshore

production. Since oil is the source for approximately 85 percent of Angola's foreign exchange and 65 percent of its total government revenue, Angola's fate is tied to factors far beyond its control.

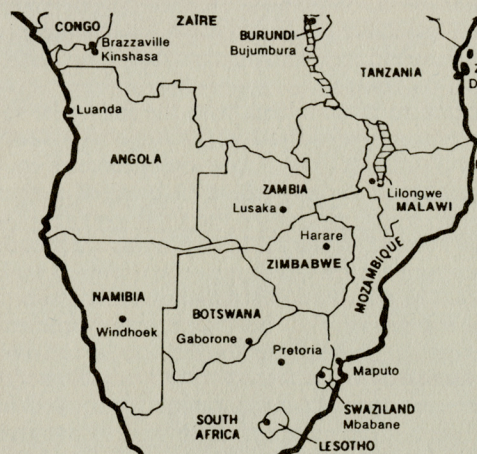
In addition to its problems with the industrial sector, and despite its meager populace, the Angolan government has found it difficult to feed its people. Experts consider only 8 percent of Angola's land to be even potentially arable, and only 4 percent of the total available land is now being utilized. While MPLA has made the production of food a priority, its efforts have been thwarted at almost every turn. The distribution of supplies and transportation of produce to markets has been a perpetual problem, for two thirds of all trucks within the country were driven off and abandoned by the defeated settlers immediately after independence, and 149 bridges were destroyed in the South African invasion which followed. Although these bridges had been rebuilt by 1980, recurring South African invasions have prevented any reliance on their use, and UNITA forces continue to target the few remaining trucks and bridges for sabotage. The Benguela railroad, the sole cross-country rail link, has been another prime target. As a result of these difficulties, provincial towns and capitals are better stocked with food than the national capital of Luanda, where population has doubled from the mass exodus of peasants escaping the terrorism of UNITA and South African forces. The drought which plagues the region has exacerbated this food crisis, and a rural population which could be capable of producing for the entire nation now needs for itself the little it can produce. After two successive years of drought, Angola has had to begin bartering oil for food to supply the hard hit urban areas where returning Angolan exiles and Namibian and Zairian refugees are clustered. Western analysts predict that it will be at least 1990 before Angola will be able to achieve agricultural self-sufficiency, and even then only if export earnings allow for the purchase of the materials needed for food production.

However, these same analysts have also predicted that any future rise in Angola's export revenues will be eroded by pressure from past due creditors and increasing military costs. In 1981-1982, Angola had to reverse its traditionally cautious borrowing policies and double its debt from 1.1 to 2.2 billion dollars to meet foreign currency needs. For the first time, Angola entered the Euro-currency market but requested trade credits for imports, not cash. Since the MPLA government was committed to meeting the needs of all, not just those of white settlers, domestic spending had been soaring and public expenditures had jumped 25 percent. By 1982-1983, various factors had forced the government to cut subsidies, end investments in new projects, and collect personal income tax for the first time since 1976. Defense needs accounted for nearly half of Angola's budget, and after the South African invasions and occupations of August 1981 and December 1983, war needs were expected to continue to take precedence over civilian concerns.

Despite this bleak picture, MPLA conducted the country's first-ever literacy and vaccination campaigns, reopened provincial hospitals and imported the pharmaceuticals to supply them, established an indoor/outdoor school system which operates in two shifts to meet demand, and developed a National Language Institute to document and compile the indigenous Angolan languages. All seem to agree, however, that Angola's economy will remain depressed until and unless a solution to its security problems can be found. □



## REAGAN WATCH: U.S. POLICY ON ANGOLA



While the legitimate national concerns of developing nations have typically been subsumed under the strategic concerns of U.S. policymakers, and Western aid was knowingly utilized against the increasingly effective liberation movements operating within each of Portugal's African colonies, Angola's national aspirations have been actively opposed by the U.S. government for at least twenty-three years. Angola was the only Portuguese colony with a range of strategic minerals as comprehensive as those found in South Africa, and American firms had a virtual monopoly over the extraction and production of Angolan oil. By 1970, Angola was the world's fifth largest diamond exporter, and the South African firm which controlled the Angola diamond industry had extensive U.S. interests. Also at stake was NATO's strategic domination of the south Atlantic Ocean, for Zaire virtually has no coast; and world outcry over South Africa's illegal occupation of Namibia suggested a challenge to the West's continued use of Walvis Bay. Neither Portugal, South Africa, nor the U.S. was prepared to lose access to Angola's resources, and each did its best to prevent Angola's independence.

Between the end of the slave trade and 1961, the U.S. had no specific policy towards Angola. By 1961 the U.S., already embroiled in the "Congo crisis," and alarmed by Cuba's relationship with newly independent African nations, saw "communists" lurking behind every national independence movement. Thus, when in 1961 the MPLA launched the armed struggle phase of Angola's anti-colonial struggle (after five years of non-violent protest against Portuguese rule had been brutally repressed), the Kennedy administration was primarily concerned not with Angola, but with the East-West implications of another central African conflict. Although the U.S. responded to the development of an Angolan war of national liberation by publicly urging Portugal to prepare Angola for eventual independence, the shift in diplomatic rhetoric was actually an attempt to diffuse the world outcry over the U.S. role in the assassination of Lumumba and to portray the Kennedy administration as a friend of African liberation. Despite the public proclamations of support for Angolan independence, 1961 also marked the initiation of

CIA military and financial assistance to Angolan organizations considered susceptible to Western direction and capitalist orientation. First to receive such aid was Holden Roberto, protege and brother-in-law of Mobutu, the U.S. chosen leader for the Congo (now Zaire).

While covertly supporting Black movements that would protect Western interests in the event of Angola's independence, U.S. military and financial aid to Portugal was never more than briefly interrupted. Successive administrations trained and equipped Portugal's fighting forces, shared anti-guerilla techniques developed by U.S. troops in Vietnam, subsidized Portugal's war-strapped economy, and supplied the toxic substances used in waging biological and chemical warfare against the civilian populations of Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, and Mozambique. Though this logistical support was justified by citation of NATO treaty obligations, the 1970 leak of the "Tar Baby Memorandum" revealed the real foundation of U.S. policy to be the assumption that white settler regimes in southern Africa were "there to stay" and were natural U.S. allies. The U.S. intelligence network seemingly was unaware, however, not only of the strength of southern African liberation movements, but the extent of anti-war sentiment within Portugal itself. Surprised when a coup unseated Portugal's dictatorship in 1974 and the new junta established mechanisms to hasten the end of the colonial period, the U.S. stepped up its campaign to ensure that a "moderate" government would assume power in Angola, which had always been considered the "prize jewel" of the Portuguese empire.

MPLA, the oldest Angolan liberation movement and the only one with a truly multi-ethnic character, had always alarmed the U.S. with its capacity to effectively govern and its anti-imperialist ideology. During the fourteen-year war of Angola's independence, the U.S. had supported at least three other movements, each professing various ideologies and tribal loyalties but sharing the CIA's goal of destroying MPLA. Roberto's FNLA movement claimed to seek the reformulation of the 14th century Bakongo kingdom through the unification of southern Zaire and northern Angola. FLEC, the Front for the Liberation of the Cabinda Enclave, formed in 1963 after MPLA opened a Cabinda front and sought the secession of the province containing the greatest known source of Angola's oil reserves. While FLEC never gained much credibility, the CIA had greater success with UNITA, formed by dissident FNLA member Jonas Savimbi in 1966. UNITA, originally only a southern counterpart of FNLA with the aim of uniting the Ovimbundu people of southern Angola and northern Namibia, was a beneficiary of massive CIA support and direct South African aid. Despite this, a vast propaganda effort portrayed Savimbi and Roberto as the leaders of authentic liberation movements and characterized MPLA as an elite movement of intellectuals and "mulattoes." Mercenaries were recruited from among the population of unemployed Vietnam veterans, and special appeals on behalf of FNLA and UNITA were made to the African-American community's Pan-African sentiment. Covert aid to such insurgent forces



was at least theoretically ended on May 25, 1978, by President Carter; and a ban on covert action in Angola without Congressional notification was later codified through the Clark Amendment. However, since the inauguration of the Reagan administration another movement, COMIRA has been promoted in the Western press; and as late as fall of 1983, a *Newsweek* cover story on the CIA listed Angola as one of three African sites for U.S. covert action.

It was in 1966 that South Africa first launched air strikes from its Namibian bases against MPLA liberated zones, and South African troops began to fight alongside Portuguese combat troops. However, preoccupied by its own war against Vietnam, a broad-based domestic anti-war movement, and an African-American community that was increasingly conscious of its ties to Africa, the U.S. could ill afford to duplicate South Africa's direct support of Angola's Portuguese settlers. On August 5, 1975, three months before the scheduled date of Angola's independence, regiments of South Africa's regular army invaded Angola under the pretext of protecting its hydro-electric dam complex built in collaboration with the Portuguese just inside the Angolan border. The U.S. was silent, but arranged for an airlift of French, U.S., Belgian, and West German arms to South Africa and UNITA, and FNLA forces massed on the Namibian side of the Angolan border. MPLA repelled the South African invasion with the

aid of Cuban troops and established the Popular Republic of Angola on November 11, 1975. The next month, the U.S. government ordered Boeing to withhold delivery of two planes worth more than \$200 million—already paid for by the MPLA government—and forced Gulf to cease operations and withhold payments, thus causing Angola to lose \$1.5 million per day in foreign exchange. The U.S. then vetoed Angola's first request for UN membership. This pattern of South African aggression and U.S. hostility toward Angola has been clarified both by President Reagan publicly supporting Savimbi and defining South Africa as a friend of the U.S., and by South Africa's citation of the U.S. invasion of Grenada as a precedent for its invasion of Angola in December 1983.

The principle tenets of U.S. policy toward Angola have remained distressingly consistent. Diplomatic, military, and economic means once used to forestall the emergence of a sovereign Angola are now utilized in an attempt to destabilize Angola and hinder its economic development. Both Democratic and Republican presidents have been concerned solely with Angola's geopolitical significance, mineral resources, and oil reserves, and Angola has become a model case for advocates of U.S. covert action. The improvements in U.S. policy have been due to international public pressure, not from the recognition of Angola's inherent right to self-determination. □

*Although successive U.S. administrations have railed against the continued presence of Cuban troops, the Reagan administration has taken the most belligerent attitude and has urged that the termination of South Africa's illegal occupation of Namibia be linked to the removal of Cuban troops from Angola. Periodically, media reports focus attention on the relationship between Cuba and Angola and allude to supposed rifts between the two governments over new developments in the southern Africa region. Only rarely are the Cuban and/or Angolan government's views directly presented. The following are translated excerpts from an official statement which received little coverage by American media.*

## JOINT DECLARATION OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF CUBA AND ANGOLA

More than two years ago, the Governments of the Popular Republic of Angola and the Republic of Cuba, in their joint statement of February 4, 1983, divulged worldwide, expressed very clearly their principled position regarding the tense situation that prevails in the Southern Cone of Africa.

The time elapsed has but confirmed the fairness of all aspects included in the aforementioned statement, which has earned approval of international public opinion and has been welcomed by virtually all countries of the World, with the shameful exception of the Governments of the United States of America and South Africa, who have stuck for years to the harmful formula of the so-called "linkage" that lacks any legal or moral base and has been repudiated by everyone except their authors.

The Government of the Popular Republic of Angola has kept the Government of Cuba fully informed of the details of the conversations that is currently conducting with South Africa and the United States, through which Angola seeks, based on principles, a negotiated solution to the conflict that over the years has confronted the Angolan people with the South African aggressors, and to create conditions that will make viable the immediate instrumentation of Resolution 435/78 of the United Nations Security Council and the independence of Namibia.

Rigorously abiding by what is established in the aforementioned joint statement, the Governments of Cuba and Angola reiterate that they would resume, by their own decision and exercising their sovereign will, the implementation of the gradual withdrawal of the Cuban internationalist military contingent, as soon as the following requirements are fulfilled:

1. Unilateral withdrawal of the racists troops of South Africa from Angolan territory.

2. Strict implementation of Resolution 435/78 of the United Nations Security Council, access of Namibia to true independence and total withdrawal of the South African troops that are illegally occupying that country.

3. Cessation of all acts of direct aggression or threat of aggression against the Popular Republic of Angola on the part of South Africa, the United States of America and their allies.

Together with these three requirements it will also be an indispensable condition, as was expressed by the Government of Angola through the statement made by President Eduardo Dos Santos on August 26, 1983, the termination of all assistance to the counter-revolutionary organization UNITA and any other puppet group, on the part of South Africa, the United States of America and their allies. . . .

The Government of Cuba, on behalf of the Cuban people, pays due homage to the heroism of the Angolan people, whom for almost a quarter of a century have waged a liberation war. . . .

The Government of the Popular Republic of Angola expresses the unlimited gratitude of the Angolan people for the internationalist assistance that for two decades the Cuban people have provided to their liberation struggle. . . .

Both Governments express their admiration and solidarity with the heroic struggle that the peoples of Namibia and South Africa wage under the leaderships of their sole and legitimate representatives, SWAPO and ANC, against the opprobrious system of *apartheid*, and they reaffirm their conviction that this horrendous institution is historically condemned to disappear. □



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