



ANGOLA: CAN HUMPTY DUMPTY BE PUT BACK TOGETHER AGAIN?

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INTRODUCTION

The ongoing war has exacted a terrible toll on Angola and its people. Potentially one of Africa's richest countries, with diverse natural resources and agro-ecological zones suited to the growing of a wide range of food and cash crops, it has been reduced to abject poverty. Several million people - over a quarter of the estimated total population of 11-12 million - have been displaced from their homes, often losing all their possessions and means of livelihood. Many have fled to the major cities or across the borders to neighbouring countries; still others have found refuge in other rural areas or have been taken captive by UNITA.

For ordinary Angolans, real peace therefore cannot start soon enough. The challenge for reconstruction and development will be enormous in the short, medium and long terms. Social and physical infrastructure will need rehabilitation, reconstruction and much new construction; the re-establishment of basic health and sanitation services and education in war-affected areas is a major priority. The whole spectrum of civil society will have to be re-established and strengthened.

Angolan oil production may reach 1 million b/d by the turn of the century or shortly thereafter, as the new ultra-deep water fields being explored and exploited with new drilling technology come on stream. Several exciting finds made since late 1996 are under development, while prospects for further discoveries in the near future are good.

Rehabilitation of diamond mines and the bringing into production of new deposits should boost

government revenue from that source, provided that the Cuango Valley and other key areas in Lunda Norte and Lunda Sul remain secure; a recent UNITA raid has raised some concerns in this regard. Nevertheless, foreign concession-holders have begun or resumed exploration, and De Beers announced the discovery of two new kimberlite pipes at the beginning of June.

Elsewhere, the gradual rehabilitation of infrastructure and progress with demining should enable iron mining and agriculture to resume in a piecemeal manner. The government anticipates that rehabilitation of the northernmost of Angola's three railway lines, linking Luanda with Malanje, will be completed by mid-1998; by the beginning of the year passenger trains had already resumed services between Luanda and Dondo. Rehabilitation of the southern port of Namibe and the railway line from there to Matala and Menongue has cost US\$400 mn to date, while work on war-affected zones of the key Benguela Railway linking Lobito with the Copperbelt in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Zambia is scheduled to start later this year. Rehabilitation of the coastal stretches near Lobito and Benguela has already commenced. The total bill is likely to exceed US\$500 mn. As soon as the security situation permits, a joint Angolan-Namibian project to repair and upgrade the trunk road from their mutual border at Oshikango to Lubango can commence.

Given the centrality of peace and security, this *Update* focuses on progress to date with the much-delayed process of demobilisation and disarmament in terms of the Lusaka Protocol, signed in November 1994.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PEACE PROCESS

UNITA (the Union for the Total Independence of Angola) quickly gained the ascendancy when it resumed the war following its failure to win power (and Savimbi's failure to win the Presidency) in the 1992 elections. Having cached vast quantities of weapons and retained key fighting units intact despite claiming to have complied with demobilisation and disarmament procedures under the Bicesse Accords, UNITA forces quickly gained control over 70% of the country. Through an effective rearmament and mobilisation process, the MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola)-dominated national army, the FAA (Angolan Armed Forces), gradually recovered lost ground and inflicted some telling defeats on UNITA in many parts of the country by late 1993 and 1994.

Most observers agree that UNITA could have been vanquished as a fighting force in late 1994 or early 1995 had the war continued. However, Western diplomats, led by the USA, pressurised the government of President Dos Santos to declare a ceasefire in terms of the Lusaka Protocol, signed in November 1994. Their rationale was that Savimbi would be more likely to agree and then comply if he retained some military credibility and dignity. The USA has consistently supported and promoted Savimbi, despite irrefutable evidence of his bad faith and the most horrendous atrocities committed against the civilian population by his forces.

PROGRESS IN 1998 TOWARDS DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILISATION AND PEACE

After the Lusaka Protocol, Savimbi was able to regroup his forces and rearm via Zaïre. This option fell away with the ousting of President Mobutu in May 1997, thereby significantly weakening UNITA's military options despite the retention of large quantities of concealed arms within Angola and delays and inadequate compliance with the terms of the demobilisation process. This was clearly an important factor eventually impelling him to move forward with the process in early 1998.

An important but little-known fact is that Angolan government forces played a substantial role in Kabila's military campaign. This involvement had been motivated by the prospect of cutting off UNITA's rear bases and support infrastructure through deposing Mobutu. Similarly, Angolan forces intervened in neighbouring Congo Brazzaville in October 1997 to aid ex-President Denis Sassou Nguesso's coup against the democratically elected President, Patrick Lissouba.

Lissouba had assisted UNITA and FLEC guerrillas seeking independence for Cabinda from Angola. At the time, the motivation behind Angola's intervention was not generally understood abroad, and it was portrayed as irrational or opportunistic in most Western media reports. Threatening unilateral action if unheeded, Angola has also recently warned Zambia to do more to prevent arms and supplies from reaching UNITA from Zambian territory, and to prevent people in Angolan refugee camps in northwestern Zambia from using them as bases for attacking Angola. As a result, a joint Angolan-Zambian military operation was promptly launched along their mutual border to investigate the claims and secure the border area.

While the overthrow of tyrants like Mobutu may gain widespread international support, participation in a coup against a democratically elected leader like Lissouba is more problematic. However, these two interventions provide evidence of the complexities of cross-border conflicts even in the post-Cold War era. It appears that the Angolan government, so long frustrated in its generally sincere efforts to bring peace and development to its country, eventually resorted to threatened and actual military action in neighbouring states in order to secure its own territorial integrity and remove the sources of support in neighbouring countries for rebel movements.

Notwithstanding these mounting pressures, UNITA's compliance with the demobilisation process has been subject to frequent delays, misinformation and outright contradiction. The laying of landmines certainly also continued after, and in violation of, the Lusaka accords; Human Rights Watch has documented new mine laying activities as recently as 1997, while attacks during May 1998 have provided ongoing evidence of this. High level pressure from the UN and USA failed to hasten Savimbi's pace, eventually resulting in the imposition of much-delayed UN sanctions at the end of February 1998.

Implementation of the Lusaka Protocol is overseen by the Joint Commission, a body comprising representatives of the Angolan government, UNITA and the so-called Troika of observer states which oversaw the Lusaka agreement, namely Russia, the USA and Portugal. It is chaired by the UN Secretary General's Special Representative in Angola, Alioune Blondin Beye. The 'final' timetable agreed by the Joint Commission on 9 January was due for completion on 28 February 1998, more than a year behind the original schedule. On account of the subsequent delays, the Security Council has been compelled to extend

MONUA's mandate several times, most recently to the end of June.

By 28 February none of the nine specific stages - including demobilising residual forces, legalising UNITA and formalising Savimbi's 'Special Status', extending the state administration into areas previously held by UNITA, disarming the population, and installing the UNITA leadership in Luanda - had been completed. On 11 March they were therefore rescheduled for completion by 1 April after UNITA had rejected MONUA's proposal of 15 March so as to pre-empt the UN Security Council from imposing further sanctions on UNITA for non-completion of its demobilisation.

In March 1997, some 50% of Angola's territory was still under UNITA control, although 80% of the population were in government-held areas. Altogether 344 localities were to be returned to the government by UNITA under the Lusaka Protocol. By 8 January, 239 had been handed back; by 20 February the figure had risen by only 33 to 272. Among the areas still being occupied on the 1 April deadline were several strategically important localities in Kwanza Sul, Lunda Norte and Malanje Provinces, apart from the UNITA headquarters of Bailundo and Andulo. According to the UN Secretary-General's report to the Security Council on 21 April, 60 localities had then still not been handed over by UNITA. He also warned that 'further procrastination in this regard would not be acceptable'.

In some areas returned to government control, the police were accused by UNITA of using excessive force to disarm civilians; consequently the Joint Commission called on the government in January to halt such disarming, despite popular criticism that the process was proceeding too slowly. Given prevailing conditions, human rights abuses are likely to occur regularly; an Amnesty International mission to Angola in October 1997 obtained details of a number of cases of torture and extrajudicial executions by both UNITA and government security forces. Violations by the police were widely felt by local people to be the most pressing human rights problem in areas under government control. Corruption and involvement in crime are common; people are beaten for non-payment of extortion monies and often detained on very flimsy evidence. Such events are so common and the chances of redress so slim that victims seldom bother to report them.

THE 'FINAL TIMETABLE'

Progress in implementing the 'final timetable' under the Lusaka Protocol during March 1998 was smooth, but it again failed to meet even the revised deadline, and so continued into April. The main features of the process were as follows:

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| 6 March | UNITA formally declared its demobilisation complete, although some remaining troops and Savimbi's 400-strong bodyguard would be demobilised by mid-March. |
| 10 March | MONUA formally declared that UNITA had demilitarised. |
| 11 March | Angolan government announced that UNITA was now a fully legal political party (only possible once its armed wing had been demilitarised). |
| 16 March | President Dos Santos replaced the MPLA governors of Uige, Lunda Sul and Cuando Cubango provinces with UNITA nominees, and named seven deputy governors, in terms of the Lusaka Protocol. |
| 18 March | Savimbi's bodyguard was demobilised at Andulo and reconstituted as an official body in terms of the Lusaka Protocol. Their numbers are to be reduced to 150 over nine months. |
| 19 March | The senior UNITA generals were duly demobilised in a ceremony at Bailundo. |
| 20 March | The Angolan government announced the formal granting of 'Special Status' to Savimbi as UNITA President. This entitles him to official residences, a bodyguard, salary and access to government ministries. |
| 1 April | A UNITA delegation headed by Vice-President, Antonio Dembo, returns to Luanda to arrange the transfer there of the party's HQ. |

2 April UNITA announced the closure of its Radio Vorgan (or Voice of the Black Cockerel) in terms of the Lusaka Protocol, and its replacement by a commercial station to be known as Despertar.

THE CURRENT SITUATION

Notwithstanding these developments, UNITA has continued to give contradictory signals and even to launch new armed attacks. Several towns, villages and communes in Uige, Moxico Malanje and Lunda Sul provinces previously handed over to the government were retaken by UNITA soldiers. Other settlements in Benguela, Bengo, Cuando Cubango, Huambo, Malanje, Huila, Cabinda, Lunda Norte and Lunda Sul provinces were raided during March, April and May, when properties were destroyed and local administrators expelled or abducted. Such attacks increased in both frequency and severity during May, with at least two state administrators recently installed in towns handed back to the government being murdered. In terms of casualties, the most serious incidents involved attacks on vehicles in a manner long favoured by UNITA. Seven Angolan police officers, including the local commander, were killed in this manner in Casseque (Benguela Province) on 2 May and 11 people, including a local police commander, were killed in Cuango (Lunda Norte) on 15 May.

UN helicopters ferrying officials into areas where bridges have been destroyed were fired on in Malanje Province on 18 February and 24 March, but without causing casualties. However, a UN translator was killed in an ambush near Calandula village in Malanje Province on 21 May; two peace monitors and a senior policeman were also wounded.

The FAA and Angolan police have also regularly seized weapons and uncovered a number of substantial arms caches. However, most of UNITA's heavy arms and artillery, which have not been surrendered to the UN under the demobilisation process, remain unaccounted for. These events indicate a continuing UNITA military capability, whether authorised or freelance, in almost every province of the country. The UN Secretary General's report to the Security Council on 13 March stated that a total of 27,291 UNITA soldiers had by then deserted from demobilisation camps, and that this represented a 'cause of major concern'. It is highly likely that, as reports have suggested, at least some of the attacks cited above have been carried out by such deserters, who have not always been adequately fed and have become

frustrated with long confinements without the anticipated civilian retraining or redeployment. Crucially, however, at least 8,000 and perhaps as many as 20,000 of UNITA's best soldiers are estimated never to have participated in the demobilisation process, and therefore remain a potentially potent fighting force spread around the country. This represents one of the major shortcomings of the UNAVEM/MONUA process. Under the terms of the Lusaka Protocol, following UNITA's and MONUA's declarations that the UNITA demobilisation is complete, the FAA is now free to attack any remaining soldiers, as these are deemed 'armed bandits' (*bandidos armados*). To date, the army has acted with restraint but it is entirely possible that pursuit and armaments recovery operations may give rise to significant clashes in the near future. In late May, the Angolan government warned explicitly of this as a result of the growing catalogue of raids.

The overall political uncertainty has been increased by the impact of Savimbi's paranoia and autocratic rule within UNITA. There is a long history of bright and able comrades, including those who had been together with him from the very earliest days, being murdered or expelled lest they threaten his position. Such defections, out of such fear or frustration with Savimbi's tactics and constant breaches of faith, have continued throughout the last few months.

Savimbi has still not returned to Luanda as required, citing a string of excuses relating to security fears or alleged non-compliance by the government with its requirements under the Lusaka Protocol. The fact that Savimbi refused to sign the declaration of demobilisation on 6 March, sending his deputy, Antonio Dembo, instead also precipitated speculation. On several previous occasions, senior officials sent to sign such agreements - including the 1994 Lusaka Protocol itself - were subsequently arrested or worse, while Savimbi then abrogated or defied the agreements. However, Dembo has so far survived, heading the UNITA delegation which returned to Luanda on 1 April. Savimbi eventually sent the delegation in order to avoid further sanctions and because of his apparent concerns that the parliamentary deputies and others in Luanda were impatient and contemplating a split in order to enable progress with the peace process. They had recently defied Savimbi's orders to oppose the budget by abstaining. Clearly, Savimbi's character is such that he will continue to loom large over the country's political future so long as he remains alive and well.

Foreign encouragement for the process continues, symbolised by a series of high-level visits. In late

March, the Portuguese Defence Minister visited Luanda, while President Dos Santos met US President Bill Clinton during the latter's African tour. The President of the Australian Lower House of Parliament, Bob Halverson, and the President of the Development Commission of the European Parliament, Michel Rocard, visited in mid-April, while President Chirac of France is expected during June.

However, by early June the balance between persuasion and pressure appeared to be shifting again as a result of mounting frustration with the rising level of armed attacks and number of casualties, and the failure yet again by UNITA to

comply with the latest Joint Commission deadline for the return of remaining strongholds to state administration by the end of May. Alioune Blondin Beye has threatened to resign if this intransigence continues, and on 12 May expressed his growing impatience in unusually forthright terms, saying that 'We are, unfortunately, witnessing an escalation of violence, of acts carried out here and there which are beyond simple acts of banditry. These are serious acts of rebellion and acts of military nature which cannot fail to be noticed by anyone'. The politico-military situation therefore now appears more uncertain and precarious than at the end of April.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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