



# international policy UPDATE

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## ANGOLA: PROSPECTS FOR PEACE?

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Angola's Government of Unity and National Reconciliation (GURN) was inaugurated in Luanda on April 11, in the presence of President Mandela and several other African Heads of State, including the Presidents of Botswana, Malawi, Namibia and Zimbabwe. President Jorge Sampaio of Portugal was the most senior member of the *troika* of official Observers present. US Assistant Secretary of State for International Organizations, Princeton Lyman, and the Russian Federation's Minister of Natural Resources, represented the other two governments in the *troika*.

The inauguration was preceded by the swearing-in of 66 of UNITA's 70 members of the National Assembly on 9 April, only a handful of whom had taken up their seats since November 1992 when the Assembly commenced its activities. The few UNITA members who had previously been in the Assembly had not originally been there voluntarily; they had been captured in Luanda when the second civil war broke out late in October 1992 and were initially under house arrest in the capital.

President José Eduardo dos Santos' chair at the inauguration was flanked on the right by an empty seat. Dr Jonas Malheiro Savimbi, UNITA's leader and now officially 'leader of the largest opposition party' - a title with formal protocol status and privileges - was not present, having indicated that his personal security could not be guaranteed. His message to the gathering was read by General Antonio Dembo, UNITA's Vice President, who had been charged by Dr Savimbi to represent him. While both Angolan parties still have forces involved on opposite sides of the Zairean conflict, unity and national reconciliation are concepts that still sit uneasily on the Angolan reality.

President Mandela's presence at the inauguration was important and symbolic. Not only is peace in Angola of great importance to the whole SADC region; South

Africans of many different ideological persuasions and walks of life have lived (indeed, some have died) amidst the travails of the Angolan war and the 'peace process' that followed it. Former SADF officers and men fought alongside UNITA against 'Soviet expansionism in southern Africa', while MK *cadres* were deployed in support of FAPLA in a common battle against the 'forces of colonialism and imperialism'.

### A History of Foreign Intervention

Angola has also played a major role in Portugal's modern history. The way in which Angola and Mozambique came to independence deeply divided the Portuguese nation and forced a reappraisal of Portugal's place in the world, eventually affirming its destiny as a European, rather than pre-eminently a Luso-African, state. It defined and tested the limits of Cuba's commitment to socialist internationalism and afforded combat experience to many units of its armed forces.

Angola also represented a southern beach-head in Brezhnev's drive into the Third World to exploit US weakness after Watergate and Vietnam, at the height of Moscow's effort to advance the 'world revolutionary process' through encouragement of the 'national liberation movement' in the non-industrialised world.

Washington's engagement with Angola was less consistent. From 1975, when the Clark Amendment, initiated in the Democrat-controlled Senate, prohibited the Ford Administration from intervening in Angola, to 1985, when the Reagan Administration initiated a programme of covert support for UNITA in the midst of negotiations seeking Namibia's independence and the withdrawal of Cuban combat troops, Democrats and Republicans in the White House and the Congress jockeyed for primacy in defining the USA's position on

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the margins of the bipolar struggle for global power.

Angola's sorry modern history has also seen engagement, either in efforts to resolve the crisis, or to condemn or support one party or the other, by the OAU, the United Nations, the Frontline States, Morocco, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Zaire and Arab states committed to an anti-communist stance.

From 1975 until the signature on May 31, 1991 of the *Acordos do Paz para Angola* by President dos Santos and Dr Savimbi, Angola knew only war. South African and Cuban combat units with Soviet and, latterly, US advisers had assisted Angolan combatants to scar the landscape, implode all sectors of the economy other than the oil enclave and kill each other in their hundreds of thousands.

But the Angolan civil war was not driven exclusively by foreign ideological agendas.

### Internal Divisions

Portuguese colonial possession had resulted in the formation of three distinct classes among indigenous Angolans: a *petite bourgeoisie* comprising 'intellectuals' and commercial traders,<sup>1</sup> a near-*proletariat* employed by the Portuguese on farms and in factories, and the residual *peasantry*, whose members were seen as little more than a source of contract labour by the industrial and agrarian *bourgeoisie*.

The emergence of Angola's three 'liberation movements' in the 1960's reflected this pattern of colonial development.

- The MPLA was founded by left-wing, urban, educated elites in Luanda. Its leadership culture was (and is) Luso-African; its leading cadres were Catholic seminarians or other '*assimilados*' and *mestiços*. Its limited rural base was Kimbundu.
- The FNLA was pre-eminently a Bakongo movement, rural in character - although many FNLA members later gravitated to the northern coastal cities, where they came to be reviled as '*Zairenses*' - led by Holden Roberto, whose brother-in-law is Mobutu Sese Seko, still President of Zaire.
- UNITA was founded in 1966 on an Ovimbundu base, although its leadership structures always included Cabindans, Bakongo, Lunda-Chokwes and others. Its institutional culture is rural-traditional and it originally included very few *assimilados*.

The Angolan urban elites, traditional supporters of the MPLA, are the products of the Portuguese colonial administrative culture and were seen by the Portuguese as their natural successors after Lisbon's disorganised withdrawal in 1975. The sense of superiority of these *Luandenses* to the Ovimbundu of the central plateau, whose economic roles were menial both before and after independence, is palpable even today.

Political mobilisation among the elites since 1975 has been a function of this feeling of superiority to, and fear of, the '*pretos*'; whose resentment of the domination of the '*mulatos*' and '*Luandenses*', on the other hand, has fuelled UNITA's campaign against the MPLA since 1975.

There is today no Angolan nation. The challenge of overcoming deep-rooted resentments, fears and suspicions, defining common visions, developing common values and building a nation, still lies ahead.

### Superpower, Trilateral and Troika Interventions

Angola's move toward peace in 1989-91 was, moreover, not indigenously motivated. The peace accords were the product of a compact between the super-powers after Gorbachev's accession, to powers based on an understanding that their proxy confrontations in the Third World were counter-productive.

The first phase of the movement towards peace in Angola was the agreement in the trilateral talks between Angola, South Africa and Cuba, facilitated by the US with the discreet assistance of the USSR, to link the withdrawal of Cuban combat troops from Angola to Namibia's passage to independence. The object of the New York Accord, signed on 22 December 1988,<sup>2</sup> was to bring Namibia to independence and progressively deprive the warring Angolan parties of the resources that had sustained the civil war. Neither Washington, which had supported UNITA since 1985, nor Moscow, with its long ties to the MPLA, intended that their protégés should be defeated on the battlefield; both were agreed that a political solution was needed to the military conflict.

Sensing the possibility of success, the Portuguese government offered its services as mediator. The *troika* of Observer Nations thus came to be composed of the Portuguese and the two super-powers. The negotiations between the MPLA and UNITA led to an agreement that a Joint Political-Military Commission (JPMC), comprising representatives of the Angolan government, UNITA and the three observer nations, would oversee the transition to elections after the cease-fire had taken effect.

The United Nations was drawn in to the JPMC as an observer and charged to monitor the Angolan parties' compliance with their undertakings. Until just before the elections, UNAVEM II's resources throughout Angola were limited to 580 observers, increased by 300 during the elections themselves.<sup>3</sup> UN Special Representative Margaret Anstee aptly described her task as 'flying a (Boeing) 747 with fuel for a DC-3'.

The *Acordos do Paz* brought Angola sixteen months of artificial peace until early October 1992, when mutual suspicion - and exploitation by both the Angolan parties of the UN's inability to effect compliance with the Accords - led to resumption of the civil war. When the brickbats were distributed after the disaster, the Guardian tellingly described the UN effort as an attempt to 'get peace on the cheap'.

### The Lusaka Protocol: A Second Shot at Peace?

This second phase of armed hostilities lasted officially until November 20, 1994, when the Lusaka Protocol was signed in the Zambian capital on behalf of, but not by, President dos Santos and Dr Savimbi, the latter, then as now, fearing for his life if he left his safe haven near Huambo. Government forces and their mercenary teams continued to pursue UNITA units, who had abandoned Huambo and other larger towns, for another five months. Negotiation of the Protocol had taken just over a year, following announcement of UNITA's unilateral cease-fire in Abidjan on 14 September 1993.

The success of these negotiations, following the failure of earlier attempts by the UN to broker peace in Namibe in Angola (November 1992), Addis Ababa (January and February 1993) and Abidjan (April to May 1993) was due largely to the efforts of Maître Alioune Blondin Beye, the UN's new Special Representative, and those of Paul Hare, Mr Clinton's special emissary.

Over 500 000 people died in just over two years of bombs and shells, ethnic cleansing, revenge killings, land mines, starvation and disease. More Angolans died between October 1992 and November 1994 than in the sixteen years before 1991 when regional and super-powers had fuelled the conflict.

The explanation for this lies in the sophistication of the weaponry imported by the FAA and, to a lesser extent, UNITA; and the superior efficiency of the forces which led the FAA counter-attack against UNITA after Savimbi had announced his unilateral cease-fire in September 1993.<sup>4</sup> Unwilling to accept a cease-fire when UNITA controlled four-fifths of Angola, the Revolutionary Government of Angola (GRA) ignored UNJTA's termination of hostilities - and the ensuing peace negotiations in Lusaka - and deployed its new weapons and forces, as well as mercenary special forces

units, with devastating effect.

UNITA commanders counter-attacked. The unilateral cease-fire collapsed and the war became one of attrition. What little was left of Angola's economy after sixteen years of civil war was destroyed between 1992 and the end of 1994. Official IMF estimates indicate that the GDP declined from US\$12.1 bn. in 1991 to US\$4.7 bn. in 1994. Total external debt, as a percentage of GDP, rose from 67.3% to 233.8%. Military spending was only 5% of government expenditure in 1991, but rose to 20% in 1994. Social spending shrank from 10% to 4% over the same period.<sup>5</sup>

Maître Beye's difficulties, albeit with the support of a much larger UN monitoring group (UNAVEM III) numbering 7200 at its peak, in inducing the parties to implement the Lusaka Protocol, can only be understood against this tortuous background. The prospect of sustainable peace must be evaluated against the same history.

The Protocol founded the settlement on a few simple points.<sup>6</sup> After conclusion of a cease-fire, UNITA's troops were to be confined in quartering areas; FAA troops and units of the Rapid Reaction Police were to return to their barracks. The FAA was to be restructured so as to incorporate 26 300 of UNITA's troops in its eventual 90 000 officers and men. Five thousand and five hundred UNITA soldiers/police were to be incorporated into the Angolan National Police, 1200 of them into the paramilitary Rapid Reaction Police. The balance of the officers and men serving in both armies are to be demobilised.

UNITA's seventy elected members were to return to the National Assembly, four of its nominees were to become the Ministers of Geology and Mines, Trade, Health and Hotels and Tourism; seven to assume Deputy Ministries of Defence, Home Affairs, Finance, Agriculture, Public Works and Social Reintegration; six to become Ambassadors (to Canada, Mexico, India, Poland, Cape Verde and UNESCO). Three will become Provincial Governors, seven Deputy Governors, 30 Municipal Administrators, 35 Deputy Municipal Administrators and 75 Administrators of Communes. All these persons will be obliged to sever their formal party affiliations to assume these posts.

The Angolan President went beyond the provisions of the Protocol in offering Dr Savimbi one of two Vice Presidencies, the other to be filled by an MPLA nominee. After lengthy deliberation, UNITA's Third Extraordinary Congress, convened in September 1996, rejected that offer, indicating that it was more important that Savimbi be able to lead his party, which would in theory have been impossible if the provisions of the Protocol requiring severance of formal party links, had been applicable to him as well.

## The Path to a GNU

The path to the inauguration was marred by delays and set-backs aplenty.<sup>7</sup> Of the more than 70 000 UNITA troops quartered, 22 685 had gone missing by the beginning of February. Only 5895 UNITA officers and men had been incorporated into FAA by then, and UN Secretary-General Annan reported that it was unlikely that it would be possible to select 26,300 UNITA troops for incorporation into FAA as planned.

Annan's report to the Security Council in February and a subsequent report to the Joint Commission by UNAVEM military commander General Philip Sibanda late in March, recorded numerous violations of the cease-fire and the deployment of troops by both sides in contravention of the protocol.

The Secretary-General's report noted that 4891 UNITA police had been registered in the quartering areas, of whom 743 were absent by 1 February. Only 2100 weapons and 4000 rounds of ammunition were surrendered by these almost 5000 men! Only 625 UNITA members had been incorporated into the Angolan National Police by 1 February, out of the 5500 intended to be accommodated in this force.

The scale of the problem occasioned by the GRA's decision to arm civilians is evident from the fact that only 2642 firearms had been collected by February 1 in the government's effort to disarm them. The fact that 102 'crew-served weapons' were recovered in this programme is an indication of the extent to which even heavy weapons are diffused throughout Angola. Annan noted that the results of the civilian disarmament programme were 'far from satisfactory'. He also called 'once again on the Government to begin collecting weapons from the Civil Defence Corps without delay'.

A 'critical shortfall of financing necessary to maintain the 15 quartering areas for UNITA troops ...' is another problem. Although a Technical Working Group on Demobilisation has been set up to effect rapid demobilisation, no provision for the social integration of 100 000 former combatants has been made.

UNITA has expressed fear that unless certain key issues - especially the formula for the extension of state administration to UNITA-controlled areas, formal registration of UNITA-controlled diamond companies and the GURN's programme of action - are resolved without delay, UNITA faces serious threats from powerful factions within the government's security apparatus, putting its survival at stake.

UNITA's unwillingness to commit fully to the GURN is related to what it perceives as the MPLA's 'covert strategy' to weaken UNITA by isolating Savimbi from his most skilled political and military advisers and

activists; depriving it of its income stream from the diamond areas; limiting its territorial influence by occupying coercively the areas it now controls; discrediting it internationally; and subordinating it politically in Angola.

Although one could argue that Savimbi's own recalcitrant behaviour in recent months has done more to achieve this than the GRA's actions, UNITA's suspicions are probably well-founded. Few in the MPLA have any interest in seeing UNITA emerge as an effective parliamentary opposition or a political movement capable of threatening MPLA hegemony in the cities, or displacing part of their access to the main resource streams and clientelist networks in Angola's chain of spoils. Few MPLA leaders and cadres are, moreover, disposed to trust Savimbi's commitment to peace. Over twenty years of civil war, aggressive propaganda and pervasive uncertainty have not encouraged either side easily to take risks.

## South Africa's Role

The South African government's intervention in January, in inviting Savimbi for talks at Mr Mandela's home in Qunu, was therefore a constructive step, despite the criticism it drew. By making it clear to Savimbi that he would be unable to serve his supporters effectively or assist in building a stable peace in Angola without participating in government, and that UNITA's decision to decline the Vice Presidency had been a strategic mistake, Mandela reshaped the negotiations by focusing on the real requirements of a sustainable accommodation, where sterile compliance with the formal requirements of the Lusaka Protocol, had become the focus of the UN and the *troika*.

Following Savimbi's reappraisal of his position after the meetings in Qunu, the UN and *troika* proposed to the government on 19 January that he should assume a post as 'special adviser to the President, with executive power'. The government responded legalistically, however. UNITA later abandoned this approach, and reverted to entrenching certain rights for its president as 'leader of the largest opposition party'. This reverses all the gains achieved at Qunu and leaves the settlement exceptionally fragile. While UNITA nominees will assume posts as Ministers, Deputy Ministers, Ambassadors, Provincial Governors, Deputy Governors and local administrators, their party president will be outside the GURN as leader of the opposition!

The other sensitive issues are how to restore government authority over the territory presently under UNITA's control, including valuable diamond areas - on which matter the UN Special Representative and the *troika* representatives have presented a proposal to the Joint Commission - and the programme of action of the

## Government of Unity and National Reconciliation.

This matter too has proved difficult to resolve. UNITA's demand that agreement on a basic programme be reached, was seen to be reasonable by Beye and the *troika*, but was rejected as a precondition for formation of the GURN. The MPLA initially took offence at the demand, but the Angolan government, at UN Secretary-General Annan's prompting, agreed to discuss it just before his visit to Luanda late in March. To date, however, there has been no agreement on the content of the programme and the challenge of determining priorities in restructuring the economy, allocating resources to the rehabilitation of infrastructure and the restoration of essential services in a war-devastated land, will test to the hilt, the ability of the parties to work together.

## Prospects for Peace?

The 'international community' will not keep patience with the Angolan dispute forever. The cost of the UN peace support mission has averaged US\$26 million per month since early 1995, at a time when the United Nations has faced the worst financial crisis in its fifty-one year history. There is no disposition in New York - or Western capitals - to sustain this level of spending in the face of unwillingness by the leaders of Angola's warring factions to agree to peace. Now that the GURN has been inaugurated, UNAVEM III will be scaled down progressively and replaced with a small UN team charged only to monitor governance and assist with social reconstruction.

The absence of centripetal forces in Angola sufficient to offset the devastating effect of decades of class-based and ethnic antagonism, mistrust, propaganda and brutal war between the opposing parties, coupled with the looming threat of Zaire's collapse, with the forces of the Angolan parties loosely aligned with opposite sides in that benighted domain - UNITA with Savimbi's long-standing ally Mobutu, the Angolan government with the AFDL 'the enemies of its (Zairean) enemy' - still pose huge risks for stability in Angola in 1997.

The risk in the short-term is not war: Savimbi is well into his sixties and has no inclination for renewed hostilities. UNITA is not under the illusion that it has the resources to win on the battle-field and opinion within the GRA/MPLA is too divided for the government to risk an unprovoked campaign. Recent FAA deployments in Angola are described as 'purely deterrent' in the highest government circles. Even a rapid strike to wrest control of the diamond fields from UNITA would require support from a disciplined, outside force and the political cost to Luanda of hiring such units in the present environment, would be considerable.

The true risk is the implosion of the framework afforded by the Lusaka Protocol, within which an orderly national community, an accountable government, a responsible opposition, a burgeoning civil society and a growing economy, are in (remote) prospect, and in consequence reinforcement of the sense that the law of the jungle will continue to prevail. Simultaneous anarchy in Angola, Zaire, Rwanda and Burundi, perhaps extending in a zone of instability to southern Sudan, is a frightening prospect.

The first precondition if one is to begin to avert these threats in Angola, is an honest understanding between Santos and Savimbi - neither of whom is as strong within his party as he was five years ago<sup>8</sup> - and a commitment by each to set aside personal antagonism in the interests of national reconstruction. No sustainable settlement is possible without this.

Efforts by the presently more powerful group in Angola to destroy or politically envelop the other,<sup>9</sup> or failure by the currently weaker party to rise to the political challenge of participating in institutions dominated by its opponent,<sup>10</sup> will lead to Angola's being sucked - and feeding - into a widening maelstrom of conflict in central Africa. The consequences for the region are evident.

International efforts must therefore be focused on getting the leaders together to address a coherent agenda directed to national reconciliation and development. Only if this is successful will it be possible to direct international resources<sup>11</sup> to the issues that must still be urgently addressed. These include, in a daunting agenda, the effective integration of forces, the provision of civilian skills to former soldiers scheduled for demobilisation and their employment in reconstruction projects, the expansion of mine-clearing programmes and the restoration of agricultural output, macro-economic stabilisation and debt restructuring in the context of a long-term development strategy, and the arduous task of building democratic institutions and facilitating the growth of civil society.

It is too soon to be sure which way the tide will run, but the indications will be readily apparent as Angola moves ahead. The survival or collapse of the GURN will be a clear index, not because this instrument is itself essential - only 11 officials of the 87 sworn in on April 11 (two other MPLA officials were indisposed) were drawn from UNITA's ranks - but because its failure will be seen by both sides as reflecting the impossibility of co-operation. Effective engagement of Savimbi in the process of nation-building would, on the other hand, suggest strongly that progress towards stability and economic growth was indeed possible. Those with an interest in the fate of southern and central Africa will watch these portents with care and concern.

## ENDNOTES

1. The petite bourgeoisie comprised whites, mestiços and assimilados (acculturated black Angolans).
2. Agreement between the People's Republic of Angola, the Republic of Cuba and the Republic of South Africa, 22 December 1988, *UN Security Council Document S/20345*.
3. Anstee M, Letter to the Editor, *Washington Post*, 10 June 1993.
4. VORGAN (UNITA radio) broadcast, 11.00 am., 20 September 1993; following this, on 23 September, UN Special Representative Beye called for a meeting between the FAA and UNITA Chiefs of Staff on São Tomé to consolidate the unilateral cease-fire. UNITA's delegation, led by General Arlindo Pena 'Ben-Ben', attended; General João de Matos, FAA Chief of Staff, declined. Negotiations between the two sides, which eventually led to signature of the Lusaka Protocol, were initiated in Lusaka by UN Special Representative Beye on 18 October 1993, as a result of UNITA's unilateral action.
5. IMF calculations based on Angolan government data, September 1995.
6. Lusaka Protocol, 20 November 1994.
7. United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III), *Document S/1997/115*, 7 February 1997.
8. Santos has faced a succession struggle following reports of problems with his health, with both Marcolina Moco and Lopo de Nascimento challenging him for the leadership; Santos fired Moco as Prime Minister in mid-1996 but Lopo de Nascimento is particularly strong at present. Savimbi's primacy in UNITA has always been a function of his founder status and his 'revolutionary-charismatic' leadership style; such leaders must, however, be continuously successful to maintain their positions.
9. There is regrettably much evidence of this. Many government ministers and senior parliamentary officials seem to regard the incorporation of UNITA into the GURN as cosmetic - a function of 'buying UNITA off' by giving houses, cars and money to some of their officials, not of according them real functions and responsibilities. Few believe that UNITA officials are capable of contributing to governance.
10. UNITA's leadership has not risen to the occasion. Its continuing demands that the GURN's Programme of Action, period of office and rules of decision-making procedure be negotiated and agreed before the GURN is inaugurated, were seen - albeit not entirely correctly - by most outside observers, as dilatory. Its tendency to leave substantive concerns to the last moment in negotiations and to shift its ground to emphasise different components of a package of requirements, are evidence of uncertainty as to purpose, the lack of coherent strategy and a poor understanding of the expectations of the UN and the *troika*.
11. Over US\$1000 million was pledged for a 'Programme of Community Rehabilitation and National Reconciliation' at the First Roundtable of Donors held in Brussels on 25-26 September 1995. Most donors made this conditional, however, on implementation of the Lusaka Protocol and adoption of an IMF/World Bank macro-economic stabilisation package.

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