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## Angola: An Analysis of the Conflict

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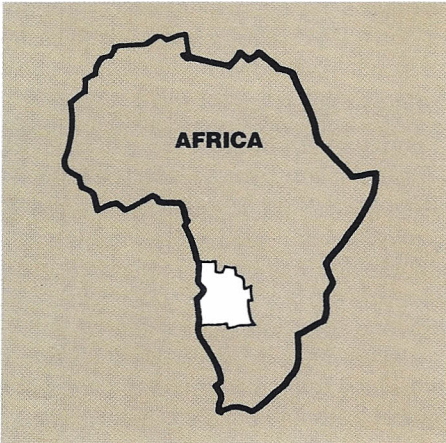
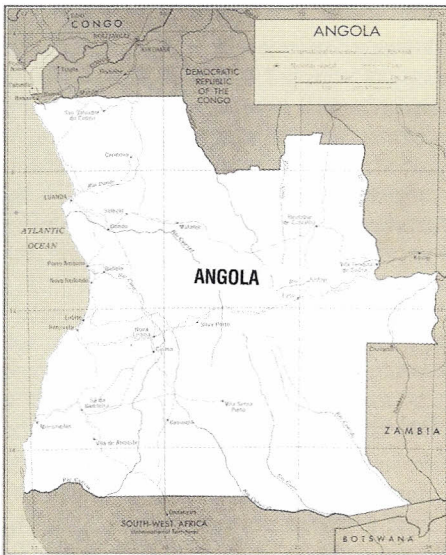
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# ANGOLA

By Charles E. Cobb, Jr.

After years of struggle against a brutal colonial system, Angola finally gained its independence a few months ago. The road to nationhood for Portugal's last colony in Africa was tough and ridden with much heralded bloody encounters among the various factions in the Angolan conflict.

Like Vietnam before it, Angola's struggle for national liberation constitutes a focal point of an international conflict involving power, politics and economics. In part, it represents a major clash of world views.

Here, a brief history is in order.

In mid-1950s, much of the colonial world was in the process of decolonizing. Much of Africa was in the beginning stages of political struggle that would lead to a burst of independence in the 1960s. The Vietnamese had defeated the French; China was consolidating its hard won independence, armed struggle was beginning in Algeria; and stirrings of a new phase of Black struggle here in the United States could be felt.

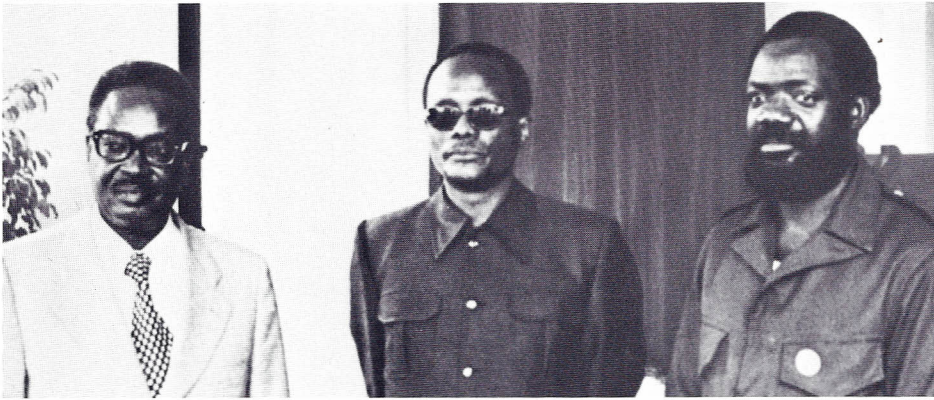
Angola was not isolated from these "winds of change." Relatively unorganized political ferment and pressure for reform had begun there. Some of the roots of this ferment lie in what conditions in Portugal — then a fascist state — had produced.

Poverty in Portugal accelerated migration to Angola in the post World War Two period, heightening in Angola, already existing European-African land and labor tensions.

The post war period also saw the development of a "Luso-tropical" notion. This idea defined Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau as part of a greater Portugal with all inhabitants being Portuguese. This intensified the importance of various class and caste categories:

*"Assimilado"* — a tiny minority of educated Africans given legal status that enabled them to enter into professions; *"Mestico"* — offspring of Africans and Europeans, usually African women and European men;





**Before Independence**—MPLA's Agostinho Neto, (left) who now heads the Government of the People's Republic of Angola, is seen here with FNLA's Holden Roberto (center) and UNITA's Jonas Savimbi during January 1975 unity talks in Mombasa, Kenya.

## THE U. S. INVOLVEMENT IN ANGOLA

By Courtland Cox

The internal struggle in Angola has a relatively long history. The long standing differences between the leaders of the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) and the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) are both ideological and personal. As far back as 1964, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) tried to mediate the differences between the two factions, but gave up in 1966 without success.

Given the long and bitter ideological and personality differences between FNLA head Holden Roberto and MPLA head Agostinho Neto, it should not be too surprising to see them opposing each other in the Angolan conflict.

### The American Role

The United States played a dual role in Angola from 1961 to 1969. It supplied Portugal's military needs for the colonial wars in Africa; at the same time, hedged its bets in Angola by supporting FNLA with funds for political and logistical purposes.

Ostensibly, the United States sold millions of dollars in arms—including bombs, napalm, munitions—to Portugal for NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) purposes. However, during hearings by Congressman Charles Diggs (D-Mich.) in March, 1973, it was revealed that the United States had indeed contributed to the prosecution of the counter-insurgency warfare in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau.

Also, the United States subsidized—at a much reduced level—Holden Roberto's FNLA through Zaire and CIA conduits from 1961 to 1969. (*New York Times*, September 23, 1975). But, in 1969, the Nixon administration decided to end the covert aid program to FNLA as a part of

policy decision to improve relations with the white regimes in Southern Africa. (According to State Department aides at a hearing before the Subcommittee on Africa, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, February 5, 1976, the CIA kept Roberto on the payroll [reportedly at a sum of \$10,000 annually] as an intelligence source).

In January, 1975, when it became clear that Angola would receive its independence, this time the Ford administration turned Roberto back on by granting him a sum of \$300,000. According to testimony by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger before the Senate Subcommittee on Africa, January 29, 1976, the funds were given to Roberto for the purchase of supplies and bicycles.

In the early spring of 1975, President Gerald Ford made the decision to also fund the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola [UNITA], which was founded in 1966 by Jonas Savimbi. The 40 Committee—a body in the Executive branch that approves large scale covert operations (chaired by Kissinger), approved \$300,000 in secret subsidies for UNITA. Both President Ford and Secretary Kissinger were aware that bringing UNITA to the American side constituted a major step—close to a commitment that the United States would not allow MPLA to control Angola.

An official of the Ford administration told John Marks, an associate at the Center for National Security Studies, that Kissinger pushed hard for increased CIA intervention. "Henry wanted to be told why we should intervene," said the official, "not why not." (*Intelligence Report*, Vol. 1, No. 1, December 1975). Many within the State Department were

*Continued on Page 40*

"European"—the rulers;  
"African"—minimally, 95 percent of the population of Angola, oppressed, exploited, and angry.

In 1954, the Bakongo tribe of Northern Angola chose Holden Roberto as its new chief in a secession quarrel that was tied up with reform issues and Catholic-Protestant religious conflict. What Roberto stood for at this point was separation of the Bakongo from Angola, and tribal self-determination through the reestablishment of the old "Bakongo Empire" of the 15th Century, which stretched between Angola and what is now Zaire. The organization formed for this purpose was UPNA—the Popular Union of Northern Angola.

During this same period, men like Agostinho Neto, Marcelino Dos Santos, and Amilcar Cabral, all "assimilado" from Portugal's African colonies, were returning to Africa after university education and political involvement in the Portuguese left.

Neto, who returned to Luanda, had already been jailed in Portugal for his militant anti-fascist poetry. As a gynecologist, he set up practice in Luanda's slums, but also maintained political commitment, becoming involved in the formation of the MPLA—the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola—in 1956. This movement at this time was primarily urban-based and different from UPNA in its non-tribal orientation as well as in its leadership which, while "nationalist," was also politically leftwing—borrowing much, though not blindly, from Marx and Lenin.

At the persuasion of a number of African leaders attending the 1958 All African Peoples Conference in Ghana, Roberto dropped the "N" from UPNA and redefined the movement as a movement for national liberation. UPA, however, never lost its tribal image or its hostility to the "urban elites" of MPLA. In political terms this translated into an anti-communist hostility—communism being the rather inaccurate view by UPA of MPLA's objectives. Though ill-defined politically, UPA's



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hostility was rightly placed in the sense that MPLA was for the elimination of the kinds of feudal remnants reflected in UPA's desires for a new ancient "empire."

In the north, in Bakongoland, and in Luanda, there were sporadic political protests partly spurred by events in neighboring Congo Kinshasa (now Zaire). In February 1961, there was an MPLA-led uprising in Luanda, basically, a failure, certainly a military failure. A month later, there was a UPA uprising in the north. Both triggered massive Portuguese repression.

Inside MPLA, the Luanda uprising intensified an already begun debate over strategy and goals. This debate was handicapped by the fact that a significant part of the MPLA leadership was in jail—Neto included.

UPA was in a better military position to fight in a heavily forested area of Angola, and won political and financial support from some African states through the efforts of Frantz Fanon—and interestingly, from the Kennedy administration. Although Fanon felt closer politically to MPLA, he believed that UPA was ready to start fighting immediately. In his view, at least at the time, it was most important for fighting to begin which would act to define a revolutionary movement. The Kennedy adminis-

tration on the other hand, while having a basic commitment to Portuguese colonialism, especially in terms of NATO—North Atlantic Treaty Organization—interests, felt it necessary to provide support for UPA.

#### **The OAU Connection**

In July 1964, Jonas Savimbi who [in 1966] was to form UNITA—the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola—in breaking with UPA, was to tell the OAU (Organization of African Unity) that UPA was an American creation aimed at splitting Angolan nationalists and assuring that if decolonization did occur, neo-colonial relations would be maintained.

Nevertheless, in 1961, despite contradictions, UPA had the appearance of a potentially effective national movement; while MPLA was caught up in internal debate. Events in Congo Kinshasa assisted Roberto's UPA. Patrice Lumumba was assassinated and Roberto was able to parlay tribal kinship into close ties with one of the contending factions there: the Cyrille Abdoula-Joseph Kasavubu-Joseph Mobutu faction, which was America's faction. A right-wing government in next-door Congo Brazzaville was another assist. MPLA also in Congo Kinshasa was very much a political pariah.

When the OAU was formed in 1963, UPA which had by now formed an official fighting wing called FNLA—the National Front for the Liberation of Angola—also formed a government, GRAE—Revolutionary Angolan Government in Exile. With this, they convinced the OAU Liberation Committee that they were the sole representative of the Angolan people. The Abdoula regime expelled MPLA from Congo Kinshasa.

Agostinho Neto had escaped prison in 1962 and was trying to rebuild MPLA. Despite problems in Congo Kinshasa, a coup in Congo Brazzaville in 1964 moved that country leftward and enabled MPLA to establish a base there. That same year, Zambia became independent and MPLA was able to locate there also. From Brazzaville, MPLA had access to Cabinda

Province; from Zambia, it had access to Angola's eastern zone.

That same year (1964), yet another coup in Congo Kinshasa established Moise Tshombe as prime minister. Tshombe had led the Katanga Province secession attempt and had received support from Portugal and South Africa. He returned the favor by closing the boundary to UPA-FNLA-GRAE. This collapsed the already shaky organization so far as military activity was concerned.

As mentioned earlier, Savimbi in 1964 broke with UPA-FNLA-GRAE and created UNITA in 1966. And, according to one Portuguese official, Portugal looked with favor on this development in the hopes that the same kinds of conflicts that characterized FNLA-MPLA relations would develop and continue to disrupt the development of a unified national liberation movement. There is no hard evidence that UNITA was "created" by the Portuguese.

Though conflicts continued both internally and with the rival movements, MPLA managed from the latter part of 1964 to maintain fairly consistent guerrilla warfare, helped by its close political ties to the stronger movements of PAIGC in Guinea-Bissau (its head, assassinated by the Portuguese shortly before independence, was Amilcar Cabral who was also one of the founders of MPLA) and FRELIMO in Mozambique. MPLA was handicapped by the fact that unlike PAIGC with a strongly committed Republic of Guinea neighboring Bissau, and Mozambique with an equally as committed Tanzania on its border supporting FRELIMO, Angola had a hostile Congo Kinshasa then being run by Mobutu in 1965, and a wishy-washy Zambia to the east fearful of its copper routes through Angola being disrupted.

Meanwhile, Savimbi, after having broken with Roberto's UPA-FNLA-GRAE organization (Savimbi was foreign minister of GRAE) over that organization's lack of fighting, and the tribalistic content of its politics, went to Cairo and then spent a year in Switzerland, where he had done



most of his college education. During this period, he also went to China, and to Congo Brazzaville, where he held discussions with Neto and MPLA.

Although Savimbi proclaimed a Marxist-Leninist line with Chinese orientation, in 1963 he blocked the admission into GRAE of Viriato da Cruz, who had broken with the MPLA and who had good relations with the Chinese. This appears to be part of a power struggle between the two men for leadership of the left factions within MPLA and FNLA. For apparently, Savimbi's main reason for not coming into MPLA after his break with Roberto, was his belief that Neto's politics was "revisionist." Neto, for his part, seems to have considered Savimbi an unstable ultra leftist.

On March 19, 1966 UNITA was formed and almost immediately began armed struggle. UNITA also called for a united front against the Portuguese, which MPLA did not consider serious in light of Savimbi's refusal to come into MPLA before forming UNITA. The FNLA for its part insisted that UNITA dissolve, and that Savimbi write a letter of apology for his denunciation of Roberto in 1964.

UNITA's fighting was on a front south of Luso in Angola and along the Zambian border. Though small in scope, it was consistent.

Zambia's independence also helped UNITA in establishing an external base there. But UNITA was expelled in 1967 following accusations by the Portuguese that it had blown up sections of the vital Benguela railroad, and Portuguese threats to cut rail line access to Zambia unless action was taken. Also, since MPLA was on good terms with Zambia's ruling party, UNITA found itself allying with the Zambian opposition in Lozi Province which borders Angola.

Kicked out of Zambia, UNITA found itself without means to receive material support and consequently its fighting effort suffered. By 1970, the small amount of support from the Chinese had virtually vanished, and Portuguese military bulle-

tins didn't even mention UNITA. Also, like MPLA, the organization was hampered by internal differences, specifically in UNITA's case, differences between the regional commissioners of peasant origin and the political commissioners of urban origin. These internal conflicts dovetailed with an MPLA drive into eastern Angola which sparked clashes between MPLA and UNITA.

Consequently, while UNITA was in Angola fighting and organizing, it couldn't convince anybody that it existed.

In 1972, MPLA attempted to enter into a military alliance with FNLA in the hopes that the Zaire border would become open to its forces, and also because there was political debate inside MPLA over the necessity of at least operational unity with other Angolan movements. Part of the pressure was also coming from independent African states, most of whom were pledging (at OAU Conference in Morocco), to downplay political differences among independent African states in the interests of advancing the liberation of Southern Africa. The clearest sign of this effort was in Tanzania's swallowing its misgivings about Mobutu's role in the Lumumba murder and warming up its relations with Zaire.

One account has it that the internal MPLA debates were serious enough to disrupt the Angola fighting, enough for Portugal to begin shifting troops to Mozambique. As this report has it, Tanzania and Zambia were concerned enough about this to ask the Chinese to provide military support to FNLA in the hopes that they would add to the fighting—thus keeping the troops in Angola. China, at any rate, was giving some support to UNITA in southern Angola.

There was in 1973 an apparent shift of support away from Neto by both Tanzania and Zambia, and the Soviet Union, toward Daniel Chipenda. Chipenda, however, lacked the internal support inside MPLA and support swung back to Neto. The Chipenda-Neto break became final

***It is most important to mention at this juncture that the United States had more than just a passive involvement and concern with these events. First, the implications of independence for this area of Africa were viewed with much more interest than in other areas of Africa. In trade and investments, from Zaire to Africa's southern tip, billions of dollars were and are there. The area's potential in terms of raw material was, and is, of major significance; and the potential for capital investment crucial to the financial and industrial complex that runs the United States. The U. S. strategy for the region had two prongs: 1) moderate African buffer states around the white-ruled states; 2) the permanence of white rule in the Southern region.***

with an attempt to assassinate Neto, and Chipenda fled to FNLA with a portion of MPLA's eastern military force. And it was Chipenda who was one of the major links in the relationship established last year among UNITA, FNLA, and South Africa.

#### **The American Connection**

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The political map of independent Africa, and particularly the experience in Congo Kinshasa in the early 1960s, gave assurance that the kinds of political units which would be fraternal at least to capitalism, could be cultivated. Despite the pressure of guerrilla movements in Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) Namibia, (South West Africa) and South Africa, white rule seemed permanent for the foreseeable future. Indeed, a review of Southern Africa policy ordered by then National Security Affairs' Henry Kissinger in 1969 which posed the assumption that armed political struggle by Africans could not win, was accepted, and not changed until 1974.

What changed White House opinion was the Portuguese coup of April 1974. As in Vietnam, the United States had made a serious error in attempting to gauge the potential of armed political warfare in

strictly military terms. The U.S. had counted the forces of MPLA, UNITA, and even FNLA and came up with less men and material than the Portuguese had, and therefore concluded there was no prospect for an African victory.

Nevertheless, for all the difficulties, Portugal was faced with wars of major proportions thousands of miles away on three separate fronts, the fronts themselves thousands of miles apart. Portugal's rulers tried to argue that the wars were in the national interest, but as casualties mounted into the thousands among Portugal's young men to protect a colonial exploitation that benefited only Portugal's own ruling elite, the wars had the effect of heightening the contradictions within Portugal.

Through contact with both the Portuguese left and the African movements, younger officers began to identify the aspirations of the African movements with their own aspiration of seeing Portugal free of fascist dictatorship. In this respect, the underground among Portuguese that both FRELIMO in Mozambique and the MPLA had, were crucial points of contact in the flow of political ideas. As the African wars increasingly wreaked havoc on Portugal's economy and killed off or chased away much manpower, the regime fell, and the Southern Africa equation changed.

Independence was now inevitable in the near future. In American policy-making circles, comfortable assurance of permanent white rule in Southern Africa crumpled, and the major question became what kind of African government. Similar concern existed about Portugal itself in relation to the "Atlantic Alliance" and Southern Europe.

These concerns were intensified by the pending defeat in Vietnam, other setbacks in Europe, and post-Watergate domestic pressures that ranged from challenges to the illegal use of the C.I.A. to Congressional challenges to the personalization of foreign policy by Secretary

of State Henry Kissinger, the latter sparked by the Middle East and Cyprus.

For Angola, however, the key date is January 1975. On January 15, the Portuguese government and Angola's three movements signed an agreement setting Angola's independence for November 11, 1975. At just about the same time, the 40 Committee which coordinates U.S. intelligence voted \$300,000 for Roberto's FNLA. Secretary Kissinger (chairman of the 40 Committee) told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee recently that the money was for "office supplies." The amount of money was actually small relative to America's capacity, but almost 30 times what Roberto had been getting as a C.I.A. retainer; and dramatically visible within the Angola context. Interestingly, the C.I.A. wasn't completely sold on the idea: Its reluctance apparently based on its assessment of Roberto. The C.I.A. was more interested in UNITA, but UNITA's strength (political) and potential was relatively unknown.

The significance of the 40 Committee decision lies in the fact that Angola's movements had already agreed to a coalition, albeit uneasy. And, though MPLA had for more than a decade been getting support from the Soviets and other socialist countries, the question of a massive Soviet presence was not a factor. Kissinger's own African experts—whom he ignored—saw little if any chance of Angola becoming a "Soviet satellite."

The decision harks back to 1960, 1961 and 1965—to the Congo Kinshasa conflict. In the Congo of Lumumba, the United States felt threatened by a genuine African nationalism, and with alternative political units (African) eliminated Lumumba and cultivated a takeover by someone more responsive to American interests. This was achieved by 1965 with Mobutu's ascendancy. Like in Angola, great wealth was at stake.

Kissinger's need in Angola was made especially urgent in his mind because so much of the apparatus of his tenure in



American foreign policy-making was dis-integrating around the world. At the meeting in January, a decision was made to encourage Zaire's intervention in Angola—a decision made more significant by a proposed increase in military aid to Zaire from \$4 million in 1975 to \$19.9 million in 1976; and a total increase in aid to Zaire during the same period of from \$9.3 million to \$64.5 million.

One thing emerges clearly. Contrary to Kissinger's Senate testimony in January 1976, the \$300,000 was not to "stalemate" an escalated Soviet or Cuban "intervention," but was to establish FNLA dominance, and perhaps was deliberately designed to shatter the tentative effort at a coalition. The money certainly sparked a series of FNLA-MPLA armed conflicts throughout the summer of 1975. It also guaranteed an escalated Soviet involvement. Again in the area of speculation, it's entirely possible that Kissinger saw it not only in terms of a regional strategy for Southern Africa, but also as a means of testing what latitude he had still remaining in light of recent restraints imposed by the Congress. Here, there is a striking resemblance to the Tonkin Gulf.

For the U.S. administration in April 1975, another traumatic disaster occurs. Saigon falls and becomes Ho Chi Minh City. In May, in a burst of Macho, the Mayaguez raids occur, and Kissinger and Ford are apparently encouraged by general acceptance on Capitol Hill, in the press, and by the public.

The ante was upped in Angola in June. The C.I.A. proposed \$30 million for FNLA. In July, at least \$14 million was approved for FNLA and UNITA; and another \$15 million for Zaire and Zambia—to aid the two movements. These figures were leaked by the Ford administration, apparently in an effort to win public support for the covert operation.

Certain members of the Senate were briefed by C.I.A. Director William Colby, Senator John Sparkman (D-Ala.) for instance, but the information was not really

passed on. The Congressional storm actually broke when Senate Africa Subcommittee Chairman Dick Clark (D-Iowa) discovered the growing U. S. involvement in Angola while visiting Zaire.

Meanwhile, in Angola, although the MPLA had successfully met the FNLA challenge in Luanda, driving Roberto's men out of the city, and driving UNITA out, it was losing in the countryside.

An important question occurs here. The main conflict was between FNLA and MPLA. UNITA adopted a stance of neutrality, which from the MPLA point of view, acted to assist America's attempted take-over through its FNLA proxy. This, coupled with deep and long-standing suspicion of UNITA, led to the abandonment of any attempt to work out at least an operational relationship. This was in fact what the UPA-FNLA-GRAE had done to MPLA in the middle 1960s.

The consequence was to push UNITA formally into the FNLA camp. Would it have been better for there to have been an MPLA-UNITA alliance? Probably, certainly in a tactical sense. Politically, the distance between MPLA and UNITA was not that far—not as far as the distance between FNLA and UNITA, as the earlier conflicts between the two factions reflect.

However, since this is not an academic question, it is largely unanswerable from outside of the conflict's own pressure. The MPLA conflict was not determined by a summer's events, but by a decade's.

In essence, the summer break between MPLA, FNLA, and UNITA was political, with MPLA viewing a just-about-to-be-independent Angola already under assault by imperialism, whose agent was FNLA; and UNITA increasing Angola's vulnerability either consciously or by opting out in the name of "unity." An assessment of MPLA's choice to push away UNITA would have to be weighed carefully to determine how much was ideological and how much of it was the taking advantage of a tactical opportunity. Its appearance is that ideological differ-

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ences were secondary to what was seen as the tactical advantage within the Luanda context.

#### **The Soviet-Cuban Connection**

MPLA soon found itself faced with fighting on two fronts; UNITA in the south, and FNLA in the north. It's at this moment that MPLA began to get the dramatic increase in Soviet aid, and manpower support from Cuba. The context in which this support arrives escalates support for FNLA and UNITA from the United States, and the entrance of South Africa into the conflict.

Senator John Tunney (D-Cal.) told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in February 1976, that, in October 1975 Savimbi received—through President Mobutu of Zaire—an explicit commitment of U.S. military aid. Two months earlier, South African troops occupied a border strip inside Angola near the Namibian border. In the north, Zaire committed four to five battalions of about 12,000 men to fight with FNLA. Daniel Chipenda, who earlier broke away from MPLA, formed a mercenary unit inside Namibia, and was beginning a thrust into Angola by mid-October. Behind that unit were UNITA troops who occupied the towns taken.

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38 been more destructive to the progress of Blacks than 1975. Though it can be argued with complete justification that other Americans also sustained losses during the year, Blacks lost more and every loss represented a major setback from which it will take them years to recover.

The hour is late. But there is still time to set the house in order. □

## An Analysis of the Conflict

*(Continued from Page 9)*

An aide to Senator Tunney who met with Savimbi in Silvo Porto told me that Savimbi acknowledged direct South African assistance.

By November 11, Angolan independence day, a formal FNLA-UNITA alliance had been formed, with a capital at Nova Lisboa, now called "Huambo," and FNLA forces were just 10 miles north of Luanda while UNITA forces, apparently spear-headed by the "Chipenda Brigade," were about 150 miles south of Luanda.

At no time during these FNLA-UNITA successes—as far as is known—did the United States approach the Soviet Union to discuss a de-escalation. There were press accounts of the growth of Soviet assistance, and of the growing South African-American assistance. However, the U.S. felt its clients would win. They were in fact winning at the time.

South Africa's presence grew as Congressional objections to covert U.S. aid intensified. By November 15, there were at least two South African units of approximately 2000 men in Angola, accompanied by Alouette helicopters, French and American tanks. Additionally, mercenary units organized by Chipenda were being supplied from Namibia by South African C-130 aircraft. By the end of November, there were almost 6000 regular South African troops as far as Silva Porto in Angola's center. Every major victory by the FNLA-UNITA forces resulted from the South African involvement. It's within this context that the massive Cuban involvement begins, and with it, the squeals from the Ford administration.

In a political sense, Angola's civil war had been transformed into a war against external invasion. In an operational sense, the war was not a guerrilla war, but a conventional one. Nowhere is this more evident than in the contingency alert orders given to the U. S. Sixth Fleet. Specifically, the carrier Independence and the guided missile cruiser Boston were

instructed to be ready to fly tactical air support strikes over Angola.

Additionally, in November, spotter planes believed to belong to the U.S. flew missions over Angola from Zaire, and cargo planes dropped supplies to South African troops in central Angola—flying from a Zaire base shared with South African aircraft.

But there were two factors that allowed the besieged MPLA to turn the situation around: 1) Political pressure in the United States. An alarmed Congress with visions of another Vietnam-type debacle halted the flow of covert money. [All of the reasons for this success can't be explored here, but it is sufficient to say that the reasons had less to do with sympathy for MPLA than with a broader conflict between Congress and the Ford administration over the procedure and conduct of foreign policy. The challenges came from both the left and the right.] 2) MPLA's stance was boosted by Cuban-Soviet assistance. In late October, the Cubans began a massive airlift of troops, and the Soviets began providing sophisticated weapons. Intelligence sources have put the estimated cost of the operation at \$200 million, but as Senator Tunney pointed out, some \$120 million was the cost of logistical support such as transportation to Angola. The value of actual equipment was about \$80 million.

As far as the Cuban support is concerned, the decision seems to have grown out of political support for MPLA and a long relationship with the movement. As for the Soviets, certainly they seek to generate influence in Africa, and see MPLA as a potentially important ally. The Soviet role is complex, and not always principled (as in the case of flip-flopping support for Chipenda and Neto, or the intrusion of Sino-Soviet conflicts in their decision-making).

The important qualitative difference between Soviet-Cuban involvement and South African involvement is: MPLA admits it asked the Soviets and Cubans in,



UNITA and FNLA consistently deny asking in the South Africans. Thus, if there is a criticism of the Soviet-Cuban presence, that criticism must be focused at MPLA. South Africa, if one accepts the UNITA-FNLA position, is clearly an invading force. And arguing that UNITA does not have the capacity to take on the South Africans does not alter the difference in South Africa's presence as compared to the Cuban presence.

Between December 1975 and February 1976, the combined MPLA-Cuban effort clearly defeated South Africa—an important victory for Africa.

### The Road Ahead

Now, the question is whether MPLA can turn military victory into an effective national political consolidation. This is more difficult than the military conflict, despite outward signs of breakthroughs such as recognition by OAU and the reconciliation with Zaire, and possibly with Zambia, and overtures to the United States.

The answer turns, in part, on MPLA's own political dynamic. In 1973 and 1974—even as the first effort at inter-movement coalition was being attempted—MPLA was in the midst of internal debate. There were at one point in 1974, at least three separate MPLA factions (one being the Chipenda group). These rivalries and political debates, in part, reflected questioning of the Neto leadership growing out of frustration with both the tactic of fighting and political organization. Some of the specific focuses of the debates were strengthening collective decision-making, the question of coordinating with UNITA—which was fighting a limited but successful struggle in the south—and how to deal with Angola's ethnic realities. On this latter point, for instance, MPLA was much more hostile to existing traditional tribal structures than UNITA.

Three kinds of issues have always been troublesome to MPLA. Although they are resolved in the sense of an "official

by MPLA of a popular Luanda radio program because it "inflamed" racial and tribal antagonism, and the protest that followed, indicate that there are deep difficulties ahead. The MPLA decision in February to set up a party school and to become more selective in allowing membership in the MPLA, is another sign of still-existing problems with internal definition and structure.

MPLA's own overtures to South Africa, with respect to the Cunene River hydroelectric project, and to the United States with respect to Cabinda oil, also undercuts some of its own criticism of UNITA.

The other side of this same political question is the prospect for continued military pressure in the form of guerrilla activity waged by UNITA. Despite the dim prospects of aid from either Zaire or Zambia, it does seem possible for UNITA to maintain the same level of harassing pressure on MPLA that it maintained against the Portuguese. UNITA's base area is also Angola's "breadbasket." As the conventional warfare winds down, guerrilla activity may grow. Of potentially major significance is mercenary involvement with at least covert support from South Africa.

MPLA's task of consolidation thrusts to the forefront the question of economic organization. In Luanda, steps are being taken that appear to be leading towards worker control of factories. On the other hand, Angola's oil and mineral wealth places it on the target of multi-national corporate interest. Coupled with MPLA's urgent need for skilled manpower (depleted by the flight of Portuguese settlers), developing Angola's resources poses the dangerous and difficult task of balancing immediate needs with political objectives.

Yet another question for the future is the remaining struggle against white rule in Southern Africa. The battle lines are closing in on the Republic of South Africa. Zambia fears a political-military thrust that disrupts its own "detente" with South Africa and Rhodesia.

The motivating factor in Zambia's concern is economic necessity in terms of copper exports and consumer imports, which traditionally have been routed through Angola and South Africa. Zaire to the north fears a radical political entity, with comparable material resources to itself, as threatening to its perceived hegemony over the independent African states in the region; and like Zambia, is concerned to moderate relations with South Africa.

The two immediate focuses of the Southern Africa concern are: Namibia and Rhodesia. Guerrilla activity in both places is on the rise. The growth of capitalist penetration in "the white South," which has been rapid since the mid 1960s—based on the assumption that armed political struggle by Africans was not viable—is made insecure by a radically nationalist Angola, which along with Mozambique moves the battle lines 2000 miles nearer to South Africa. (See Commentary, Pg. 10) □

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