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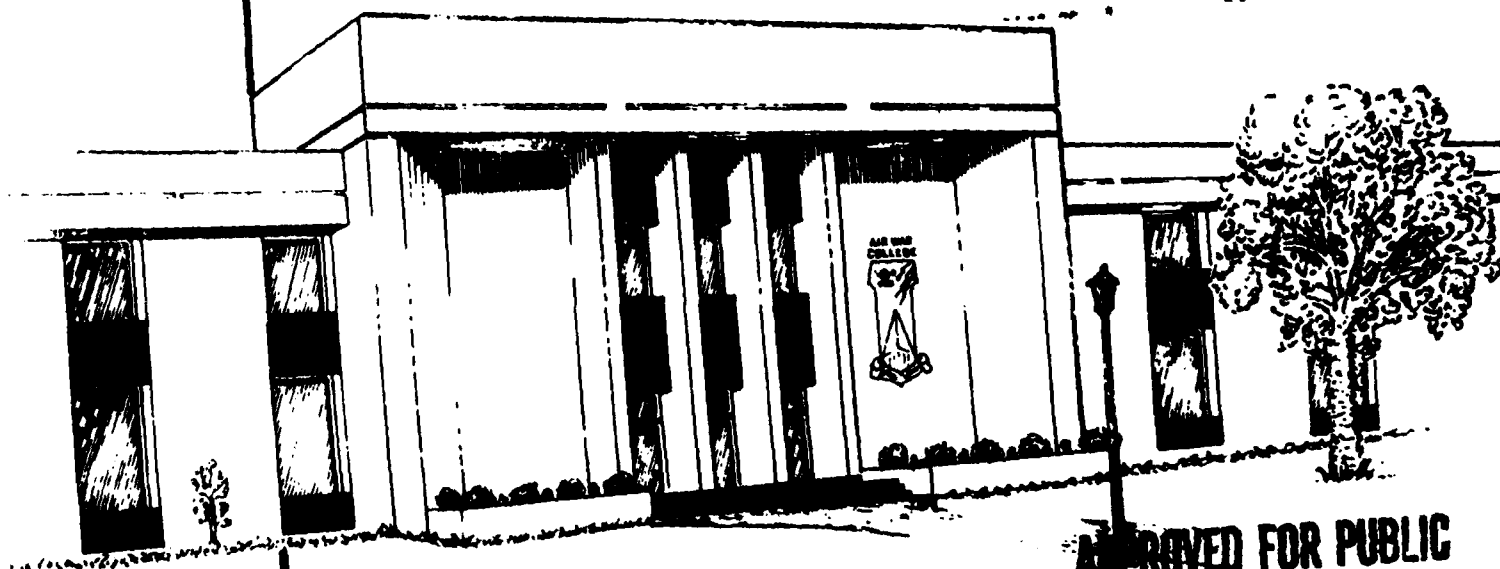
WHO'S WINNING:
HAS FOREIGN AID PROVEN EFFECTIVE IN ANGOLA?

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UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

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WHO'S WINNING: HAS FOREIGN AID
PROVEN EFFECTIVE IN ANGOLA?

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A DEFENSE ANALYTICAL STUDY SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
IN
FULFILLMENT OF THE CURRICULUM
REQUIREMENT

Advisor: Colonel Graham W. George, Jr.

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

May 1989

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TITLE: Who's Winning: Has Foreign Aid Proven Effective in Angola?

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A survey of the various factions fighting in the 13 year civil war in Angola and the numerous sources of assistance provided those factions introduce a discussion of respective objectives and interests. An analysis of those objectives, the amounts and types of assistance provided, and the influence of factors external to Angola itself, leads to the conclusion that the United States is in a stronger position of influence than other powers in spite of investing significantly less in foreign aid. Multiple reasons for this situation are provided.



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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Colonel Veneble L. Hammonds, Jr. (B.S., USAF Academy; MA, Webster College) has a lifetime interest in international affairs. He has resided overseas for more than seven years and has travelled throughout most of the world. He first became interested in Southern Africa during an assignment to Portugal where he enjoyed discussions of the subject with military officers who had served in the region during the 1970's. Colonel Hammonds is a graduate of the Air War College, class of 1989.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

After 13 years in Angola, Cuban military forces began departing for home in January. Under terms of the agreement to provide for neighboring Namibia's independence, Cuba agreed to withdraw all of her 50,000 troops from Angola in a phased process. All troops should be redeployed during the next 27 months. Also beginning to leave are the estimated 8,000 to 10,000 members of the African National Congress, a guerrilla army which is dedicated to overthrow South Africa's white dominated government. South Africa agreed to halt aid to the Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) which has been fighting a civil war against the government of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola since 1975. A United Nations observer force is established in Angola to monitor the terms of the agreement.¹

At signing ceremonies in New York in December, 1988, diplomats from the United States, Angola, Cuba, and South Africa hailed the Namibia Agreement as offering "peace without losers."² The term "offers" should not be minimized in importance. Any agreement with so many and varied parties directly affected will be difficult to carry out, perhaps even as difficult to carry out as was the process necessary to get the parties to agree that the independence of Namibia and the situation in Angola are inseparable issues in the first place.

In the final analysis, the accord's success will also depend upon the United States and the Soviet Union, both of whom have invested considerable foreign assistance to the warring factions in Angola's civil war. For now, the agreement has been signed with great public fanfare after a very protracted negotiation mediated by the United States. Assuming the agreements are abided by, it is not too early to begin an assessment of the effectiveness of foreign aid provided the major combatants in Angola. Such an assessment will show that the United States has clearly benefited more from her modest investments than have the Soviets and Cubans who have spent enormous sums in comparison. This is not to suggest that Cuba and the Soviet Union have not scored foreign relations victories in the area. It simply means in relative terms their very expensive assistance to keep in power the government of President Jose Eduardo dos Santos and his Marxist Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola may net them very little in the long run.

In arriving at this conclusion, one needs to emphasize that the withdrawal of Cuban and African National Congress troops from Angola, and South Africa's agreement to end support provided to UNITA do not end the 13 year civil war in Angola. The United States still provides \$15 million in annual aid to UNITA and the Soviets spend an estimated \$1.5 billion supporting the Angolan government.³ However, once the foreign troops are removed from Angola, and if South Africa's security is no longer seriously threatened from factions operating from

within Angola, the level of violence in Angola should dramatically decrease and the prospects for a negotiated settlement to Angola's civil war are greatly improved compared to any other period since Angola received her independence. These are a large number of "ifs", but are now at least possible, perhaps probable. Many possible events brought about by numerous different factions could alter the present outlook and prospects for ending Angola's violent civil war. If these possibilities occur, they will need to be analyzed and dealt with as they occur. At the present time, the United States is in a better position than ever before during the past 15 years to positively influence events in Angola and they are in that position at far less costs than the Soviets and Cubans.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND: THE ANGOLAN CIVIL WAR

As the Portuguese flag came down in Luanda, on 11 November 1975, to be replaced by the flag of the new independent state of Angola, Agostinho Neto, Angola's first president stated, "Our independence was born in fire."⁴ Indeed as the independence ceremonies continued, many in the crowd ducked for cover when celebrating soldiers fired their guns into the air. The Portuguese withdrawal, even after years of violent warfare for independence, came about suddenly once the decision was made in Lisbon. With a new revolutionary government of its own, Portugal not only cast off her colonies in Africa very quickly, her own domestic problems and reorientation left precious little time or effort to be expended in insuring a peaceful transition to independence of the former colonies. The factions within Angola, who had fought the Portuguese and each other prior to independence, now began a bloody civil war which continues to this day. The initial battles saw the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) headed by Doctor Neto emerge victorious. But primarily because of external support of the various factions, the victory has never been totally decisive and Angola has yet to enjoy sufficiently long periods of peace to develop and enjoy independence. Through the invitations and necessity of all of the factions involved, the struggle for control of Angola became largely an east-west issue with numerous unusual combinations of allies, some making little

sense at all on the surface, and all making acceptable resolution of the conflict extremely difficult.

The MPLA which emerged from the initial battles victorious and which still forms the government of Angola, described itself as Marxist. It was the first serious threat to Portuguese control, recruiting mesticos as well as black members. Opposed to the MPLA were the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). Both the FNLA and UNITA were originally supported by the United States and the People's Republic of China. The leader of UNITA, Jonas Savimbi, was once a member of the FNLA who tried to join the MPLA. Savimbi and UNITA are also backed by South Africa. The FNLA was largely supported by Zaire, headed by President Mobutu Sese Seko, brother-in-law of FNLA leader Holden Roberto. When South Africa sent an expeditionary force to assist UNITA, the MPLA government requested assistance from Cuba and combined MPLA and Cuban forces defeated the Zairean-backed FNLA. The MPLA were also successful in thwarting the initial moves of UNITA, so that by the end of 1976, the MPLA was squarely in the driver's seat.

The civil war devastated the economic infrastructure of the country. Powerlines were destroyed, farms were idle because farmers did not feel secure enough to farm, diamond mines had been looted, few telephones worked, and the civilian transportation system was disrupted. Most of the 300,000 white settlers who possessed nearly all the technical skills and

management expertise had fled Angola. The task of rebuilding the economy and bettering the lives of the nine million Angolan citizens has been a slow, difficult process. UNITA continues to battle MPLA forces, aided by South Africa who has made numerous raids into Angola both to assist UNITA and to battle Angolan supported forces of the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) who seek to control the future of Namibia while operating out of southern Angola. With all of these factions and interests at work in Angola, peaceful resolution to the conflict is difficult to see. The recent agreement to establish the independence of Namibia offers hope and may indeed point the way towards solution of Angola's conflict. Such a solution would require satisfying at least the major concerns and objectives of the major parties involved. Part of the problem may in fact be determining exactly what those objectives are.

South Africa's objectives have consistently been her own security and protection of white rule in South Africa, or at least to protect the transition to a sharing of powers within South Africa in terms acceptable to and directed by South Africa herself. Although some argue South Africa makes use of the security issue primarily to gain support among Western powers by defining her security in terms of a Soviet threat, the argument is one long debated within South Africa and cannot be simply ignored. South Africa has little doubt that the Soviet Union has identified South Africa as a target area.

Prime Minister Botha, as well as many others, have made this argument consistently over a long period of time. The Soviet goal, according to Mr. Botha, is to control the supply of oil from the Middle East and of minerals from South Africa to the West, thus dominating the West and forcing it to surrender. The Soviet support of black African struggles for liberation in Southern Africa is only a part of Russia's total struggle to defeat the West. Because some black power organizations in South Africa believe blacks are being oppressed and will only achieve their aims through violence, both the Soviets and black power organizations have the same goals and use the same instruments in pursuit of these goals.⁵

With regard to threats to her security from neighbors in southern Africa, the South Africans do not consider their neighbors to pose a direct military threat at present. They do see an unprecedented buildup of conventional forces, especially aggravated by the presence of Cuban, Soviet and Eastern Bloc forces in Angola, to possibly pose a threat in the future. Additionally, they see an indirect threat against their security posed by those who grant the African National Congress training bases and transit facilities from which they could infiltrate South Africa.⁶ South Africans go further to explain that there is often no difference in the threat from outside their borders and within their borders, because both form part of the larger Soviet strategy for worldwide domination. This strategy seeks to cause South Africa to fight, isolated and

simultaneously as possible, on the Mozambique, Rhodesian, and Angola fronts while at the same time having to do internal battle with the defeatists and the "joiners" within South Africa itself. It is South Africa's opinion that the Soviets were fully expecting South Africa to fight in Rhodesia and in Mozambique and South Africa's diplomatic initiatives were largely responsible for the failure of the Soviet strategy on these fronts.⁷

From these perceptions, it seems clear South Africa's interests in Angola are primarily to further South Africa's own security by reducing the Soviet external threat, meaning of course the Soviet, Cuban and East Bloc threat; and reducing the threat to white rule in South Africa. The latter seeks to minimize, if not totally defeat, outside assistance to the African National Congress. In addition to decreasing arms and financial support to the ANC, they want very much to remove Angola as a possible launching point for ANC cross border infiltrations into South Africa through Namibia.

The United States has attempted to define its interests in Angola in more global terms. In early 1976, Secretary of State Kissinger declared the U.S. had no intrinsic interests in Angola and did not oppose any particular faction. Stating the U.S. could develop constructive relations with any Angolan government, Kissinger clearly put the blame for Angola's internal problems on the Soviets aided by Cuba. U.S. interests were solely to allow conditions for the development of an Angolan

government that could represent all of Angola's citizens, something not possible so long as Soviet and Cuban forces and armaments made it possible for the MPLA to dictate to all of Angola and exclude other political factions from participating.⁸ More recently, Assistant Secretary of State for Africa Chester Crocker described U.S. objectives to be that of the "honest broker in a region that includes many different kinds of political regimes."⁹ Even more explicitly, in a major U.S. policy statement before the National Conference of Editorial Writers in 1983, Under-Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleberger stated U.S. objectives are "constructive and peaceful engagement in the affairs of Southern Africa because the U.S. is uniquely situated to speak to all sides in the conflict." He went on to explain the U.S. belief that regional stability and domestic stability and change of various countries in the region are all interdependent. Regional stability is unlikely without basic movement away from entrenched rule by white minorities in South Africa. Equally, peaceful changes within South Africa are unlikely to occur without greater regional stability.¹⁰

U.S. objectives appear to have changed dramatically over a five or six year period and this indeed has caused confusion in the region. It seems clear now that at the same time the U.S. was saying one thing, it was actually doing another. U.S. assistance to both the FNLA and UNITA may well have begun prior to Angola's independence and prior to significant amounts of

Soviet and Cuban assistance. There is considerable evidence, therefore, that Soviet and Cuban assistance in large quantities was largely a response to U.S. and other's (including Chinese) growing aid.¹¹ The point is this: whether the U.S. had consistent objectives with regard to Angola all along or not, there was certainly no consistent, well defined statement or consistent pursuit of those objectives until the past six to seven year period.

This situation may be understandable when one considers all the factors influencing U.S. policy making during the late 1960's and 1970's. For example: how could the United States support its NATO partner, Portugal, who insisted upon keeping, and indeed fighting to keep, her African colonial empire, while at the same time publicly supporting the independence movements throughout Africa during the period. How could we not support Portugal who was the only European ally who allowed use of bases in support of U.S. resupply efforts to save Israel in 1973? How could the United States begin to strongly oppose apartheid in South Africa while at the same time seeking to stabilize the newly independent nations of Southern Africa who were espousing Marxist leanings? How could the United States fight a perceived growing communist influence in Southern Africa when she had just withdrawn from a long and unsuccessful attempt in Southeast Asia? While confusion and lack of clarity helps to explain why it has taken nearly eight years of steady negotiation effort to convince the various

factions at work in Southern Africa that the United States is indeed interested in being the honest broker for the region, and that our colors are not likely to change abruptly, the success achieved at negotiating an agreement on the independence for Namibia shows wide acceptance now of that U.S. role for the region. Success in seeing the agreement fully carried out will firmly establish that U.S. role.

Much of what can be said of Soviet and Cuban objectives in Angola can at best be described as educated speculation. Certainly an abundance of opinions exist and both the Soviets and Cubans have stated their objectives. It is our nature, in the west, to read any such statements as just more rhetoric all designed to justify nothing more than a designed, long standing intent to march whenever and wherever they can toward the ultimate goal of world domination. In fact, world domination may be the ultimate objective. In the case of Angola, it may be the Soviet objective to control. The point is, it might be useful to our analysis to look beyond the rhetoric to determine our own realistic definition of Soviet objectives. One thing is certain, like our own, their realistic objectives will have to be met if the Angolan conflict is to be concluded.

The Soviets were largely led into Angola by the Cubans and the Chinese. It was the Cubans who first answered the call for assistance from the MPLA, primarily because Fidel Castro sees himself as the one chosen to advance marxism anywhere in the third world he possibly can. He is the true opportunist

and he saw the opportunity in Angola. As long as the Soviets were willing to pay the bills, Castro had little to lose because U.S. hands were tied, and he had much influence to gain as the champion of the struggle for national liberation who was willing to do more than just provide verbal support. Once the Cubans were in place, the Soviets had little choice but to ante up the necessary support in funding and equipment. This decision by the Soviets was helped by the knowledge that the Chinese were aiding the FNLA. Under Brezhnev, the Soviets were not about to allow the Chinese the opportunity to outgain them in influence in the third world. Realistic Soviet objectives appear therefore to be support of a marxist leaning newly independent Angola, support of their Cuban ally, access to port and air facilities in Angola, and to build a relationship which would permit a Soviet influence in events in the Southern African region.¹²

With all of these differing interests in the region, as well as those of Western Europe and the other neighboring countries of Southern Africa, it might appear solutions to end the violent conflict in Angola are not to be found. To accept such an argument and wash our hands of the region is not in the United States interest either. The region is of significant if not vital interest, to the United States and the West. Resolution of the conflict in Angola is directly tied to resolution of the conflicts of the entire region, most of which are tied to the questions of South African

security and changes to internal South African political and economic structures. No important leader of the region believes the west has no role to play in the area. Even Angola's MPLA government continues to express interest in negotiations with Washington. The United States, beginning with the Carter administration and continuing through President Reagan's, has consistently attempted to play the major role in seeking resolutions in the region acceptable to all. Taking the position that a collapse of the South African economy would not be a benefit to the entire region, the Reagan administration's policy of constructive engagement has sought peaceful, steady changes to South Africa's internal structures while simultaneously working to remove the sources of threat to South African security. While still providing support to UNITA, the U.S. successfully negotiated with the MPLA, Cuba and the Soviets to reach an accord acceptable to all to provide for the independence of Namibia. The linkage of Cuban forces withdrawal from Angola to the independence of Namibia was key to gaining South African acceptance. The success of this accord, if carried out, and the success the West has in continuing South Africa's move away from apartheid are key elements to resolution of the Angola conflict. Such a resolution would help greatly to achieve the West's interests in assuring political stability in a strategic and economically important region and averting a violent racial confrontation in Southern Africa.¹³

CHAPTER III

THE MULTIPLE SOURCES OF FOREIGN ASSISTANCE

To state that it is difficult to precisely identify the sources, not to mention the amounts and types, of assistance provided the competing factions in Angola is an understatement of the problem. The number of players and their reasons for giving support are many and have produced some unusual allies in the conflict. It is, however, possible to identify with some degree of accuracy the major contributors and identify those major contributors whose interests must be satisfied if peace is to come to the country. The questions of how much aid and how effective that aid has been will be addressed in subsequent chapters. Much has been written, Congressional inquiries have been made, and many still debate the issue of who came first to the war in Angola. One thing seems clear, various countries, including the United States, South Africa, Cuba, the Soviet Union, China, and Zaire provided financial support, training, technical advisors, and probably mercenaries to each of the MPLA, FNLA, and UNITA even before Angola's independence in November of 1975.¹⁴

The question of who actually initiated the arms buildup is a fascinating one, but not really of great importance to the objective of this study. What is important are the questions of who is providing that support today and how effective has that assistance been? Even if they were crystal clear at

the time, the objectives sought during those initial years of "choosing up sides" may be less clear and even of little importance today. One could go even further and make a strong case for the argument that those original reasons were flawed, or at least circumstances have changed which should require a consistent change in why one would provide support for one side or the other today. To assume any side of the conflict must hold steadfast in original intent leaves no hope for any negotiated settlement, continues the stalemate of a winner-take-all mentality and guarantees continuation of the war of attrition.

At the time of Angolan independence in 1975, there were three major factions seeking to dominate the Angolan government.¹⁵ The People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) was founded by the late Dr. Agostinho Neto in 1957 as a popular front seeking to include all tribal and ethnic groups of Angola in beginning the struggle for liberation from Portugal. It began by setting up various cultural and other societies to provide a legal cover for the MPLA political work. One of these societies which became the most effective was the Angolan Nurses Movement whose leaders were men who for the most part worked as male nurses in the households of Portuguese settlers. This organization provided access to the homes, the activities, and secrets of the ruling class of Portuguese and an excellent communication system throughout Angola's cities, towns, and farms. The MPLA also attracted leftist members of outlawed

Portuguese and Angolan communist parties, some of whom were radical. From the late 1950's until about 1972, the Soviets provided political and material support to the MPLA, primarily because Neto's major opposition, Holden Roberto, was committed to United States support. In 1972, the Soviets decreased their support to Neto because he publicly disavowed dedication to Marxism or Soviet Communism and because he was not radical enough in his approach to liberation and the type of government he envisioned replacing the Portuguese. Neto did attempt to gain U.S. support in 1962 and again in 1974, but was rebuffed both times. He died of cancer in Moscow in 1979 and was replaced by Jose Eduardo Dos Santos, an engineer of considerable administrative talents and committed to the attempt to maintain Angola as non-aligned in the east-west struggle. Periodically, throughout the past ten years, the MPLA has continued to express interest in opening up its relationship with the United States.¹⁶

According to Cuban officials, President Neto first requested aid from Cuba in May of 1975 with specific requests for instructors to establish four training centers where Angolans could learn how to use the modern weapons being supplied by the Soviets. While the 480 man training cadre was being assembled to deploy to Angola, South Africa entered Angola in force during August, 1975, perhaps at the request of the U.S. Thereupon, Cuba increased the training cadre to include medical, communication, transportation, and other specialist. This group of about 800 sailed to Angola in three ships, reaching Angola in early

October. Shortly after arrival, the trainers found themselves having to teach their new students during lulls in battle, as both UNITA and FNLA forces were thrusting towards Luanda, the capital. Another SOS was sent to Havana where the politburo and Castro weighed the risks of Cuba entering the war in force. According to the Cubans, it was their decision, not the Soviets, to aid the MPLA based upon their own assessment that the Soviets would provide material aid and that the U.S. would not be able to intervene because of the effects of Watergate and Vietnam, the decreased effectiveness and reputation of the CIA, and the unwillingness of the U.S. to be seen as the ally of racist South Africa. The Cubans immediately airlifted a 650 man combat battalion and followed with further reinforcements transported in ships.¹⁷ The Cubans were correct in their assessment and both Cuban and Soviet assistance steadily grew as they became committed in much more than just words to maintaining the MPLA in firm control of Angola.

The National Front for the Liberation of Angola, FNLA, was led by Holden Roberto who succeeded at various times in gaining support from the United States, the People's Republic of China, Romania, France, South Africa, Israel, West Germany and Zaire, headed by Mobutu, Roberto's brother-in-law. The FNLA, operating primarily out of Zaire initially, was probably the better financed and equipped faction in the early years of Angola's civil war. They suffered from being led by Roberto who, although very capable of convincing others to back his

movement, spent much of his time trying to lead the conflict from well behind the lines and antagonized other leaders of the FNLA by his arrogant personal style and following a "tribalist line" in building followers in the FNLA. The vast majority of FNLA membership came from the Bakongo tribe of northern Angola. The FNLA, in spite of great external support, suffered some major defeats on the battlefield and was split when former member Jonas Savimbi broke with Roberto to head UNITA, the Union for the Total Independence of Angola. The FNLA is no longer a major contender for control of the Angolan government.

UNITA, still lead today by Jonas Savimbi, was the last of the three major factions to emerge to contest the control of Angola, but is today the only major faction still battling the MPLA government. Like Roberto, Savimbi has had great success in gathering assistance from numerous sources. His major backers have been the United States and South Africa although he did receive assistance from the Chinese and at one time he supposedly was supported by Che Guevara. It is also reported that he and about a dozen other leaders completed a course of intensive guerilla training outside of Peking. He made efforts to reconcile political differences among the MPLA, FNLA and UNITA, without success. He built UNITA strength within the Ovimbundu tribe, Angola's largest, in the southern and eastern regions of Angola.¹⁸ From this geographical proximity to Namibia and South Africa, UNITA has had a mutually beneficial

alliance with South Africa for some time. South Africa has been UNITA's primary source of arms and occasionally direct military support. In return, UNITA helps keep the pressure on the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) and African National Congress (ANC) troops based in southern Angola. SWAPO troops, often based with MPLA forces, are the military forces seeking to gain control of Namibia. The ANC is the most radical of several South African black power movements. Jonas Savimbi and South African President Botha coordinate operations through occasional meetings.¹⁹

In recent years, Savimbi has toned down his earlier statements calling for the capitulation of the MPLA government and has stated his movement is on the brink of forcing the MPLA to the negotiation table. He has also been actively seeking the support of some of MPLA's European friends in the attempt to begin negotiations with MPLA. UNITA poses little threat to Luanda itself and has concentrated primarily in keeping military pressure on the MPLA until they decide it is time to negotiate a settlement.²⁰ UNITA faces serious problems for the future. Under the Namibia independence accord, South Africa has agreed to cease providing assistance to UNITA in exchange for the removal of Cuban and African National Congress forces from Angola. If these agreements are satisfactorily carried out, UNITA will be without her primary supporter and the United States may find it increasingly difficult to gain Congressional approval for continued aid once foreign troops are removed from Angolan soil.

This would especially be true if, at the same time, the Luanda government agrees to negotiate their differences with UNITA, increases its attempts to normalize relations with Washington, and indeed controls the SWAPO and ANC activities within Angola's borders.

There is one final source of assistance that should be included in this study, although it may not be considered by all to be technically a legitimate or normal dispenser of foreign aid. This source is the multinational corporation, primarily the American oil companies. Whether one considers a U.S. oil company to be a form of diplomacy or simply a company doing business in a country whose government is obviously opposed by the corporation's parent government, the significance of the peculiar situation in Angola deserves consideration. Angola is the second largest oil producer in sub-Saharan Africa and oil exports comprise well over 90 per cent of Angola's total exports. More than 40 per cent of Angola's exports go to the United States, with most of the remainder going to the Bahamas, Netherlands, United Kingdom and Spain. More than 50 per cent of Angola's imports come from the United States, Brazil, France, and Portugal. Oil is the key. If it were not for spending over 50 per cent of their budget on defense, Angola has sufficient oil production to make it an economic giant in Africa, sufficiently wealthy to aid development of other African neighbors. This wealth could be a blessing for the region or it could pose a problem for South Africa in the future because it could provide

assistance from within black Africa to support black nationalist movements within South Africa. With oil providing the largest portion of Angola's growing (nearly \$3 billion) export income, one must conclude they are quite capable of financing their defense for many years to come, with or without Cuban troops. The real issue is the continued cost of such defense to other much needed investments in social and economic programs which would allow development within Angola. Spending in defense related areas has so far prevented any such development and that spending can only be significantly decreased if the level of foreign intervention does in fact drop dramatically. If nothing else, one has to wonder how U.S. oil companies can be allowed to continue financing the MPLA government while the U.S. government continues to finance the opposition. Obviously, the answer is that if not U.S. companies, some other nations' companies would step in and produce the oil. The truth of the matter is that we have a peculiar situation resulting in U.S. consumers financing one side while U.S. taxpayers finance the other side of the same civil war.²¹

CHAPTER IV

HOW MUCH ASSISTANCE HAS BEEN PROVIDED?

Although it is the most asked question, the question of how much assistance has been provided is not one that can be precisely answered. It can be estimated. Even then, the important issue is not necessarily how much. Equally important are the questions of type of assistance, timing of assistance, and to whom that assistance is given. The issue of how effective the assistance provided by various sources to the key recipients has been will be addressed in the following chapter. This chapter will attempt to answer the key questions of how much, what type, to whom, and when assistance was provided by the primary backers of the factions battling for control of Angola. It is not intended to be a total picture, but one which enables an assessment of the relative effectiveness of that assistance when compared to the giver's interests and objectives.

As stated earlier, the MPLA has received the vast majority of its assistance from Cuba and the Soviet Union. The Cubans were the first on the scene in force, most likely in response to U.S. covert aid in supplies, equipment, and arms to the FNLA and UNITA, and a major South African advance into Southern Angola. At the same time the FNLA, joined by a battalion of U.S. trained and equipped Zairean troops were advancing on Luanda from the north. While the United States debated what to do next, ultimately resulting in the U.S. Senate, via the

Clark Amendment, cutting off any additional covert aid for Angola on 19 December 1975, the Cubans were rushing men and equipment into Angola to prevent the MPLA collapse. By late January, 1976, the Cubans had about 12,000 men in Angola and the Soviets had greatly increased their military aid, mostly arms and equipment estimated to be worth over \$200 million. The Cubans initially brought in only light weapons, while the Soviets began the buildup of tanks, artillery, MIG-21 fighter bombers, and 122-mm rocket launchers the Cubans were already familiar with. South Africa departed the battlefield and the FNLA and UNITA forces were pushed back and have not seriously threatened the MPLA-Cuban-Soviet control of Luanda since.²²

The Cuban and Soviet assistance program continued to grow during subsequent years and they have been joined by others, primarily Warsaw Pact nations. The U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency estimated in early 1988 that Angola had received more than \$5.3 billion in arms transfers between 1982 and 1986. Nearly \$5 billion of that amount supplied by the Soviet Union with eastern Europeans supplying the majority of the remainder.²³ As of early January 1989, the Cubans have an estimated 50,000 troops in Angola and Soviet aid has reached an average of \$1.5 billion a year.²⁴ After 13 years of Soviet and Cuban training, Angola's 55,000 man armed forces, now well equipped with Soviet weapons, will still be a formidable force against UNITA after withdrawal of Cuban troops in accordance with the Namibian Independence Agreement.

UNITA was initially provided U.S. arms, equipment, training, and most likely U.S. paid for mercenaries up until the Senate vote to curtail any future covert aid to Angola in December, 1975. Since resumption of aid under the Reagan administration, assistance to UNITA has increased to an average of \$15 million per year.²⁵ In early 1987, one of the airstrips in Zaire supposedly used to deliver arms to UNITA was publicly uncovered. While President Mobutu denied that purpose and refused to close the airstrip, the United States did not deny the allegations and apparently continued to supply UNITA with even more sophisticated weapons, including surface-to-air missiles.²⁶ As stated earlier, UNITA has benefited most from assistance provided by South Africa, including direct military support on the battlefield and participation in joint operations. One source has identified at least seven major South African raids into Angola and many smaller actions between 1978 and 1985. While these raids were supposedly aimed against South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) and ANC forces, it was clear that SWAPO and the ANC often used the same basecamps and other facilities occupied by Angolan (MPLA) units in the area. Some of these raids were coordinated with UNITA and emphasized "shock, surprise, aggressive advance, intelligence, and maximum disruption." The raids were supported by artillery, multiple rocket launchers and some close air support strikes. They often used airborne and air mobile assaults.²⁷ Others have reported South African raids in force solely in support

of UNITA and South African air strikes supporting UNITA
ground operations.

CHAPTER V

ASSESSMENT OF FOREIGN AID

The one thing that is most certain concerning the foreign assistance provided the factions fighting for control of Angola is that both the level of violence and the effects of violent conflict have been vastly increased over the past 13 years because of that aid. The drain on the Angolan economy and the destruction and disruption of transportation, communication, power, agriculture, and other industries have prevented realization of any real post independence economic progress for the majority of Angolans. Although there is no accurate measure of total assistance provided, it seems clear the largest dollar value of assistance has come from the Soviets and Cubans. Much of this has been paid for by the Angolan MPLA government using export, primarily oil, revenues which are drastically needed for further domestic development and improved quality of life needs. Angolan foreign debt has continued to grow and was estimated to be \$4 billion at the end of 1986 and considerably higher today.²⁸ The costs of maintaining itself as the sole power of government in Angola have been tremendous, both to the Angolan nation and to the Soviet Union. There are recent indications the Soviets are tiring of their continued support at such high levels.²⁹

In return for their investments, the Soviets have achieved significant gains in their position within the region. While

there are no indications of any sizable permanent Soviet presence in Angola, it is safe to assume Soviet access to air facilities and ports will continue for the foreseeable future. Such access eases considerably the ability of the Soviet Union and other friendly nations such as Cuba and eastern bloc countries in their efforts to support and provide assistance to SWAPO, the ANC and other liberation movements they choose to support. Access to Angolan facilities would make much easier Soviet projections of military power into the region and the South Atlantic. A relatively small permanently based Soviet presence could be very helpful to Soviet efforts to monitor both western military movements around the cape and the shipments of Middle East oil to western Europe and the U.S. Access to such facilities could greatly facilitate quick deployment of Soviet forces to the region should future conflicts arise which would require such a Soviet force projection. The same access to facilities along the Southwestern coast of Africa could be of equal value to the U.S. Such access of course is not likely as long as the Soviets and Cubans maintain a significant presence.

Past experience of Soviet military assistance to African nations, however, has not left the Soviet Union in any position of significantly improved strategic advantage. Whether in Egypt, where the Soviets made considerable investments during the 1950's and 60's, or in Somalia or Mozambique, it could be argued that the Soviets, in fact, have decreased access to airfields and ports and even less influence than they enjoyed

prior to such assistance programs. The return on investments has not been a good one for the Soviets, economically, militarily, or politically. It may be that their failure in some areas to consolidate mutually beneficial relationships even helped to propel some African states in movement toward closer relationships with the United States and western European powers. This appears to have been the case in Egypt and may be partially behind some recent movements towards an improvement of U.S. and Mozambique relations. The track record would indicate that the Soviets have had little to offer her potential clients in Africa other than armaments and training assistance related to the use of those armaments. No long lasting close relationships have developed on the continent which lasted very long after the acute need for military buildup ended.

In a very practical sense, it appears that the African nations have found for themselves that the Soviets are indeed a superpower only because of their military force and have little else, either politically or economically to offer in the longer term of any special relationship they enter. Whether this will prove to be the case with regard to Angola is of course uncertain, but one could easily see the very good possibilities which would cause Angola to move more toward the west and away from the Soviets in the long term. For example, Angola is highly dependent upon U.S. and European markets for her exports. Clearly the vast majority of her oil production, the real key to further economic improvement, is tied directly

to western markets. Few if any of Angola's other natural resources have a significant market anywhere other than in the west. Even today the majority of Angola's non-military imports come from the west.³⁰ With the Soviet economy apparently ready to launch into a new direction, the Soviets must find it more and more difficult to provide more of those same types of goods to her own population.

Politically, one should be careful to avoid putting emphasis on the MPLA's description of itself as marxist. Founder and first President Neto moved away from the strict definition of marxism. Angola has continued an active trade with countries of all political and economic leanings. It has steadily increased exports to the U.S. The consortium arrangement of the U.S. company Gulf-Chevron and the Angolan national oil company, Sonangol, has been an economic arrangement which would be intolerable in a pure marxist system. Angola is a provisional member of GATT, the Economic Commission for Africa, a recipient member of the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa, and several other economic development organizations, many of which are financed by "capitalist" funding. One must wonder how much political and economic influence the Soviets can peddle abroad as the Soviet Union herself has declared the old system has failed and seeks to change drastically her own political and economic infrastructure and practices. In moving toward a society which resembles more and more those of the West, the Soviets have themselves admitted marxism, even in

its Lenin-defined form, has failed to meet the needs of today's international realities. Politically and economically, Angola has shown the same unwillingness to be tied to strictly defined marxist structures and beliefs.

The Soviets and Cubans have enjoyed 13 years of a highly visible presence in Southern Africa and will continue to be a presence for some years to come. As a major signatory of the Namibia accord, Cuba especially has achieved a level of recognition and participation she has seldom enjoyed so far from her own shores. Certainly Cuban influence in Africa is, at a minimum, a factor which must now be considered by any nation seeking to participate in events throughout the continent. Even if the Soviets were to deny funding any future Cuban assistance in Africa, the possibility of Cuban force projection, financed by other sources, will represent a capability which must be considered in the region. It is also debatable whether agreement on independence for Namibia would have been achieved without the large Soviet and Cuban presence just to the north in Angola. While the threat represented by their presence was also a big factor in South Africa's reluctance to grant independence to Namibia, it could also be that in recent years South Africa saw no other way to remove this threat to her own security except by linking Namibia's independence to the withdrawal of Cuban combat troops from Angola.

The fact remains, however, that it was the United States, not the Soviets or Cubans, who ultimately constructed the long

term consistent policy and diplomatic efforts to create the condition leading to the agreement for the removal of those forces from Angola. It was the United States who recognized and addressed the regional concerns which must be satisfied in the long term if conditions throughout Southern Africa are to be significantly altered through means more peaceful than in the past. It is doubtful the United States would have been in so favorable a position to accomplish what it has if U.S. assistance to UNITA had been significantly larger and more direct than it has been over the past 15 years. By maintaining a relatively low level of military assistance to the opposition and by continuing in her role as the major trading partner, the United States was able to gain credibility among the various factions by recognizing and giving support to some of the legitimate concerns of all the major parties involved in Angola. Had the U.S. investment in the future of UNITA been much greater and more visible, it would have been politically impossible for the U.S. to achieve much credibility when trying to negotiate a significant reduction in the threat against UNITA. By showing willingness to negotiate with the MPLA government of Angola, the United States has extended defacto recognition to that government which greatly supports statements that declare no U.S. interest in overthrowing the MPLA and lends credibility to our stated objective of seeking only the freedom of popular participation in that government by UNITA and others.

At the same time, the United States has recognized that one

of the keys to a more peaceful stability in the region lies in satisfying to an acceptable degree the concerns South Africa has over her own security. By linking the removal of Cuban forces from Angola to the independence of Namibia, the United States has moved significantly toward a possible resolution of the Angolan conflict. If those forces are indeed removed over the next 27 months as called for in the agreement, if South Africa refrains from cross border operations against SWAPO forces based in Angola, and if South Africa refrains from further support of UNITA, as she claims she is, there is no reason why the precedent established with the accord for the independence of Namibia could not eventually be extended to begin in earnest the negotiated settlement of the conflict in Angola. These circumstances can only be brought about if Angola for her part does in fact cease support of ANC and those members of the ANC movement do in fact depart Angola. The prospects look favorable, as the parties to the agreement all appear to be taking those initial steps agreed to.³¹

Further illustration that the United States is taking a more regional orientation to the problems in Southern Africa are recent announcements that the United States has begun modest assistance to Mozambique where a violent civil war has also long existed against the originally self described marxist government. Were the United States solely concerned with maintaining South Africa as the primary anti-Soviet power in the region, it might be beneficial to assist South Africa in con-

tinuing the instability in Mozambique. The realities of the situation, however, indicate that if the U.S. does not assist Mozambique, that government may find no other recourse but to turn once again to the Soviets for military and economic assistance. By establishing a better relationship with Mozambique and preventing a Soviet influence in Mozambique, South African fears of that country assisting black nationalist within South Africa are decreased. Once the Soviet threat to South Africa from throughout the region is significantly diminished, South Africa will no longer be able to use that argument as justification for cross-border incursions into other countries of the region. The point is, the Soviet threat that South Africa perceives throughout the region is systematically being decreased because of U.S. efforts in Namibia, Mozambique, and Angola. The stage is being set for those conditions necessary to be able to negotiate an end to hostilities in Angola, but that stage is one much larger than just Angola itself.

The United States has also shown consistency over the past eight years in publicly calling for changes to the internal economic and political system of South Africa while continuing to support UNITA in Angola using similar justification, the right to participate in the established government. While some have expressed their view that the United States has not gone far enough in opposition to apartheid, there are those who recognize the dangers inherent should the South African

economy collapse. Even polls taken within South Africa indicate most blacks do not favor a total withdrawal of whites and Afrikaans. The vast majority of black South Africans want the freedom to participate equally in the economy and political life of the nation. Neighboring countries benefit from an economically strong South Africa as illustrated by the thousands of workers in South Africa from Mozambique and the strong trade among countries of southern Africa and the Republic of South Africa.³² The reality is that if it chose to do so, South Africa is capable of presenting a considerable military threat to her neighbors with or without trade with the United States or those U.S. companies who are established in South Africa. While not a racial-based system of minority rule, the Angolan government has also been discriminatory in not allowing economic and political participation by those not supportive of the MPLA. By consistently expressing strong opposition to minority rule in South Africa, the United States has gained credibility among many of the region's governments in using that same argument directed at the MPLA in Angola.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

Compared to any other nation, the United States is in a better position to satisfactorily resolve the violent civil war in Angola. This position of influence has come about for a variety of reasons, many of which are external to the immediate conflict and the specific problems of Angola. The combination of military, economic, and political power of the United States throughout Southern Africa has resulted from a consistent, long term diplomatic effort to address the multiple concerns of all nations of the region. By pursuing an even-handed, step-by-step process designed to find those key areas which must be resolved to bring stability, the United States has greatly increased her influence except in South Africa during a period which has seen the beginning of a commensurate decrease in Soviet influence in the region. The Soviets have continued to display little influence in the region other than that resulting from her willingness to provide military assistance. They have exported growing amounts of military hardware and equipment to Angola while not significantly increasing Soviet imports from Angola. They have seen other newly independent countries turn toward the U.S. and Europe for support the Soviets once provided or would prefer to provide. The Soviets stood largely on the sidelines as the United States succeeded in long, hard negotiations with all sides involved in Angola to reach

an agreement on the independence of neighboring Namibia. The Soviets can no longer successfully export the ideology of Marxism after recent admissions that their own system has failed to keep up with the explosion of development experienced by open market economics.

The United States has not, however, achieved its present position of influence solely by default. By pursuing policies which recognize and actively support the legitimate desires for national independence of the region's nations, by continuing to publicly denounce those governments, particularly South Africa's, which have not allowed a more equal participation by all, and by turning away from previous policies which sought to define all conflicts solely in East-West terms, the United States has gained the confidence of the region's leadership. The stage is set for the eventual resolution of Angola's long conflict. It will not occur immediately and is highly dependent upon successful implementation of the Namibia accord, further movement towards change to the internal political and economic structures of South Africa, and continuing improvement in U.S.-Soviet relations. If these conditions occur, it is the U.S. who will be sought to bring about the resolution of conflict in Angola. The United States arrived at this position of pre-dominate influence at far lower costs than that expended by the Soviet Union.

That this analysis could find no direct or absolute cause and effect relationship between amounts of aid provided and

political advantage of one power in relation to others is significant in its own respect. It is clear that the United States provided far less aid than the Soviets to those battling in Angola, although it is the United States who has led the long process toward solution of the region's major areas of conflict. It is not at all clear that the current position of greater influence in the region is directly tied to the amounts of aid provided. This strongly suggests that factors other than specific aid programs, whether they be military assistance or non lethal aid, play the significant role in determining actual influence or power within a region. It is most probable that factors such as persistence, a long term consistent policy toward the region, a willingness to negotiate with all parties representing all sides of the conflict, and an ability to recognize multiple and diverse objectives of all parties involved are more responsible for one attaining a position of superior influence.³³

If one accepts the assessment that the United States is indeed in that position of superior influence in Southern Africa and that the United States, more than the Soviet Union, holds the key to resolution of Angola's conflict, the fact that the United States arrived at this position at far less costs in aid compared to the Soviet Union makes a very strong statement that factors other than military assistance alone are essential to finding long term solutions to conflict.

NOTES

1. The Atlanta Journal and Constitution. "Cubans Begin Withdrawal From Angola as Part of Regional Peace Agreement", from Wire Reports, 11 January, 1989.
2. Brooke, James. "Angola Sanctuary Closing to Rebels", Special to the New York Times, 9 January 1989.
3. Atlanta Journal and Constitution, 11 January, 1989.
4. Foy, Colm. "Angola", The African Review, 12th Edition, MERCO, 1988. Much of the following 3 paragraphs come from this survey and from personal conversations between the author and Portuguese officers who served in the Portuguese colonies in the early 1970's.
5. Botha, P.W. Prime Minister of the Republic of South Africa in House of Assembly Debates, 2 Feb 1982 (cols 109 and 140-141). Taken from Hough and Van der Merwe's "Selected Official South African Strategic Perceptions 1976-1987."
6. Hough, M. and Van der Merwe, M. "Selected Official South African Strategic Perceptions 1976-1987." Institute for Strategic Studies, University of Pretoria, May 1988. pp 46-47.
7. Vorster, B.J. Prime Minister of the Republic of South Africa speaking before the House of Assembly Debates, 30 January 1976, (cols 356-359) reported in Hough and Van der Merwe's "Selected Official South African Strategic Perceptions 1976-1987."
8. Gavshon, Arthur. Crisis in Africa: Battleground of East and West, Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado, 1981. pp 223-225.
9. Legum, Colin, The Battlefronts of Southern Africa, Africana Publishing Company, New York, 1988, p 316.
10. Ibid, p 317.
11. Gavshon, pp 241-243.
12. See Gavshon, pp 223-233 for detailed chronology supporting this argument.
13. Legum, pp xxi through xxiii contains the best description of both the West, U.S. and regional interests.
14. See Gavshon, pp 233-250 for detailed accounts.
15. The next three paragraphs are primarily from Gavshon, pp 235 through 240, and Foy's survey in The African Review.

16. See, for example, the statement of Angola's Foreign Trade Minister made in February, 1987 cited in Legum, p xxii.
17. Gavshon, pp 248 and 249.
18. Gavshon, pp 238-239.
19. Owen, Major Robert C. "Counterrevolution in Namibia", Airpower Journal, Winter 1988, p 60.
20. Foy, p 39.
21. Ibid, pp 37-39.
22. See Gavshon, pp 228-233.
23. World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers - 1987. U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency Publication 128, March 1988. Daniel Gallik, Editor. p 127.
24. See Atlanta Journal and Constitution, 11 Jan 89.
25. Ibid.
26. Foy, p 39.
27. Owen, pp 58-59.
28. The Military Balance 1988-89. The International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, p 122.
29. Greenberger, Robert S. in The Wall Street Journal, 22 December, 1988.
30. Foy, p 39.
31. See New York Times, 9 Jan 89.
32. See New York Times, 13 September 1988.
33. See Greenberger's article in 22 Dec 88 Wall Street Journal.

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