

PERCEPTIONS AND CHOICES: AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARD  
ANGOLA, 1961 TO 1978.

by

KWASI ADU ASARE

A thesis  
presented to the University of Manitoba  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts.  
in  
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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine America's contemporary foreign policy process with primary emphasis on an analysis of the relationship between foreign policy principle (anti-Communism) and the ways in which the principle has been implemented into the concrete foreign policies. It is primarily designed to contribute to the understanding of America's contemporary strategy in Africa and its motivations, priorities and policy objectives from American perspective.

As the importance of sub-saharan Africa, especially the Southern region of the continent has become apparent in the Soviet-American relations, the controversy concerning the formulation of U.S. policy in Angola has become a focus of much debate and criticism. Unfortunately a review of policy debates on the question of U.S. involvement in Angola shows considerable ambiguity, confusion and inconsistency in various assertions made by policy-makers. The study seeks to contribute to our knowledge about an understudied substantive area of American policy and also to reflect upon ongoing theoretical debate in the literature on foreign policy.

This study also seeks to determine patterns in American perceptions and policies toward Angola in the context of

basic assumption that in the post-war period American foreign policy postures in the Third World at any particular time have been determined by two variables: a conception of a preferred world order, and a perceived need to endure a "balanced" interaction among the superpowers. Assuming the validity of this assumption, it is mine overall proposal that perceptions of five policy concerns were central to U.S. policy preferences towards Angola:

1. World order;
2. deterrence;
3. U.S. interests in Southern Africa;
4. American dominance in Southern Africa; and
5. regional stability.

The study is indirectly divided into two phases. First is a period from 1961 through mid-1974 when cooperation with Portugal made policy-makers commit the U.S. to a major long-term assistance programme aiding Portugal's economic, political and military developments in Angola. This is followed by a second period from April 1974 to November 1978, a time of serious political turmoil and civil war in Angola. American policy ranged from low level neutrality to serious involvement during this period.

Chapter One deals briefly with the nature and scope of a theoretical framework which will be used to help interpret the formulation of American policy toward Angola. Chapter Two provides a descriptive analysis of American policy in An-



gola during the liberation wars. Chapter Three deals with the Ford Administration's involvement during the Angolan civil war. Chapter Four is devoted to an analysis of Cuban and South African intervention in the Angolan civil war and U.S. reaction to these interventions. Chapter Five discusses Congressional opposition to the Ford Administration's covert involvement in the civil war. Chapter Six provides an analysis of the Angolan crisis in relation to Soviet-American détente. This chapter also deals with the Carter Administration's approach towards Angola and the whole of Southern Africa. The main findings of the study are summarized in a brief concluding chapter.

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## Chapter I

### INTRODUCTION

The Angolan wars of independence focused world attention on an area which had long been relegated to a modest position in international politics, and accentuated the momentum toward black control of the countries in the Southern African region of the continent. Angola's struggle for independence from the constraints of Portuguese colonialism and the involvement of outside forces in this conflict led to controversy over political trends in Southern Africa. Furthermore, the victory by the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) provided encouragement as well as a staging area for African nationalist movements elsewhere in Southern Africa.<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of this thesis is to analyse and evaluate American foreign policy toward Angola during the period 1961 through 1978. Angola must be analyzed within its own historical, social, political and cultural context. An explanation must also account for development of Angola into something much larger: an international symbol which transcended its intrinsic national importance. This study es-

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<sup>1</sup> Arthur Jay Klinghoffer, The Angolan Civil War: A Study in Soviet Policy in the Third World, (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1980), p. 5.

entially employs an historical case-study approach.<sup>2</sup> The theoretical focus is provided in part by an analysis of the processes involved in decision-making and the interplay among congressional and executive leaders, opinion leaders and the United Nations debates. While the major focus is on those activities which bear directly on policy making, attention will also be given to style factors in decision-making, balanced against other elements prevailing in the domestic and international environment within which total foreign policy-making functions.

In this context, the study shows that African issues receive low priority in American policy-making. The relations between the United States of America and Angola are in many ways typically "African," in the sense that these relations illustrate a central weakness in the formulation and execution of American foreign policy. This study seeks to determine patterns in American perceptions and policies towards Africa in the context of a basic assumption that in the post-war period American foreign policy postures at any particular time have been determined by variables such as: a conception of a preferred world order, in which the United States would enjoy military and economic dominance, and a perceived need to ensure a "balanced" interaction among the superpowers. Given this assumption, it is our overall hy-

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<sup>2</sup> The basic procedure followed is a thorough examination of public documents, speeches, journals, newspapers, articles and other sources.

pothesis that perceptions of four policy concerns were central to American policy preferences toward Angola:

1. World order;
2. Soviet expansionism;
3. United States interests in Southern Africa; and
4. Regional stability.

As a case study of the policy of a superpower toward a colonial country ruled by an ally, the intent of the thesis is to identify, describe and analyse American policy toward the Angolan nationalists' struggle for independence; and to examine the extent to which U.S. policy was formulated so as to give support to the white regimes attempting to maintain their dominance in Angola and the rest of Southern Africa rather than in support of self-determination for the Africans in the region. Specifically the study will examine and discuss how American policy was designed to block Communist influence in Southern Africa after the Portuguese departure from Angola. Finally, the thesis examines some of the motives which prompted the intervention of other external powers in the Angola conflict, as well as the American reaction, principally to the Soviet Union, Cuba and South Africa.

During the period covering the Angolan liberation wars (1961-1974), and prior to the April 1974 Portuguese military coup, United States did not view Angola as strategically important. However, the revolution in Portugal precipi-

tated an American search for a coherent policy, particularly for a range of policy options which would effectively counter a perceived Soviet threat. Simultaneously, efforts by the Organization of African Unity to mediate the Angolan civil strife gave way to international rivalry which superimposed solutions over those which were indigenously Angolan. Angolan independence saw both an intensification of the fighting and the escalation of external intervention to the point where it became a proxy war between the superpowers who seemed determined to fight "to the last Angolan." An editorial in the British weekly, West Africa, correctly stated "Angola is now a battleground for principles and policies largely irrelevant to her own desperate need."<sup>3</sup>

On the international scene, Angola became an arena for determining the scope and assessing the flexibility of the parameters of Soviet-American detente. For the United States, Angola was linked directly with detente. For the Russians, Angola was symbolic of Soviet support for national liberation movements, and it exemplified the Soviet Union's willingness to help Africans in their struggle against neo-colonialism. The contest that evolved was accompanied by polemics reminiscent of the Cold War.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> West Africa (London), No. 3048, November 24, 1975, p. 1399.

<sup>4</sup> Arthur Jay Klinghoffer, op. cit. p. 6.



Between 1975 and 1976, Angola became a significant foreign policy controversy in American domestic political arenas. Liberals (in Congress, the media and the general public) argued that United States covert operations in Angola could lead to another Vietnam-style involvement in a foreign conflict. They therefore demanded Congressional control over the Ford Administration's policies in Angola. This took the form of denying the National Security Council's request for military and financial assistance to two of the parties in the Angolan conflict. For the conservatives, Angola symbolized the failure of the United States to accept its responsibility as the leader of the "free world", and the acceptance of Soviet expansionism in Africa. The conservatives argued that:

the U.S. was underreacting in Angola as the Soviets and the Cubans were displaying their strength; they objected to a post-Vietnam neo-isolationist attitude which had sapped the U.S. of its will to stand up to the Soviet Union and they condemned the supposed detente relationship which could still produce such a major Soviet military action far removed from its own borders.<sup>5</sup>

This study is important for a number of reasons: first, it will attempt to provide a comprehensive study of United States policy in Angola before and after independence. It will provide an analysis which should contribute to the study of Southern Africa politics, a region where there is a serious confrontation between the black and white populations. Second, since some countries use intervention in civ-

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p. 8.

il strife as an instrument of foreign policy, the conclusion reached in this thesis will contribute to public knowledge of African international politics, and to an understanding of a little-studied, but an important colonial conflict in a nation which occupies a strategic position in changing Southern Africa.

### 1.1 PERIODIZATION.

The period chosen for this study is January 1961 to December 1978. The starting point marks the beginning of the Kennedy Administration. The Angolan nationalists' uprising against Portuguese colonialism presented the Kennedy Administration with an opportunity to reorder American priorities in Sub-Saharan Africa. After Kennedy's death, the Johnson Administration was preoccupied with Southeast Asia and the Vietnam war and it became less interested in African issues. In 1969, Richard Nixon began his first term as President, and the foreign policy preoccupations of his administration included 'an honourable peace' in Vietnam, and detente with the Soviet Union. In 1971, NSSM 39 provided a framework within which the Nixon Administration could attempt to balance Southern African and global concerns. This was followed by a period from August 1974 through mid-1976, a time of serious political turmoil and civil war in Angola. American policy ranged between covert and overt support to one faction in the conflict. The final phase beginning in early 1977 and lasting to the end of 1978, was the time of most

severe conflict in United States-Angolan relations. The Carter Administration accused Angola, Cuba and Russia of supporting the Katangese rebels' attack on Zaire. The study terminates in 1978. This termination is not arbitrary for it was towards the end of 1978 that Mr. Donald McHenry, the United States deputy permanent representative at the United Nations, visited Luanda for informal talks on "matters of mutual interests." Soon after this visit, there began both official and unofficial contacts between the two governments. On December 9, 1978, Mr. Andrew Young had a long meeting with the Angolan permanent U.N. representative. This marked the initial step to formal United States relations with Angola.

## 1.2 METHODOLOGY.

The methodological approach used in this study is basically descriptive, analytical and historical. Evidence is a crucial problem for studies of contemporary foreign policy formulation. Information concerning recent American policy in Angola is extensive on most points. The interests of many nations converged on Angola following the nationalist uprising in 1961 and throughout the period of civil strife. Hence there is a wide range of newspaper and periodical reporting available. In addition, some key actors in the Angolan conflict have written their memoirs, among them are leading U.S. State Department officials, Ambassadors and CIA agents.

Also several observers have written analytically about aspects of United States policy in Angola and Southern Africa. Finally, of great value are the yearly volumes of documents published by the United States government and the United Nations. These contained important information which form part of my primary sources. The secondary sources include books, scholarly articles, and newspapers.

It is necessary to set this study in the still-evolving intellectual context of studies in decision making, foreign policy formulation and international politics.

There are two basic arguments for the particular focus that I adopt in this study. First, I am much concerned with the effect of policy --- or its outcome --- and the lessons of this effect (or lack thereof) for U.S. policy formulation toward Angola and the whole of Africa. Therefore, I must cope with a specific set of policies, international actors, international events and environmental factors during a specific time period. Second, I agree with those scholars who try to build bases of comparability in the study of foreign policy formulation, although I doubt the feasibility of a full theory of foreign policy formulation. This commitment requires some effort on my part to examine some of the literature on the studies of foreign policy formulation. With just the first commitment, and free of the second, I could attempt an exercise in diplomatic history, constrained by the requirements of historical analysis and the special difficulties of assessing evidence for the contemporary period.

This apparent dilemma is compounded by the absence of any theory of foreign policy formulation compelling in its analytical power to deal with empirical data that it demands adherence. The field is still in the "pre-theory"<sup>6</sup> stage in terms of its ability to resolve complex relationships. The complexity of variables affecting foreign policy formulations and outcomes was correctly emphasized by Kissinger when he said:

I have participated in the conduct of American foreign policy during a period of fundamental changes. As always in such times, that policy emerged from an amalgam of factors: objective circumstances, domestic pressures, the values of our society and decisions of individual leaders. The relative weight to be given to each can be left to historians. But their mix shaped a profound transition in our foreign policy. The trauma of Vietnam transformed our international perceptions; the nightmare of Watergate brought into question the validity of our domestic institutions. These upheavals concluded with radical alterations in the international environment. We have to cope...with an increasingly complex and turbulent world in which America must seek to achieve its principles and its purpose under circumstances greatly at variance with traditional attitudes.<sup>7</sup>

This rumination shows a policymaker's awareness of the potency of interacting variables influencing the course of American foreign policy. I will not examine alternative

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<sup>6</sup> James N. Rosenau, "Pre-theories and Theories of Foreign Policy," in R. Barry Farrell (ed.), Approaches to Comparative and International Politics, (Evanston Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1966), pp. 27-92.

<sup>7</sup> "Remarks by the Hon. Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State, Before the National Press Club, Washington D.C., January 10, 1977. State Department Press Release, No. 3, January 11, 1977.

theoretical accounts directly. Nor do I want to test them. Rather, I will outline the rationale for a selected set of accounts and to employ this select set as a guide in making inferences from the descriptive material.

### 1.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE ANALYSIS OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY.

The evolution and development of U.S. foreign policy toward Angola did not take place in a vacuum. Events in other parts of the world, shifts in relations between the superpowers, and alterations in the posture taken toward Southern Africa, the continent of Africa, and the Third World by other Western and Communist powers, --- all of these affected U.S. policy.

This case study will indicate that neither external nor domestic factors alone, but rather the complex interplay between the two, can account for U.S. foreign policy behaviour. International and domestic events can both be regarded as necessary but not sufficient conditions in explaining U.S. behaviour in Angola.

The independent variables for this study are divided into two groups: The Internal stimuli and the External stimuli.

The range of alternative actions available to decision-maker is also limited by the internal stimuli. Here, four variables seem crucial in the Angolan case:

1. Bureaucratic differences on policy;
2. Executive-Legislative rivalry;

3. the role of CIA; and

4. public opinion and the U.S. experience in Vietnam.

The variables in the external group in the Angolan case cover the following:

1. the United States and Portugal as NATO allies;

2. American and Soviet aid to the competing parties in Angola;

3. Soviet expansionism in Africa;

4. Cuban and South African intervention in the Angolan civil war; and

5. the April 1974 military coup in Portugal.

Together, the actions and demands from the external environment constitute the external stimuli that were led into and processed within the context of American domestic politics and foreign policy decision-making. If it had not been for the existence of internal divergencies between the U.S. State and Defence Departments, or between the Bureau of African Affairs and Bureau of European Affairs of the State Department, it is unlikely that international events, in and of themselves, would have triggered major shifts in U.S. behaviour in Angola. For instance, President Kennedy would have been less likely to renegotiate the Azores agreement, and Kissinger would have been less likely to recommend that President Ford accept the 40-Committee's decision to aid the anti-MPLA forces.

Conversely, without certain international events, it is unlikely that the domestic issues alone would have determined U.S. behaviour in Angola. The South African intervention and the U.S. experience in Vietnam provided fuel to Congressional opposition to Ford Administration's covert involvement in Angola. In the same way, the Cuban involvement and Soviet logistic support was exploited by the Administration and its supporters to demonstrate the feasibility of Soviet Union using detente to press Communist "expansionism" in Africa.

#### 1.4 DOMESTIC ENVIRONMENT.

There is no single comprehensive account of the domestic environment of foreign policy formulation or behavior. Frequently the idea of a domestic environment is differentiated into alternative accounts, such as the bureaucratic politics, partisan politics, the electoral support for certain broad lines of policy, public opinion, interest and pressure groups, as well as Congress and its committees. It also includes the President and the Executive.

##### 1.4.1 Political Culture.

It is reasonable to say that American foreign policy is profoundly influenced by an internalized set of values, cognitions, ideas and ideals characterizing most of the foreign policy elite and "influentials." In short, American politi-



cal attitudes form certain aspects of political culture which help to shape American responses to international events. The concept of political culture is very broad, but used judiciously, it can provide insight into the domestic sources of American foreign policy. To the extent that basic needs, values, beliefs and self-images are shared by Americans, these orientations and national values may be linked to the kinds of policies pursued externally by the U.S.

The dominant norms of American political culture relate to such American political beliefs and institutions as democracy, capitalism, the two-party system, federalism, free enterprise, the separation-of-powers, and the principles of "due process" and "self-determination." More generally, the liberal philosophy of John Locke is embedded in the dominant American political culture. Louis Hartz maintains that Lockean liberalism has become so pervasive in American life that Americans may be blind to what it really is, ideology.<sup>8</sup>

The liberal democratic belief concludes that "radicalism and revolution are bad." Essentially,

Radical politics, including intense conflict, disorder, violence and revolution, are unnecessary for economic and political development and therefore are always bad.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Donald J. Devine, The Political Culture of the United States, (Boston: Little Brown, 1972); Louis Hartz, The Liberal Tradition in America, (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1955)

<sup>9</sup> Robert A. Packenham, Liberal America and the Third World, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1973).

This premise has in fact affected American foreign policy. It is especially useful in explaining American policies that favoured anti-communist, stable, pro-American governments and movements in the Third World --- in other words, the Cold War approach. The explanation for this Cold War approach is the single most important cause --- the intense American preoccupation with security as a problem in international relations. Much of this preoccupation was exaggerated and unproductive even from the point of view of U.S. security interests narrowly defined. But, justified or not, these perceptions of security needs were pervasive and powerful. This seems to be strong evidence indeed to support the proposition that radicalism and revolution are detrimental to the security of the U.S., to its foreign policy goals and to its allies. Opposition to radicalism and revolution supported by the Soviet Union or by other Communist states would be expected to be particularly strong. The analysis of U.S. foreign policy in chapters Two and Three provide a considerable amount of evidence suggesting that this assumption was operative in Angola from 1961 to 1975.

The linkage between ideological traditions and foreign policy behaviour is found in American diplomatic history from the Monroe Doctrine to the Alliance for Progress and from Vietnam to Angola. Edward Weisband argues that, as an "integral part of American ideological tradition" such themes as self-determination, self-identification, and

self-preservation" appear continually as justification for policy action."<sup>10</sup> Weisband also observes that:

American foreign policy has been alternately criticized for being too economically driven and imperialist, too moralistic and interventionist, too militaristic and isolationist. All, paradoxically, are equally correct. For the concern with wealth, power status, moral virtue, and the freedom of mankind were successfully transformed into a single set of mutually reinforced values by the paradigm of Lockean liberalism.<sup>11</sup>

Although decisionmakers' references to the themes which compose political culture are undoubtedly window-dressing at times, at a minimum they are used as ways of mobilizing public opinion in support of U.S. actions and endowing those actions with moral values as well as functional utilities.<sup>12</sup> In Chapters Two and Three of this study, the continuity of these themes in the Anglian context will be addressed.

Another potential link between political culture and foreign policy which could fundamentally change the political culture should be noted. Sometimes a combination of developments may coalesce over time to stimulate new values and beliefs. This was vividly exemplified by the events in 1960s and 1970s. Raised in the primacy of values such as freedom of speech, equality, independence and individualism, many Americans found that --- through the Bay of Pigs, racial

<sup>10</sup> Edward Weisband, The Ideology of American Foreign Policy: A Paradigm of Lockean Liberalism, (Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications, 1973).

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. p. 62.

<sup>12</sup>

Ibid.

discrimination, political assassinations, CIA covert activities in foreign countries, Vietnam and then Watergate --- ideals were prostituted by practice. Many protested the abuses which challenged seemingly sacred assumptions. The result, it can be argued, is that American culture is now different from what it was during the 1960s and 1970s. Some traditional cultural attitudes no longer exist in part because of these experiences.

Although it cannot be shown that these cultural transformations caused American policymakers to change, their association with major political events in the 1960s and 1970s is hard to deny. As James Rosenau and Ole Holsti found in their study, the Vietnam experience set the terms of the domestic debate on Angola. Many of those taking part in it drew parallels between the two events, and argued that the lessons of Vietnam should govern American policy toward Angola.<sup>13</sup> More importantly, the policy outcome in Angola might well have been different had it not been for public pressure on the Ford Administration. It seems likely, for example, that Congressional action prohibiting further use of American funds in Angola was significantly influenced by both the perceived parallels between the conflict in Angola and the premise that the "lessons" of Vietnam should be applied in the case of Angola.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Ole Holsti and James Rosenau, "Vietnam, Consensus, and the Belief Systems of American Leaders," World Politics, Vol. 32, No. 1, October 1979.

But the nexus between cultural change and policy change is dependent on how those in power perceive or reflect American political culture. Although we might argue there is an association between cultural and policy changes in the 1960s and 1970s, cultural changes themselves did not bring about policy changes. Rather, they had a share in creating an atmosphere that made new policies acceptable and old policies unacceptable.

#### 1.4.2 Executive-Congressional interactions in Foreign Policy making.

This section briefly explores this important area of the domestic environment of foreign policy formulation. Although the "initiator-respondent" label is a meaningful summary, the precise nature of executive-congressional relationships is more complex.

For nearly a decade, (1955-1965), the Congressional role in foreign policy making is described by Frans Bax as one of acquiescence.<sup>15</sup> It was in this phase that Congress passed the "area resolutions" granting the president broad congressional support for dealing with external conflict situations, in the Middle East, Berlin, Cuba, and Vietnam. The chief congressional function was essentially that of receiving and legitimizing presidential decisions. Congress became

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Frans Bax, "The Legislature-Executive Relationship in Foreign Policy: New Partnership or New Competition?" Crisis, Vol.20, Winter 1977.

partner to the national consensus supporting the containment of communism. It agreed with most of the specific foreign policy decisions made by the three presidents who held office during this period. And it participated in supporting containment by reassuring the public that presidential actions were necessary and consistent with the consensus.

On some occasions, the Congress did deliberate upon and agree with presidential plans, but all too often the Congress simply swallowed its lingering doubts, preferring not to share the responsibility of decision with the president.<sup>16</sup>

The presidency, for its part, encouraged the acquiescent congressional role.

Following the massive build up in Vietnam in 1965, however, Congress changed its docile role. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearings during the mid-1960s focused attention on what began to be perceived as a major foreign policy failure. The Cambodian incursion in 1970 transformed congressional ambiguity into acrimony between the legislature and the executive. Disenchantment with the involvement in Vietnam was the critical catalyst giving rise to congressional acrimony in the 1970s. In a large sense, however, it was not just Vietnam but rather a breakdown of the conditions on which congressional acquiescence of the 1950s and the 1960s had been based. Congressional acquiescence, as Bax argues, is only possible when two conditions are fulfilled. First, there must be substantial consensus in the nation on

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

the general purpose of policy. Second, the specific means chosen by the president to pursue those purposes must be generally successful.<sup>17</sup>

Beyond foreign aid and the defence budget, however, the frequency with which Congress has sought to deal with a dominant executive through the power of the purse has been remarkably small. One occasion that occurred was during the Angolan crisis. Over strong opposition by the Ford Administration, the Clark Amendment to the appropriation bill was adopted, which barred the use of any funds in the bill, "for any activities involving Angola directly or indirectly."<sup>18</sup> The mood of Congress was one which did not accept the view that Soviet involvement in Africa required American counterpoise.

Although Congress is relatively removed from the day-to-day activities in foreign policy making, this should not obscure the fact that it is an important component in domestic politics. As Congressman Aspin observes, Congress functions reasonably well as an avenue for the expression of the views of constituents and special interest groups; as an overseer of government policies and resource allocations; and as a "guardian" of the process of government.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Roger Morris, "The Proxy War in Angola," The New Republic, January 31, 1976, p. 6.

<sup>19</sup> Les Aspin, "Why Doesn't Congress Do Something?" Foreign Policy, No. 15, Summer 1974.

### 1.4.3 Bureaucratic Politics.

Bureaucratic politics have an important bearing on the formation and administration of U.S. foreign policy. While a complete detail examination of bureaucratic politics would require a large set of variables, the basic assertion of bureaucratic politics model is that:

events involving the actions of two or more nations can best be explained and predicted in terms of the actions of two or more national bureaucracies --- and that the foreign policy process is influenced less by the events in the international system than by the bureaucratic game.<sup>20</sup>

Foreign policy products are seen as outcome of a bureaucratic-political process in which bargaining takes place among players arranged hierarchically within government.<sup>21</sup>

It will be argued in Chapter Two of this study that the bureaucratic politics approach explains the degree of bureaucratic-political influence on the decisions of both Presidents Kennedy and Nixon to re-negotiate the Azores bases with Portugal. The Pentagon was able to persuade the two presidents on both occasions that the Azores bases were more vital to the security of the U.S. and its allies than was U.S. support for Angola's self-determination. The Pentagon's position won over the opposition of the State Department.

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<sup>20</sup> Morton H Halperin, Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy, (Washington D.C: Brookings Institute, 1974).

<sup>21</sup> Graham T. Allison, Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis, (Boston: Little Brown, 1971).



Similarly it will be demonstrated in Chapter Six that the "global syndrome" perspective which later dominated President Carter's policy in Angola is explained by the Bureaucratic Politics approach. Recognizing the changing perspectives in Africa, President Carter emphasized the need for the U.S. to work with African leaders in resolving their problems. The thrust then, of this new U.S. policy was toward a rapprochement with African countries. The appointment of Andrew Young as the U.N. Ambassador was part of this strategy.

However, after the invasion of Zaire by Katangese rebels in Angola, the National Security Council led by Brzezinski was able to persuade the President to "link" Soviet involvement in Angola with the overall superpower relations. According to some observers, the policy was instituted over the objections of Cyrus Vance and Andrew Young, who advocated "African solutions for African affairs."<sup>22</sup>

Some scholars, such as Stephen Krasner, have criticised the Bureaucratic Politics approach. Krasner argues that the bureaucratic interpretation is misleading, dangerous and compelling. It is misleading because it undervalues the power of the President; it is dangerous because it relieves high officials of responsibility for their actions; and it is compelling because it gives policymakers an excuse for failure.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> African Institute Bulletin, July 1978.

While the model may contain some conceptual flaws, it correctly identifies the locus and the pyramid of foreign policy decision making, and identifies where political power rests. It also emphasizes the conflict which goes on among members of the strategic elite in the President's "court".

### 1.5 THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT.

Clearly the external environment and the perception of that environment are crucial. For both the existence and the threat of insurgency have dominated American policy towards the Third World --- from Indochina, Cuba, and Dominican Republic to Angola. The fear that even "indigenous" insurgency could be manipulated --- first by "international communism", then by Moscow or Peking --- in a chain reaction that would endanger America's security, led to world-wide U.S. counter-measures.

Universalised fears continued to dominate American policy. The administrations examined in this study exhibit the perception that the liberation war in Angola constituted a threat to U.S. global security. The nature of the threat had changed. To the Cold War ideologists "subversion" leading to insurgency (which U.S. adversaries could turn to their advantage) --- was the primary threat. The post-Vietnam "realists" reverted to a more traditional stance, which

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<sup>23</sup> Stephen L. Krasner, "Are Bureaucracies Important? Or Allisons Wonderland," Foreign Policy, No. 7, 1972, pp. 159-179.

saw the power of the rival state as the threat.

Yet if the focus has altered, the end result is much the same. For as Roger Hilsman noted, in a period of intense Cold War anxiety, the threat of insurgency is not due to the coming to power of indigenous revolutionaries in a particular country. Rather the threat is contained in the possibility that indigenous revolution can be exploited by the Soviet Union, who consider it "the best way of using force to expand the communist empire with the least risk". The theory of wars of national liberation

enables Moscow and Peking to manipulate for their own purposes the political, economic and social revolutionary fervor that is now sweeping much of the underdeveloped world.<sup>24</sup>

Revolutionary movements are puppets without autonomous existence: thus the Pathet Lao in Laos or the liberation movements in Africa, according to a senior State Department official in 1961, "can be turned on and off from long range."<sup>25</sup>

The U.S. method of checking or eliminating internal challenges to its allies (causing "instability") is either suppressive or reformist. Suppression assists an ally to put down by force any significant movements of opposition. It is argued in Chapter Two that U.S. military and economic assis-

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<sup>24</sup> Roger Hilsman, "Internal War: The New Communist Tactics," in Franklin Csaka, (ed.), Modern Guerrilla Warfare, (New York: Free Press, 1962), p. 453.

<sup>25</sup> Harlan Cleveland, Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs, quoted by Melvin Gurtov, The U.S. Against the Third World, (New York: Praeger, 1974), pp. 58-59.

tance to Portugal during the colonial wars with the Angolan nationalist movements was a form of assistance designed to suppress the Africans. Reformism improves an ally's image and performance --- legitimacy --- to the extent that dissident movements are easily contained. Reformism is more compatible with American domestic values, but reformist policies which fail to achieve their aims tend to give way to suppression. This was the political environment in which American policy in Angola was engaged between 1961 and 1974. This political environment was intimately linked with the military, economic and covert environment.

#### 1.5.1 Covert Activities.

Such activities involve two forms of "linkage": political and moral, and external and domestic. These are connected. For as Kissinger has aptly put it in his address on "Moral Purposes and Political Choices": "A nation's values define what is just. Its strength determines what is 'possible.'"<sup>26</sup> Both forms of linkage are evident in statements by supporters and critics of covert operations, such as those carried out by the CIA in Angola. On the one hand, a former Attorney-General, Nicholas Katzenbach, proposed that:

We should abandon publicly all covert operations designed to influence political results in foreign countries. Specifically, there should be no secret subsidies of police or counter-insurgency forces, no effort to influence elections, no secret

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<sup>26</sup> United States Department of State Bulletin, October 29, 1973.

monetary subsidies of groups sympathetic to the U.S., whether governmental, non-governmental, or revolutionary. We should confine our covert activities overseas to the gathering of intelligence information.<sup>27</sup>

Katzenbach's concern was that the administration's "manipulation of facts" and its covert activities abroad, undertaken on the grounds of national security, tempt the President to let the end justify the means --- "even if the means requires dissembling or misleading the Congress and the American people."<sup>28</sup> However as Katzenbach puts it the restoration of a domestic consensus in support of U.S. foreign initiatives, by encouraging candour and openness in decision-making, also safeguards the democratic process at home.

To Katzenbach, the foreign-domestic, moral-political linkage is one in which U.S. covert activities result in the perversion of American democracy. To William Colby (Director of CIA during the Angolan conflict), it is the other way around: the defence of American democracy sanctions external subversion.<sup>29</sup> Such activities, as those which occurred in Angola, are justified, according to Colby, because "we decided

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<sup>27</sup> Nicholas Katzenbach, "Foreign Policy, Public Opinion and Secrecy," Foreign Affairs, October, 1973.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Fallachi in The New Republic, March 13, 1976. Brzezinski during the Carter Administration, "wants the U.S. to shake free from the Vietnam war-inspired curbs on presidential powers enough to permit U.S. aid for clandestine operations in Angola 'to pin down the Cubans' and limit their ability to stretch into other adventures." Guardian Weekly, May 28, 1978. This point is fully discussed in Chapter Six.

that we should go any distance to fight for 'freedom',<sup>30</sup> --- meaning, essentially the preservation of American way of life. "Freedom" in this interpretation does not mean internal freedom in Angola. It means U.S. freedom from external threats or internal subversion, i.e. national security. This linkage, and its acceptance by policy-makers, permitted the CIA to recruit mercenaries to fight against the MPLA in the Angolan civil war.

### 1.5.2 The Global Syndrome.

The requirements of global policy constantly override America's sensitivity to or concern with regional or local characteristics, which are the underlying causes of liberation wars or insurgencies in the Third World. Sometimes, the importance of global consideration leads to disastrous results on the regional or local level.<sup>31</sup>

An integral part of the "global syndrome" is the fear that instability in the Third World could and would be "manipulated" by adversaries to America's disadvantage. By implication U.S. policy has been more dynamically keyed to the forces attempting to maintain the status quo in the Third World than to the forces of change. However, as I will ar-

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Kissinger emphasized the global consideration of U.S. policy in Angola when he told a Senator during the Foreign Relations Committee Hearings on Angola that "You may be right about Africa, but I am thinking globally." New York Times, Weekly Review, March 14, 1976.

gue in the case of Angola, the belief in, and the urge to act against, "instability" confuses the concrete processes and consequences of unrest, subversion or dissidence, which vary country by country, with the generalised threat to U.S. national security. Ironically, in view of President Carter's disavowal of Ford-Kissinger "linkage" concept, a policy differences occurred between the global strategists and "Africanists" within his administration over policy in Angola. Andrew Young and Cyrus Vance supported "African solutions for African problems" in the belief that the force of African nationalism would best check the spread of Communism and Soviet influence. This line was opposed by Brzezinski, who linked Soviet activities in Angola with overall superpower relations.

#### 1.6 CONCLUSION.

This study is divided into six chapters. Chapter One is a brief introduction. Chapter Two provides a descriptive analysis of American policy in Angola during the colonial era. The chapter covers the period 1961 to 1974 during the administrations of Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon. The argument is made that the NATO alliance and the importance of the Azores bases to the United States defence policy were some of the external factors which contributed to American support for Portuguese colonial policy in Angola. Chapter

Three deals with the Ford Administration's covert involvement in the Angolan civil war. The analysis includes the National Security's decision to provide funds for the FNLA and the domestic factors which influenced the Ford Administration's decision. Chapter Four is devoted to an analysis of Cuban and South African intervention in the Angolan civil war. Chapter Five discusses Congressional opposition to the Ford Administration's covert aid to the FNLA and UNITA. Chapter Six provides an analysis of the Angolan crisis in relation to Soviet-American detente. A section of this chapter will deal with the novelty of the Carter Administration's approach toward Angola and the whole of Southern Africa. The main findings of the study are summarized in a brief concluding chapter. The conclusion includes a series of recommendations for policies seen as necessary if United States is to have a truly African policy which is not simply a reaction to Soviet moves or to the perception of Soviet threat in Sub-Saharan Africa.

In the scholarly debate over the balance between external and internal factors in the explanations of foreign policy behaviour, two extreme positions can be distinguished.

First, there is the traditional inter-state model which analyzes international politics exclusively in terms of state action/reaction and which ignores the inner dynamics of state decisions and actions.



Recently the state-as-only-actor concept has come under increasing criticism, and an alternative model of "transnational bureaucratic politics model has been proposed, where the focus is shifted to domestic determinants of foreign policy.

It is suggested in this thesis that a prerequisite for a realistic conception of U.S. foreign policy is to avoid pitfalls of both extreme positions. Exclusive emphasis on either external or internal factors should be replaced by greater attention to the complex interplay between the two. This case study indicates that neither the inter-state nor the internal level of analysis alone can tap all relevant dimensions of U.S. foreign policy behaviour. Rather, international and domestic events can both be regarded as necessary but not sufficient conditions in explaining U.S. behaviour in Angola.

## Chapter II

### U.S. POLICY IN THE ERA OF THE ANGOLAN ARMED STRUGGLE.

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is a comprehensive study of American foreign policy towards Angola between 1961 and 1974 (during the presidencies of John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, and Richard Nixon). The chapter begins by looking at the U.S. policy in the U.N. regarding Portuguese Colonialism. The theme of this chapter is that U.S. policy was more dynamically keyed to the forces attempting to maintain the status quo in Angola than to the forces of change. I will detail the major issues, attitudes and policies that lead to this conclusion.

Before 1961 American policy in Angola was shaped by the strategic importance of Portugal and its African holdings along the Atlantic and Indian Oceans to U.S. defence planning. According to Jose Shercliff:

Angola and Guinea, with 1,816 kilometers of coastline on the Atlantic, may be regarded as an integral part of Atlantic defense. They also offer a vital outlet to the inland territories of Africa. Angola is an important source of foodstuffs and raw materials, ... as well as asphalt, copper, commercial and other diamonds, mica and manganese. Although not a natural market for the U.S., war-time needs and the tremendous development undertaken by Portugal since 1945 have raised America's trade with Angola from 396,000 escudos in 1930 to

139,316,000 escudos in 1951.<sup>1</sup>

There was substantial agreement, among some observers, that U.S. interest in NATO and in access to the Azores bases were the guiding factors influencing its policy in Angola. However, U.S. policy was increasingly called into question, following the emergence of the nationalist movements in Angola. As a result, the U.S. was confronted with a dilemma in reconciling strategic and economic considerations with regard to Portugal with the conflicting dictates of the professed American commitment to national self-determination and independence.

The Eisenhower Administration found no compelling reason to pay attention to Angola. A coherent or vocal nationalist movement did not exist in Angola at the time and the U.S. had grown accustomed to perceiving Africa's colonial problems from a European perspective. American policy-makers took a stance that made any African cause subordinate to the U.S. interests in Europe.

American policy, however, did not go uncriticized for its lack of sympathy for the principle of national self-determination. In 1955, Hans Morganthau argued that the U.S. had sacrificed its long-range African interests by continuing to adhere to its limited view that allowed the strategic value of the Azores to form the basis of African policy.<sup>2</sup> Through-

<sup>1</sup> Jose Shercliff, "Portugal's Strategic Territories," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 31, No. 2, February 1953, pp. 321-322.

<sup>2</sup> C.W. Stillman, Africa in the Modern World, (Chica-

out the Cold-War era, U.S. policy-makers perceived the Azores to be vital for NATO defence. Portugal's inclusion in NATO brought Washington and Lisbon closer to each other. This closer relationship was viewed by some Afro-Asian countries as being at the cost of sacrificing the U.N. principle of self-determination for the Portuguese African colonies. In the context of this relationship, U.S. provided Portugal with substantial economic and military assistance.

## 2.2 POLICY UNDER KENNEDY ADMINISTRATION: IMAGE AND CONTRADICTION.

From the above introduction, before 1961 there was in effect no American policy towards Angola. But the times were changing. As a candidate for the 1960 presidential elections, Kennedy had previously called for a U.S. policy in the U.N. more sympathetic to colonial peoples and in 1957, he spoke out for Algerian self-determination.<sup>3</sup> As chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Kennedy introduced Senate Resolution 153 (85th Congress) on July 2, 1957, which urged the U.S. government to:

place the influence of the U.S. behind efforts ... to achieve a solution that will recognize the independent personality of Algeria and establish the basis for a settlement interdependent with French neighboring states. (The Resolution further provided that if no progress were shown by the

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go, University of Chicago Press, 1955), p. 321

<sup>3</sup> William Minter, Portuguese Africa and the West, (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1972), p. 74.

following General Assembly of the U.N., the U.S. should) support an international effort to derive for Algeria the basis for an orderly achievement of independence.<sup>4</sup>

Nixon had visited Africa in 1957, and on his return warned of the "battle for men's minds" in that continent. The performance of the Eisenhower Administration in dealing with opportunities in a changing Africa enabled Kennedy to gain domestic political advantage during the presidential campaign. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., pointed out that:

In 1960, for the first time in American history, Africa figured prominently in a presidential election. Kennedy charged repeatedly (there are 479 references to Africa in the index of his 1960 campaign speeches) that "we have lost ground in Africa because we have neglected and ignored the needs and aspirations of the African people."... Once elected Kennedy moved forward to lay the groundwork for a new African policy.<sup>5</sup>

After Kennedy's victory in November 1960, some officials in Washington who were sympathetic to African problems had high hopes that colonial issues were finally to receive more attention in U.S. foreign policy. Others were fearful that the new administration might endanger what they regarded as basic American interests in European security arrangements. In Europe and in Africa, anxiety and expectations were aroused. Given the new President's interest and politically-expressed views on colonial questions.

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<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of State, American Foreign Policy: Current Documents, 1957. (New York: Arno Press, 1971), p. 1071.

<sup>5</sup> Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), pp. 554-555.

The new administration began to dissociate itself from the characteristic themes of the Eisenhower Administration --- the anti-Communism and interest in Africa not for itself but as a counter in the Cold War. In his Inaugural Address, Kennedy tried to dissociate himself from Eisenhower's approach by saying to Africa and the rest of the Third World:

To those people in the huts and villages of half the globe struggling to break the bonds of mass misery, we pledge our best efforts to help them help themselves, for whatever period is required --- not because the communist may be doing it, not because we seek their votes, but because it is right.<sup>6</sup>

Amid these encouraging indications, Africans waited to see what actions the Kennedy Administration would take on issues which concerned them: (1) independence, (2) the white regimes in Southern Africa, and (3) development.

Regarding the question of independence, echoes of Kennedy's speech on Algeria in 1957 were still audible to both African nationalist leaders and some Europeans when he took office. And in statements immediately thereafter he indicated that his basic attitudes had not changed. He conveyed an intimate understanding of African nationalism. For example, Kennedy in 1962, during a state visit, explained to President Kekkonen of Finland that:

The strongest force in the world is the desire for national independence. ... That is why I am eager that the United States back nationalist movements, even though it embroils us with our friends in Eu-

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<sup>6</sup> Quoted in Waldemar A. Nielsen, The Great Powers and Africa, (London: Pall Mall Press, 1969), p.284.

rope.<sup>7</sup>

So the general context of American policy towards African issues was to change substantially in 1961. The specific situation in Angola was to change even more radically during that year: from apparent tranquility to armed revolt. The new administration was given an opportunity to demonstrate its support for decolonization in Africa.

### 2.3 U.S., ANGOLA AND THE UNITED NATIONS.

In the early weeks of March 1961, revolutionary war broke out in Northern Angola, this was followed by a bloody repression by the Portuguese authorities. As white vigilantes joined in the reprisals against the Africans, Ceylon, Liberia and Egypt submitted a resolution to the U.N. Security Council calling upon Portugal to introduce reform measures and to prepare Angola for independence.<sup>8</sup> Before the Security Council debate, U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Adlai Stevenson suggested some U.S. initiatives which would distance the U.S. from its tacit support for Portuguese colonial policy. According to Arthur Schlesinger, Kennedy took the lead in the National Security Council meeting called to consider the best U.S. response to the Afro-Asian resolution attacking Portugal for its policies in Angola. He decided that U.S. support for the resolution would "intimate a change in Amer-

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<sup>7</sup> Arthur Schlesinger, op. cit. p. 558.

<sup>8</sup> William Minter, op. cit. p. 77.

ican policy," and quickly begin the process of remedial change in Portuguese Africa.<sup>9</sup> The resolution failed, with no negative votes, but six abstentions against five positive votes. Latin American and European countries abstained, but the U.S. voted in favour.<sup>10</sup>

Adlai Stevenson told the Security Council during the debate that:

the U.S. would be remiss in its duties as a friend if it failed to express honestly its conviction that step-by-step planning within Portuguese territories and its acceleration is now imperative for the successful political, economic, and social advancement of all inhabitants under Portuguese administration --- advancement, in brief, toward full self-determination.<sup>11</sup>

Stevenson's principal argument was the danger that if Portugal did not engage in "step-by-step planning", the result would be similar to the situation in the Congo. He continued:

I do not think it would be straining the truth to conclude that much of the Congo's problems result from the fact that the pressure of nationalism rapidly overtook the preparation of the necessary foundation essential to the peaceful and effective exercise of sovereign self-government. The important thing for us, then, is to insure that similar conditions do not exist for the Angola of tomorrow.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Arthur Schlesinger, op. cit. p. 511.

<sup>10</sup> William Minter, op. cit. p. 77.

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Department of State, American Foreign Policy: Current Documents, 1961. (New York: Armo Press, 1971), p. 884.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. p. 885.



Following the Security Council debate, the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Menen Williams, repeatedly called upon Portugal to make "step-by-step preparations for self-determination in its African territories."<sup>13</sup>

The American position was welcomed by Afro-Asian diplomats. It was considered more significant and appreciated more fully because it risked rupturing the impending negotiations with Portugal for continued U.S. access to the strategic Azores facilities. The agreement governing the rights of access was due to expire in 1962.<sup>14</sup> When the Angolan issue was brought before the U.N. General Assembly, the U.S. voted for the resolution calling upon Portugal to prepare Angola for independence, to live up to the U.N. declaration on colonialism, and to allow a U.N. inquiry into the situation in Angola. American voting behaviour in the U.N. on these resolutions caused Lisbon to criticise the U.S. for weakening Europe's defences and for violating its NATO commitments.<sup>15</sup>

The Kennedy Administration again departed from the tradition of its predecessors and continued to take a stronger anti-colonial stance by sending a protest note to Lisbon over Portugal's use in Angola of a division of troops that

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Waldemar Nielsen, *op. cit.* p. 286.

<sup>15</sup> Robert A. Diamond and David Fouquet, "Portugal and the United States", Africa Report, Vol. 13, No. 5, May 1970.

had been earmarked for NATO. In response, Alberto Franco Nogueira, Portugal's Foreign Minister, insisted that his country would continue to use NATO-equipped troops in Angola in the face of a military rebellion initiated and directed by a foreign power, and cited the French experience in Algeria as a precedent. Privately, he expressed anger over American criticism and even threatened that his country might leave NATO if such an attitude was not changed.<sup>16</sup> Salazar was furious over Kennedy's "outspokenly anti-colonial policy." He commented that Portugal was engaged in a costly war in Africa "not without alliances but without allies." He criticized the U.S. for undermining Portugal's role in Africa and for pursuing a policy that would "inevitably wrest away its overseas territories" and leave it "bankrupt" and thereby open the door to American economic penetration.<sup>17</sup>

The Kennedy position was praised by African leaders but was viewed critically by policy officials in the U.S. State Department and in the Pentagon since it raised the possibility of a rupture in the impending Azores negotiations. According to Richard Walton, then Voice of America Correspondent at the U.N:

the State Department establishment and the foreign policy crowd in Washington and New York might still see the world through the eyes of cold warriors, but Kennedy himself and some of his top

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<sup>16</sup> John Marcum, The Angolan Revolution, Volume 1, 1950-1962, (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1969), pp. 184-193.

<sup>17</sup> The New York Times, May 21, 1962.

advisers were more sympathetic to the Third World.<sup>18</sup>

Within the short span of twelve months, most of the high hopes and expectations entertained by the Angolan nationalist movements had run aground on the hard realities of the Cold War. Although a new and warmer atmosphere of African-American relationships had been created, there was less change in the substance of Angolan policy under President Kennedy. In 1962, the "return to normalcy" in regard to the place of Angola in American foreign policy was confirmed and consolidated. Events in Southeast Asia, Berlin and the Cuban missile crisis later in the year kept the spotlight off Angola and fixed it on more familiar concerns in Latin America, Asia and Europe.

#### 2.4 THE AZORES AS PAWNS IN THE ANGOLAN REBELLION.

Towards the middle of 1962, evidence of a shift in the Kennedy Administration's stance on the Portuguese repression in Angola began to appear. The administration became less critical of Portugal's colonialism in Angola and refused to support Afro-Asian efforts in the U.N. to bring about an arms embargo and sanctions against Portugal. The sudden refusal of the Administration to support any U.N. resolution which attacked Portuguese actions in Angola, could be attributed to American desire to renew its lease of the Azores

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<sup>18</sup> Richard Walton, "Remnants of Power," (New York: McCann, 1968), p. 11.

facilities. The Pentagon, Dean Acheson, and some Southern Senators (including Strom Thurmond of South Carolina and Allen Ellender of Louisiana) urged Kennedy to assist, not condemn, Portuguese efforts to carry out its "civilizing mission" in Africa.<sup>19</sup>

Early in February 1962, the Portuguese Ambassador to the U.N. declared:

Ever since the U.S. began voting against Portugal in the U.N., there has been a strong feeling among certain elements in Portugal against renewal of concessions granted ... in the Azores.<sup>20</sup>

Theodore Sorenson, an aide to President Kennedy, commented on the varying Portuguese pressures by noting that Portugal

tried every form of diplomatic blackmail to alter our position on Angola using as a wedge our country's expiring lease on a key military base on the Portuguese Azores.<sup>21</sup>

According to Sorenson, the President "felt that, if necessary, he was prepared to forgo the base entirely rather than permit Portugal to dictate his African policy."<sup>22</sup>

Secretary of State Dean Rusk visited Lisbon in June 1962 to obtain consent to resumption of negotiations on renewal of the Azores agreement. The attempt failed, instead Salazar simply allowed the agreement to expire in December, and then announced in January 1963 that the U.S. could remain in the

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<sup>19</sup> Arthur Schlesinger, *op. cit.* p. 262.

<sup>20</sup> Robert Diamond and David Fouquet, *op. cit.* p. 15.

<sup>21</sup> Theodore Sorenson, Kennedy, (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 538.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

Azores. This meant that Portugal retained the right at any time to demand U.S. departure from the bases on six months notice. The strategy could be mapped out as follows:

rather than require the U.S. to leave immediately and thereby lose its leverage over American policy in Angola at the U.N. and elsewhere, Portugal would allow the Americans to stay so Lisbon could maintain its control over the direction of U.S. policy on the Portuguese colonies. This strategy would be effective as long as U.S. military planners considered the Azores bases indispensable.<sup>23</sup>

It was clear that U.S. military strategists did view the Azores "indispensable" during the period from 1961 to 1963. Arthur Schlesinger wrote that in the summer of 1961 the "Joint Chiefs of Staff declared the Azores base essential to American security in case of trouble over Berlin."<sup>24</sup> And as events in Berlin in 1960 and in 1961 were unsettled by the summer of 1963 Kennedy decided to pursue a less active policy in Angola at the fall session of the U.N. General Assembly, for fear of losing the Azores. In addition, he was due to present the Atomic Test Ban Treaty to the Senate that summer and did not want to present the Republicans with the chance to accuse him of endangering U.S. security should Salazar decide to throw the Americans out.<sup>25</sup>

The actual pattern of U.S. voting at the U.N. from summer 1962 reflected a sharpened discrimination in handling the Angola issues presented, but no capitulation to Afro-Asian

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<sup>23</sup> Waldemar Nielsen, *op. cit.* p. 294.

<sup>24</sup> Arthur Schlesinger, *op. cit.* p. 564.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

demands. The U.S. abstained on a resolution passed in July 1962 by the Security Council that asked member states to refrain from the sale of arms and military equipment to Portugal for use in Angola. The U.S. objected to the language of the draft resolution which declared that the situation in the Portuguese territories constituted a "threat to the peace." But after that language was modified, the U.S. was still unwilling to vote for the proposal. In abstaining, the U.S. representative explained that although the U.S. found much of the resolution acceptable and had for "a number of years" provided no arms to Portugal for use in its "territories," it would not support the resolution because it did not encourage a "needed dialogue between Portugal and the Africans."<sup>26</sup>

From 1963, the U.S. continued to either abstain or vote against all U.N. resolutions on Portugal's colonial policy in Angola. For example, the U.S. did not vote for the General Assembly resolutions deploring NATO military aid to Portugal for use in Angola. This was a sticky matter for the U.S. given its military commitments to Portugal under the NATO Treaty. The State Department declared that:

The U.S. has felt that arms supplied to Portugal for other purposes and used in its territories might well contribute to an increased friction and danger. With these considerations in mind, the U.S. has for a number of years followed a policy of providing no arms or military equipment to Portugal for use in these territories. And with

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<sup>26</sup> Quoted in Robert Diamond and David Fouquet, op. cit. p. 16.

these same objectives in mind, we have also prohibited direct export of arms and military equipment to the Portuguese territories. The U.S. will continue to adhere to this policy.<sup>27</sup>

The U.S. thus put itself in the curious position of refusing to vote for a resolution asking all the members to do what the U.S., according to its own statement, had already put into effect.

In the final analysis, President Kennedy retreated and pursued a less active policy toward the liberation struggle in Angola. The change of policy was a matter of necessity if the U.S. were to maintain access to the Azores, a base that the Pentagon considered "indispensable" to American military strategy. In January 1963, the same month in which an ad-hoc agreement was reached on the Azores, the Kennedy Administration agreed to supply Portugal with thirty T-37C fighter planes. The West German Press Agency, DPA, had reported a few months earlier that the American Export-Import Bank had extended to Lisbon a credit of \$50 million and had agreed to finance 50% of the cost of building three warships for Portugal.<sup>28</sup>

The softening of U.S. policy vis-a-vis Portugal was followed quickly by the White House assignment of George Ball (then Undersecretary of State) to talk with Salazar in Lisbon during the summer of 1963. Ball raised the prospect of

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<sup>27</sup> Department of State Bulletin, August 19, 1963, p. 308.

<sup>28</sup> S.J. Bosgra, Portugal and NATO, Angola Committee, Amsterdam, Holland, 1972, p. 60.

substantial U.S. economic and diplomatic support for a Portuguese bid to enter the European Economic Community. The price of American support would be substantial (but not necessarily complete) self-determination for Angola and the other territories, and guaranteed continuation of U.S. access to the Azores. Ball's mission failed. Salazar was reported to have rejected the U.S. proposal out of hand with the suggestion that it amounted to a bribe directed against the integrity of Portugal's African policy.<sup>29</sup> Access to the Azores continued without formal agreement.

## 2.5 THE JOHNSON WHITE HOUSE

Lyndon Johnson did not develop an interest in African policy during his years as President. He discounted his own direct involvement by informing his staff that African policy was trivial and he was not to be bothered with details. Regarding Angola, President Johnson maintained the policy approach that had emerged during the last few months of Kennedy's presidency. Neither the President nor any of his officials voiced any criticism of Portugal's colonial policy. In the spring of 1964, preoccupied with the presidential campaign, President Johnson moved to regularize the handling of African affairs, in which recommendations would flow through the normal channels of the State Department prior to reaching the White House. In so doing he deprived

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<sup>29</sup> Nielsen, op. cit.



the Bureau of African Affairs of the direct access to the President which it had enjoyed during the Kennedy years.<sup>30</sup> In fact, his only active involvement in African matters --- his 1965 Washington talks with British Prime Minister Harold Wilson about the impending Rhodesian unilateral declaration of independence --- reflected this lack of interest and focus. He almost casually accepted Wilson's analysis and argument for U.S. support for the British position. A number of critics have argued that his lack of interest in the substance of the Rhodesian problems led to this acquiescence and a failure to consider alternative U.S. policies.<sup>31</sup>

With the President preoccupied with the day-to-day implementation of the Vietnam war, and his senior staff drawn into his preoccupation, there was no White House impetus to strengthen or bring coherence to U.S. policy in Angola. The few high-level officials interested in African matters were more free to take initiatives, because of President Johnson's lack of interest, but their initiatives were few.<sup>32</sup>

American preoccupation with other world problems, particularly in Southeast Asia, had two indirect but important consequences for American policy toward Angola. On the one

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Waldemar Nielsen, *op. cit.* pp. 311, 312; and Robert C. Good, UDI: The International Politics of the Rhodesian Rebellion, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), pp. 106, 107.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

hand, the U.S. began to show greater dependence on the Azores bases for the shipment of war materials to the battle zone in South Vietnam. In addition, as the U.S. became increasingly absorbed in the Vietnam war, Angola was pushed to the bottom of U.S. foreign policy priorities. As Robert Diamond and David Fouquet have noted, the Vietnam war and the growing unrest in America due to the war, indeed helped to foster a return to "normalcy in U.S.-Portuguese relations. American policy-makers began to express a preference for an orderly, peaceful and rational settlement for Angolan problems.<sup>33</sup>

By the mid-1960s it was clear that Washington's retreat from Kennedy's anti-colonial stance in 1961 was beginning to pay off in improved relations with Lisbon. Foreign Minister Franco Nogueira, in a December 1966 press conference summing up the General Assembly's vote on the resolution condemning Portugal, expressed considerable satisfaction that the U.S. voted against the resolution. During the Johnson years, the U.N. voting pattern of the U.S. came to represent an acquiescence in Portuguese colonial policy in Angola. As one U.S. official said:

U.S.-Portuguese relations have been evolving satisfactorily because we have shown an understanding for their problems in the overseas territories.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Robert Diamond and David Fouquet, op. cit. p. 17.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. p. 17

The Johnson Administration continued to provide Portugal with military and economic assistance. William Minter reported that Portugal received a total of \$33 million in military assistance and an additional \$54.9 million in economic aid between 1963 and 1968.<sup>35</sup> This helped to alleviate the economic hardships that the war in Angola was creating in Portugal. Moreover, the U.S. continued to provide maintenance, support material, and training for Portuguese military personnel in the area of operations, communications and counter-insurgency.<sup>36</sup>

Congressional attitude was similarly cordial to Portugal. In early 1964, the U.S. Congress made an exception in the case of Portugal, when it terminated all military assistance to Western Europe. As Harold Hovey reported:

the reasons for this exception were stated by the Senate Foreign Relations committee to be the unique situation regarding the United States base rights.<sup>37</sup>

As the bloody repression of the rebellion in Angola continued, U.S. refused to use its influence in persuading Lisbon to bring about political, economic and social advancement in the African colonies. When the Johnson Administration's foreign policy in the Third World became

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<sup>35</sup> William Minter, op. cit. p. 107.

<sup>36</sup> Diamond and Fouquet, op. cit. pp. 16-17.

<sup>37</sup> Harold A. Hovey, U.S. Military Assistance: A Study of Policies and Practices, (New York: Praeger, 1966), p. 85. This decision was made even after the Clay Report had earlier concluded that American assistance in exchange for the Azores base was excessive.

increasingly concentrated on Vietnam, and economic and social problems in the United States continued to mount, the leaders of independent African states and of the Angolan nationalist movements concluded that:

So long as those problems commanded attention, nothing more could be expected of the U.S. than a holding action, that no-cost and no-risk would become the twin touchstones of U.S. policy in Angola.<sup>38</sup>

Menen Williams and other officials from the Bureau of African Affairs, in numerous private conversations and public speeches tried to convince the Africans of the contrary, but their efforts were unsuccessful. Nor did events and U.S. actions in the following months diminish their skepticism.<sup>39</sup> It became apparent that the U.S. arms embargo against Portugal had many loopholes during the Johnson period, as his Administration continued to oppose the U.N. calls for a ban on arms sales to Portugal.

## 2.6 THE NATO CONNECTION IN THE PORTUGUESE REPRESSION IN ANGOLA.

The cooperation between the U.S. and Portugal during the Angolan rebellion was set within the wider context of the NATO alliance. General Lemnitzer, testifying in 1968 before the House Committee on Foreign Relations, noted that the aid to Portugal

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<sup>38</sup> Nielsen, op. cit. p. 311.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. p. 312

is designed to train key Portuguese military personnel and to provide maintenance support material.<sup>40</sup>

The State Department had a general policy of not allowing Portuguese counter-insurgency training in the U.S. However, since the Kennedy era all military courses had a number of classes in counter-insurgency, therefore all Portuguese trainees acquired some experience while in the U.S. for the special NATO programmes.

Material support in the form of equipment was given to the Portuguese NATO division. The equipment included M-47 tanks, 105-millimeter and 155-millimeter guns, trucks, jeeps, and engineering and technical machinery and vehicles.<sup>41</sup> Despite U.S. denials that these types of equipment were being used in Angola, several observers, such as John Marcum, William Minter, and Basil Davidson, cited evidence of their use in the Portuguese repression of the Angolan rebellion. However, State Department officials continued to argue that:

American relationships to Portugal and NATO have nothing to do with the wars Portugal is fighting in Africa. NATO is purely a defensive alliance whose territorial boundaries are confined to Europe and the North Atlantic. Its concern is exclusively the defense of Europe. Moreover, there are no such things as "NATO arms"; arms are produced by individual countries, not by the alliance. That one ally may sell or give arms to another member of the alliance does not make those arms "NATO arms". Charges which seek to implicate NATO in Portugal's colonial wars are therefore

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<sup>40</sup> New York Times, October 18, 1968.

<sup>41</sup> Military Review, August 1968. p. 15.

misdirected, based on ignorance and prejudice.

Moreover, the bilateral American military relations with Portugal deal exclusively with American and European defense. Maybe in 1961 Portugal did use American equipment allocated to NATO in Africa instead; but now Portugal gives assurances that new equipment received is only for use in Europe. Therefore it is not necessary to have an arms embargo, such action would even be an illegitimate interference in the rights of the North Atlantic nations to organize for self-defense.<sup>42</sup>

The argument seemed logical inasmuch as Europe is not Africa. Unfortunately the Portuguese themselves did not accept the U.S. interpretation.

Even if it were true that Portugal was not using arms supplied by the U.S. in Angola, the U.S. argument could not deny that the role of Portugal's military in Europe was quite separate from its role in Angola. Therefore cooperation between U.S. and Portugal in NATO was seen by critics to be cooperation in the continuation of colonialism in Angola.

As William Minter emphasizes:

because the Portuguese make no such clear distinction. They see the mission of their armed forces as the defense of the national territory. The national territory includes, by definition, the "overseas provinces". At present the chief preoccupation of the Portuguese armed forces is Africa. Portugal is fighting no other wars. The whole character of the defense establishment is molded by its mission overseas.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Quoted in William Minter, "Allies in Empire", Africa Today, Vol. 17 No. 4 July 1970. p. 28.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

Portugal's military budget confirmed the impression that Europe and the "overseas provinces" were inseparable as far as Portugal was concerned. "The accounting is so mixed that it is impossible to distinguish what is for where."<sup>44</sup>

In the U.N. during the Johnson Administration, the U.S. made much of the fact that the legal boundaries of the NATO area did not include the "overseas territories". Therefore NATO had nothing to do with the Portuguese repression in Angola. But Portugal, as Minter has said, did not agree. Nor was a "strict" interpretation of NATO's territorial limits always agreed to by Pentagon officials. A handbook on NATO prepared by a former U.S. Air Force General, Monro MacCloskey, who served with NATO command for several years, pointed out that:

the definition of the military area in which the Treaty is applicable in no way implies that political events occurring outside it cannot be the subject of consultations within the Council.<sup>45</sup>

The U.S. Commander of Allied Forces in Europe, General Lemnitzer, on a visit to Lisbon revealed the spirit in which American military officials seemed to interpret its relationship with Portugal, when he said that:

Portuguese soldiers, while fighting for the defense of principles, are defending land, raw materials, and bases which are indispensable not only for the defense of Europe, but for the whole Western World.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Monro MacCloskey, NATO, (New York: Richard Rosen Press, 1967), p. 28.

Portugal derived a number of continuing benefits from NATO while fighting in Angola. For instance, the Alliance's detailed triennial review, updated annually:

Leads to comprehensive exchanges of views on the overall problems facing countries in the defense field and to a multilateral discussion based on the full and detailed information supplied by each member country, concerning the state of its forces, future defense plans and its economic and financial situation.<sup>47</sup>

Portugal's war effort in Angola also benefited from NATO's annual meeting for the Study of Ammunition and Light Weapons (the 1966 session was held in Lisbon). And since Portugal was producing some of the light weaponry needed for its wars in Africa, these consultations with other NATO countries very likely contributed to the quality of technology in the Portuguese arms industry.<sup>48</sup> Portugal's repression in Angola received a symbolic NATO support when the Iberian Atlantic Command headquarters was moved from Norfolk, Virginia, to Lisbon. The move prompted a leading American newspaper to hail the move as "a healthy sign of improved relations with Portugal."<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> "Portugal in Africa", (Washington D.C: American Committee on Africa, 1968), p. 4.

<sup>47</sup> Monro MacCloskey, op. cit. p. 41

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William Minter, Africa Today, op. cit. p. 32

<sup>49</sup> Richmond Times-Dispatch, April 2, 1967.



The credibility of U.S. policy in Angola was further damaged in 1965 when CIA complicity in a plan to smuggle 20 B-26 bombers to Portugal, for use in its African wars, was uncovered. Some of the bombers had already been flown to Portugal from Tucson, Arizona, when U.S. Customs, evidently not in the plot, caught up with the smugglers. During their trial for munition smuggling the defendants stated that they had been hired by the CIA. The CIA general counsel, Lawrence Houston, testified that the CIA knew about the shipments five days before they began, but denied that the CIA was involved in the affair. However, the U.S. government did not demand the return of the bombers already sent to Portugal.

## 2.7 THE ROLE OF AMERICAN INVESTMENT AND TRADE:

American business investment and trade increased throughout the Johnson Administration. Portugal's military expenditure rose steadily from 1961, and had reached 48% of central government expenditure by 1965. Comparable figures for other countries are: U.S. 42%, U.K. 34%, France 32%, West Germany 26%, and Italy 17%.<sup>50</sup> Three years later, the 1968 budget initially allocated 35% (about \$273 million) of all expenditures to military costs. Final appropriations that year mounted to 48% of the total once emergency allocations had been added.<sup>51</sup> This level of military expenditure

<sup>50</sup> O.E.C.D. National Account Statistics, 1956-65, p. 14.

<sup>51</sup> D.M. Abshire and M.A. Samuels (eds.) Portuguese Africa --- A Handbook (New York: Praeger, 1969), pp. 349-350.

would be difficult for any country to sustain. Portugal, which was extremely weak economically was forced to allow foreign investors to penetrate its rich "overseas provinces", to provide the much needed revenue to continue the colonial wars.

Portugal began in 1962 to revise the laws which stringently restricted foreign investment. By 1965 these laws had been redesigned to act as incentives to foreign investors:

Foreign enterprises are no longer bound to have participating Portuguese capital and administration; they may repatriate capital, profits and dividends freely, there are tax holidays up to ten years, customs exemptions on plant and raw material, and various other concessions.<sup>52</sup>

So beginning in 1965, American capital and technology began to flow into Angola. The number of American companies operating in Angola reached 25 in 1970, and most had begun operations there after 1965.

American investors showed great interest in mineral prospecting, oil exploration and oil production. Gulf Oil's successful oil strike in Cabinda in 1966 spurred American interest in Angola's petroleum. Shortly thereafter, Exxon, Mobil and Standard Oil of California sought oil rights in Angola.<sup>53</sup> Three other American companies --- Diversa, New York Diamond Distributors and Diamul --- were granted dia-

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<sup>52</sup> Jennifer Davies, "Allies in Empire: Economic Involvement," Africa Today, Vol. 17, No. 3, 1970, p. 7.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. p. 7.

mond concessions in southwestern Angola in 1968.<sup>54</sup>

Before the 1975 civil war, the U.S. was not Angola's largest trading partner but it played a very special role in its commodity trade. It bought more than 50% of Angola's biggest export, robusta coffee, which is used for the production of instant coffee.

Since 1946 coffee has been Angola's most important export, accounting for more than 50% of all exports in most years. In 1968 Angola's major customers were U.S. (51%) and Holland (20%); Portugal imported only 6.2%. The coffee crop earned \$63 million in U.S. alone in 1968, while the value of total coffee export reached more than \$124 million.<sup>55</sup> In 1968, 6.9% of all coffee imported into the U.S. came from Angola, which ranked third in the list of U.S. coffee suppliers, following Brazil (32.8%) and Columbia (12%).<sup>56</sup>

It was clear that the growing American participation in the Angolan economy benefited only the Portuguese government and the settler farmers. Commentators such as Jennifer Davis pointed out that:

American companies were required to make substantial payments to the Portuguese authorities in the form of income tax, profit sharing, special

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<sup>54</sup> M.A. El-Khawas, "Foreign Economic Involvement in Angola and Mozambique," Issue, Vol. 4, No. 2, 1974, pp. 24-25.

<sup>55</sup> The Journal of Commerce, (New York), January 15, 1969, p. 18.

<sup>56</sup> U.N. Foreign Trade Statistics for Africa, series A, E/CN.14/Stat/set. A-16. September 25, 1969.

defense taxes, royalties, Mining Fund contributions and other payments. These revenues are needed and will be used to maintain the war machine.<sup>57</sup>

The gain for the Africans in Angola was much less certain. Nothing in the process ensured them control over the future of resources in their own country. The new wealth flowed out of Angola, and was split between the Portuguese and the American investors. Increased revenue in Portuguese hands probably built some houses, schools and clinics for the Africans. But it did not increase their chances for self-determination and independence.

Portuguese and multinational companies, such as Gulf, made much of the fact that Africans were trained in new skilled jobs, and that new jobs were also created. That was probably true in a few cases, though the pattern of differential opportunity and differential salary, between African and European worker, was well established. The central issue remained that of colonialism; where the Africans did not benefit from the economic boom of their country while it was still a colony. Even the conservative and pro-capitalist London Financial Times saw little hope of a true sharing of the benefits of the new Angolan wealth:

For the time being --- and probably for the next five years, Angola's boom will prove of major benefit primarily to the European elite in Angola and in Portugal itself.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Jennifer Davies, op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>58</sup> Financial Times, (London) July 23, 1969.

Despite such criticism, neither the Johnson nor Nixon Administration made any effort to discourage American investment in Angola, instead the U.S. refused to support U.N. resolutions critical of Portuguese policies in Angola. The U.S. appeared to have shaped its policy primarily in response to a concern for stability: a stable Portugal in Europe, where as part of the so-called "free world" alliance against Communism and a stable Portugal in Africa, providing a known and friendly government in an area which promised an increasingly profitable future.

## 2.8 NIXON ERA --- KISSINGER'S BENIGN NEGLECT OF ANGOLA.

Dr. Kissinger, as National Security Advisor and as Secretary of State, had a decisive influence on the direction and substance of American foreign policy. His views on African issues were somewhat obscure and ambiguous. Some argued that he paid little attention to African problems because, as assistant to the President, he had to deal with specific problems that required immediate attention. Moreover, others believed that in contrast to his extensive European background his knowledge of Africa was scant.<sup>59</sup>

In any case, it is likely that Angola ranked low on Kissinger's list of priorities. His prime concern at first was to end the Vietnam war and to achieve a significant breakthrough in relations with the Soviet Union and China. After

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<sup>59</sup> Mohamed El-Khawas, "Kissinger on Africa", Habari, Vol. 7, Winter 1974, p. 5.

having completed these delicate missions successfully, Kissinger then embarked on a scheme to achieve "a stable structure of peace" based on a global balance-of-power which essentially involved the major powers --- the U.S., the U.S.S.R., China, Western Europe and Japan. Plus his work in the Middle East. From a larger perspective, these emphases provided evidence that Kissinger's chief concern was the relationships between the super powers who, in his view:

can effectively work together to avoid sudden actions that might offset the equilibrium and endanger the perceived interests of the other.<sup>60</sup>

So in the Nixon Administration African issues could not offset the equilibrium in such a theory of power politics, and African issues were not seen as a crucial dimension and received little attention. It was very difficult to understand how Kissinger could talk about the possibility of "a more durable peace abroad" while failing to take into consideration the existing realities of wars of liberation in the Portuguese colonies.

Kissinger might have alluded to his own role in shaping U.S. foreign policy when, at a seminar on "Bureaucracy, Politics and Strategy", given at the University of California in 1968, he argued that:

the position the political leader takes is much influenced by the type of intellectual that sometimes quite accidentally winds up in his entourage.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> The New York Times, September 23, 1973.

<sup>61</sup> The Washington Post, September 17, 1973.

In 1969, as the National Security Advisor, Kissinger took charge of formulating U.S. foreign policy, and during that period Portugal's colonial policies in Angola were not on his agenda. Kissinger's overriding preoccupation was with the Vietnam war and with the growing domestic political pressures to end the Indochina involvement prior to the 1972 presidential election. The series of secret negotiations in Peking, Moscow and Paris absorbed his energies; indeed they literally set the stage for a "peace with honor" in Vietnam, for improved U.S.-Soviet relationship, and for the initiation of a detente with China.

The Nixon Administration's policy toward Angola was formulated in its main outlines after a 1969 National Security Council meeting, to discuss various options based on a study on Southern Africa prepared by Kissinger's staff. The report, known as "National Security Memorandum 39" (NSSM-39), had four possible policy choices:

1. to continue the previous Administration's policy, "with its precarious combination of moralistic public rhetoric and limited quiet diplomatic entreaty;"
2. to seek through communication and encouragement to influence Southern African governments to liberalize their policies;
3. to give aid to either the liberation movements or incumbents in any conflict; or

4. to remain neutral.<sup>62</sup>

Kissinger believed that a nationalist "Communist" regime in Southern Africa would inevitably become "a center of anti-Western policy" could not recommend that the U.S. throw its weight behind the liberation movements, most of whom he viewed as Soviet "stooges" because of their dependence upon Soviet material assistance.<sup>63</sup> Some observers have argued that Kissinger's views on African matters were largely shaped by the thinking of two men who were members of the Council on Foreign Relations, namely George Kennan and the late Dean Acheson, both of whom had consistently defended the white minority regimes in Southern Africa. Kennan championed the Portuguese cause by defending their record and supporting their rationale for remaining in Angola. He also warned against the U.S. taking "hazardous" courses in Southern Africa, particularly the support of Africans in any independence struggles involving the use of force.<sup>64</sup> Similarly, Dean Acheson fought bitterly against the imposition of sanctions on Rhodesia, and defended South Africa's rule in Namibia. In addition both statesmen argued that the Nixon Administration should stand for "moderation, restraint

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<sup>62</sup> M. Marder, "Secret Memo Bares U.S. 'Tilt' in Africa," Washington Post, October 13, 1974.

<sup>63</sup> Henry A. Kissinger, The Troubled Partnership: A Reappraisal of the Atlantic Alliance, (New York: McGraw Hill, 1965), p. 205.

<sup>64</sup> George Kennan, "Hazardous Courses in Southern Africa," Foreign Affairs Vol. 49, January 1971, pp. 230-235.



and understanding towards South Africa and Portugal's deep dilemmas."<sup>65</sup> Kissinger had a deep distrust for revolutionary movements. He considered them a threat to his design for international tranquility which depended upon stable political relations among powerful states. Kissinger and the National Security Council apparently stood in favour of reliance on the further goodwill of the Portuguese, South African and Rhodesian governments to liberalize their colonial and racial policies with pressure exerted in the form of "friendly persuasion rather than constant condemnation."<sup>66</sup> In doing so Kissinger hoped to keep a low U.S. profile in Angola. As he remarked:

We have as a country to ask ourselves the question of whether it should be the principal goal of American foreign policy to transform the domestic structure of societies with which we deal or whether the principal exercise of our foreign policy should be toward affecting the foreign policy of those societies.<sup>67</sup>

This line of thinking was consistent with Kissinger's view that "foreign policy is essentially global strategy and that domestic considerations and pressures should not be allowed to impinge on it."<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Johannesburg Star, September 15, 1973.

<sup>66</sup> Willard Johnson, "U.S. Foreign Policy Towards Africa," Africa Today, Vol. 20, No. 1, 1973. pp.15-17.

<sup>67</sup> Washington Post, September 12, 1973.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

The new policy had its impact on the U.S. voting behaviour in the U.N. The U.S. repeatedly voted against resolutions condemning Portugal for its refusal to recognize the right of Angola to self-determination and independence or expressing concern over intensification of foreign economic activities in Angola, or appealing for a stop to the training of Portuguese military personnel and the sale of arms.<sup>69</sup> A comment in The Economist noted that the "Nixon Administration has used the veto more freely than its predecessors."<sup>70</sup>

Neither President Nixon nor Kissinger found the situation in Angola very compelling. In their view, for instance, the chronic problems of Southern Africa did not pose any threat to the delicate balance created by improvement in Soviet-American relations and later by the detente with China.<sup>71</sup>

To a great extent, Nixon's actions on Angola reflected similar sympathies. Neither Nixon nor Kissinger paralleled their Indochina effort with the initiation of any new measures or policies aimed at finding solutions to the Portuguese repression in Angola. Instead they insisted that any change must ultimately come from Portugal and thus considered it appropriate merely to "encourage" Portugal "to adopt

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<sup>69</sup> Willard Johnson, op. cit. pp. 20-21.

<sup>70</sup> The Economist, October 6, 1973, p. 38.

<sup>71</sup> Willard Johnson, "United States Foreign Policy Towards Africa", Africa Today, Vol. 20 No. 1, 1973, pp. 15-17

more generous and more realistic policies toward the needs and aspirations of their black citizens."<sup>72</sup>

## 2.9 NIXON'S AZORES AGREEMENT.

As of March 1971, a new agreement had not been reached on the Azores. Prime Minister Caetano thereupon began to exert pressure for an agreement to be concluded. He announced that American use of the Azores base could not continue without a formal agreement and threatened to make it a NATO base whose operation would be restricted to NATO uses.<sup>73</sup> Due to that pressure, on December 9, 1971, an executive agreement was signed with Portugal. In exchange for utilization of the Azores bases, the Administration authorized the U.S. Export-Import Bank to extend a credit loan of \$436 million, a figure four times the total amount the Bank had extended to Portugal between 1946 and 1971.<sup>74</sup>

The terms of the agreement represented a substantial change in American foreign policy in a direction strongly favourable to Portugal. Such a move was very much in line with Kissinger's interest in NATO, with his overriding concern with the "Troubled Partnership" and with his deliberate effort to revise the North Atlantic Charter. Aside from the

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<sup>72</sup> Statement made by President Nixon on February 25, 1971. See "Richard M. Nixon: An Interview with his Spokesman, David D. Newsom," Africa Report, March 1972, p. 12.

<sup>73</sup> The Guardian (Manchester), March 18, 1971.

<sup>74</sup> The Guardian (Manchester), December 14, 1971.

strategic value of the Azores for refueling transport aircraft enroute to Europe, Portugal's NATO membership was undoubtedly an important factor in the Nixon Administration's decision to remain friendly toward Portugal even at the cost of sacrificing the freedom of the Africans in Angola. The beneficial terms of the agreement, especially the provision of \$436 million in aid and loans to Portugal, reflected the Administration's desire to better American-Portuguese relations, and should be seen in the context of Kissinger's grand design of strengthening NATO members economically and militarily prior to the conclusion of SALT talks and the subsequent reduction of American troops in Europe.<sup>75</sup>

The agreement also generated strong criticism of the Administration's position.<sup>76</sup> The Nixon Administration found it necessary to give assurances that the new Azores agreement did not mean any departure from the long-standing American policy of support for self-determination in Angola. This position was made clear in the testimony of Undersecretary of State Alexis Johnson in hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> El-Khawas, op. cit. p. 6.

<sup>76</sup> Charles Diggs, "Statement Submitted to President Nixon", Congressional Record, Vol. 117, No. 199, 1971, pp. E13814-5; Basil Davidson, "Nixon Underwrites Portugal's Empire," The New Statesman, Vol. 83, No. 2132, January 1972, p. 103; G. Fernandes, "The Azores Over Africa," Africa Today, Vol. 19, No. 1, January 1972, pp. 3-6

<sup>77</sup> Executive Agreements with Portugal and Bahrain, Hearings

The official American view, however, was not shared by the Portuguese government. According to Noticias de Portugal, Prime Minister Caetano announced that:

The treaty is a political act in which the solidarity of interests between the two countries is recognized and it is in the name of that solidarity that we put an instrument of action at the disposal of our American friends, who are also now allies.<sup>78</sup>

By examining the record of the Nixon Administration in Angola, I accept the view expressed by the Portuguese Prime Minister. The strategic importance of the Azores bases in America's defence in Europe and Portugal as a NATO member overshadowed any desire of the Nixon Administration to formulate policies that were critical of Portuguese colonial policy in Angola. The financial assistance that U.S. extended to Portugal through the Azores agreement enabled the Portuguese government to cope with some of its economic problems which had deteriorated as a result of the colonial wars.

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before the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, 92nd. Congress, 2nd. Session, February 1-3, 1972, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington D.C., 1972, p. 49.

<sup>78</sup> Noticias de Portugal, No. 1285, December 18, 1971.

## 2.10 SUMMARY.

Until 1961 Angola (and the rest of the Portuguese African colonies) was given no independent weight in American foreign policy considerations --- it was treated simply as part of Portugal, and the U.S. attitude to Portugal itself was determined by its role as a NATO ally. The fact that Portugal was ruled by a dictator and was a colonial power was irrelevant to U.S. foreign policy designers. The 1961 revolt in Angola made it impossible for the new Kennedy Administration, eager to build political capital in the Third World, to avoid taking some stand on Portuguese repressive actions in Angola. Thus American policy was advanced one small step to verbal support of self-determination for Angola with accompanying assurances that American weapons would not be supplied to Portugal for use in Angola. But U.S. policy did not go beyond this posture. As the repression continued and world opinion hardened, the U.S. refused to go beyond verbal dissociation from Portugal; it maintained its military ties and stepped up investments. Supported by its Western allies, U.S. blocked effective U.N. actions, labelling any resolution that went beyond mild verbal condemnation of the Portuguese as "unrealistic."

Within the foreign policy-making groups, there were two major groups which acted to maintain the policy of support for Portugal. Such forces limited the ways in which policy might change, even under considerable pressure. Two most obvious loci of policy inertia were the Defence Department

on the one hand and the dominantly European perspective of the foreign policy elite in the State Department.

The interest of the Defence Department was clear. Portugal was included in America's most important alliance --- NATO. Portugal was anti-communist, "stable" and friendly. It controlled a number of strategic island bases in the Atlantic and the colonies provided valuable resources.

In fact the military rarely had to defend their views of Portugal, and there was little challenge from the ranks of the "civilian" foreign policy echelons. That was consistent with the assumption that European interests automatically take precedence over African interests, even when the European country involved is a small one such as Portugal. Europe, Asia, and Latin America were recognized as primary areas of U.S. responsibility; Africa was peripheral. George Ball, the former Undersecretary of State suggested that the U.S. should:

recognize that Africa is a special European responsibility just as today the European nations recognize our particular responsibility in Latin America.<sup>79</sup>

This did not mean that the U.S. had no interest in Africa, but simply that policy makers wanted a "low profile."

According to this view, the former colonial powers were important stabilizing forces. A State Department publication emphasized that:

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<sup>79</sup> George Ball, op. cit. p. 241.

the U.S. recognise the contribution made in Africa by Portugal, and believes it is important that Portugal continues to contribute to the stability and progress in that continent.<sup>80</sup>

The difference between the Portuguese and the U.S. position lay simply in the assessment of how best Portugal could guarantee its continued influence in Africa. Thus the U.S. position paper went on to say:

However, because of rapid political changes in Africa in the last decade, the U.S. believes that continued Portuguese presence in the continent can best be assured if it undertakes an accelerated program of political, economic and social reform, designed to advance all the peoples of the territories toward the exercise of self-determination.<sup>81</sup>

As Menen Williams makes clear in his book, ironically entitled Africa for the Africans, "this does not necessarily mean that independence would be the end result of such a program."<sup>82</sup> Such a policy, which required a peaceful transition to political self-determination in which Portuguese interests were safeguarded, was obviously contradicted by Portuguese intransigence and the protracted war in Angola. However, the U.S. policy-makers tolerated the contradiction as long as little attention was given to Angola and the victory for the liberation movements did not appear imminent. Pro forma idealistic statements in the U.N. continued to

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<sup>80</sup> Department of State Publication No. 8074, October 1968, p.4.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> G. Menen Williams, Africa for the Africans, (Grand Rapids: Ferdmans, 1969), p. 132.



co-exist with "business as usual" military ties and economic investment.

The military equipment Portugal obtained from its partners in NATO played a major part in its war operations in Angola. By supplying Portugal with vast amounts of military equipment, the NATO allies not only bolstered Portugal's ability to help control the Cape and South Atlantic sea route and to combat "internal subversion", they also equipped it to act as a powerful counterrevolutionary force throughout Southern Africa, capable of furthering Western political and economic interests.

## Chapter III

### FORD-KISSINGER "SAFARI" IN ANGOLA: ANATOMY OF BLUNDER.

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION.

The continuation of Portuguese rule in Angola through the 1970's and beyond seemed so secured that American policymakers paid no attention to the large-scale war for independence being waged by the Angolan nationalist movements. With the advent of the Nixon Administration, as mentioned in the previous chapter, a major review of American policy toward Southern Africa concluded that the nationalist movements were ineffectual, not "realistic or supportable" alternatives to Portuguese rule.<sup>1</sup>

The United States did not question the depth and permanence of Portuguese resolve. It just assumed that Portuguese rule would continue for the foreseeable future. It was a classic miscalculation stemming from faulty intelligence. As John Marcum notes:

By early 1970's there were ample signs that Portugal's days as a Eurasian power were numbered. Demoralization and defections among the war-worn Portuguese military; economic dislocation and inflation; the massive emigration of 1.5 million

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<sup>1</sup> National Security Council Interdepartmental Group for Africa: Study in Response to National Security Study Memorandum 39, AF/NSC - 1G 69, August 15, 1969. (usually referred to as NSSM-39).

job-seekers; and the burgeoning of anti-regime terrorism and sabotage --- these were all visible to those with eyes to see.<sup>2</sup>

The U.S. policy-makers chose to overlook the vulnerability of the Caetano regime. But when in April 1974 the regime was overthrown by the Portuguese army "the American government stood surprised, and embarrassed by its close ties to the ancien regime."<sup>3</sup>

The April 1974 Lisbon coup provided the U.S. with an opportunity to redefine its policies in Angola. A preoccupied Secretary of State fretted over the danger of a communist take over in Portugal. Rather than unequivocally supporting majority rule, the U.S. adopted a low profile while covertly supporting the conservative elements during the five-month power struggle between General Spínola and the militant members of the Armed Forces Movement committed to revolutionary change within Portugal and independence for the African colonies.

Throughout the period from April to September, until Spínola was removed, U.S. officials refrained from commenting on his efforts to maintain a Portuguese political and economic presence in Angola and the rest of the colonies.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> John Marcum, "Lessons of Angola," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 54, No. 3, April 1976, p. 408.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> For Spínola's long-term strategy, See Antonio de Spínola, Future of Portugal (New York: Arcadia Press, 1974).

Following the March 1974 Congressional testimony of Paul O'Neil, Director of the State Department Office on South African Affairs, in which he asserted that "We do not,...feel that Portugal must be completely excluded from the future of this area."<sup>5</sup> Washington's silence can only be interpreted as reluctance to recognize the inevitability of Angolan independence. In failing to do so, the U.S. was caught up in the consequences of its past actions and inactions in Angola.

### 3.2 ANGOLAN NATIONALISM ON THE EVE OF THE LISBON COUP.

Before discussing the Ford Administration's policy in Angola after the April 1974 coup in Lisbon, a brief look at the origins and history is important in order to analyze properly the relative geographic and political configurations of nationalism in Angola at the time of the coup.

There were three main movements in the period 1964 to 1976, they did have differing strengths in the various regions of Angola, and they could indeed be said to have different ethnic bases. As it is clearly stated by John Marcum:

Taken together, the influence of class and ethnicity resulted in a tripolarity, as reflected in what ultimately developed as the major streams of Angolan nationalism: (1) Luanda-Mbundu, with a predominantly urban elite leadership, (2) Bakongo and (3) Ovimbundu plus Chokwe. (2) and (3) with

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<sup>5</sup> Testimony of Paul O'Neil, Director of State Department Office of Southern African Affairs, before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, March 14, 1974.

rural, peasant orientations.<sup>6</sup>

The stagnant Portuguese educational policy in Angola prevented the emergence of an educated Angolan elite. Whereas the comparatively permissive colonial administrations of Britain and France allowed socially aware Africans to organize, politicize, and to acquire gradually a measure of political power, the Portuguese were hostile to any organized expression of cultural or political content or dissent. As Marcum emphasizes:

Coerced political docility, or silence was the responsibility of local officials and police, supplemented by PIDE, which was introduced into Angola in 1957, by networks of police informers, and finally by progressively augmented European military forces. The Salazar government was thus able systematically to root out and destroy groups and individuals suspected of nationalist activity or sympathies.<sup>7</sup>

As a consequence, surviving nationalist groups suffered common insecurity and shared common characteristics. Their leadership ranks were thin, coming from the politically aware portion of a tiny educated elite. Moreover, these groups were handicapped by travel and police restrictions. Their range of action and political vision were limited. Localized, they remained parochial. Most were unable fully to surmount the bounds of primary ethnic (or regional) relationships (e.g. Bakongo) or of class ties (e.g. the multira-

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<sup>6</sup> John Marcum, The Angolan Revolution, Vol. 1 (1950-1962), (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1969) . p. 10.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

cial intelligentsia of Luanda).<sup>8</sup>

Repression was a strong incentive for nationalist groups to move underground, where

Decimated by infiltrators and corroded by insecurities and tensions of underground politics, nationalists became exceedingly distrustful. Furthermore, when they sought refuge abroad, they immediately confronted a new situation that was no less suffused with insecurity and frustration. The debilitating condition of clandestinity gave way to the equally debilitating condition of exile.<sup>9</sup>

Foreign refuge enabled some nationalists to avoid arrest and/or to regroup, seek international assistance, and then mount a new challenge to Portuguese authority from outside. It was possible to organize among compatriots ---emigres and labourers --- living and working within the more permissive political context of neighbouring countries, for example the Bakongos residing in Zaire.<sup>10</sup> Increasingly then, displaced nationalist leaders and young militants congregated and re-organized abroad. Following the outbreak of the rebellion in 1961, they concentrated on building movements capable of effecting the politicization and military liberation of Angola through actions launched from exile. Their failure to attain this goal until 1975 and then only indirectly, was in part attributable to chronic frustration and fragmentation induced by long years of political repression, underground

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 49.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Marcum, "Lessons in Angola", op. cit. p. 410.

existence, and exile.

### 3.3 POLITICAL LEADERSHIP, DOCTRINE AND STRUCTURE OF THE LIBERATION MOVEMENTS.

The Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), led by Agostinho Neto, was in no sense a communist movement but a radical nationalist movement led by an impressive Marxist elite. A close observer of the MPLA, Basil Davidson, depicted the movement's ideology as revolutionary and Marxist but not communist.<sup>11</sup> The movement's strong appeal was that its leadership included black Angolans, white Angolans and Mestizos (Angolans of mixed race, an important element among the elite). John Marcum emphasized that:

The top levels of MPLA leadership were held by skilled, educated, and dedicated men --- many of them mestizos, a few white... Under the tough, low-key, resilient leadership of its president for fourteen years, Agostinho Neto, the MPLA held firm to its advocacy and practice of multiracialism. ... Assessing that their natural base resided in an as yet very small urban working class, the MPLA leaders saw their task as one of both improving the economic conditions throughout the country and overcoming the "tribal prejudices" of the large rural population.<sup>12</sup>

Because it received strong, if inconsistent, support from Soviet Union during the war against Portugal --- and more so after the collapse of the Portuguese authority --- the MPLA was more strongly oriented toward Moscow. But for all its strong points, the MPLA was a minority party, confined

<sup>11</sup> Le Monde Diplomatique, (Paris), No. 198, September 1970, p. 19.

<sup>12</sup> John Marcum, Angolan Revolution Vol. II, op. cit. p. 279

largely to the elites and to tribal support in the central region of Angola. Its only hope of gaining power was through military supremacy, which meant strong foreign support.

The National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNIA), led by Holden Roberto, drew its major support from among the Bakongo people in the North. Its real strength came from the neighbouring state of Zaire whose President, General Mobutu, backed the FNIA on the grounds of national security. He was suspicious of a pro-Soviet government emerging as his neighbour.<sup>13</sup> The FNIA remained motivated by an obsessive hostility toward mestizo leadership (and thus the MPLA).<sup>14</sup> Roberto saw the MPLA as controlled by a privileged class of mestizos. And he was encouraged in these views by officials from Mobutu's government who declared that they would support only those "whose authenticity" protected them from a "prejudicial acceptance" of communist or capitalist ideology", protected them from becoming satellites.<sup>15</sup>

Holden Roberto ran the FNIA with a seasoned iron hand.

He personally hoarded or doled out all funds and information. He systematically eliminated potential rivals from leadership roles.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Colin Legum, The New Republic, January 31, 1976, p. 16.

<sup>14</sup> Washington Post, February 19, 1976.

<sup>15</sup> Marcum. op. cit. p. 189.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.



The party's doctrine continued to be nationalist, non-marxist and peasant or rural oriented. While Roberto continued to run the movement as a one-man show devoid of regular process or cohesive organization, the leadership's doctrine continued to rely on visceral anti-communism and a faith in the power of physical weaponry.<sup>17</sup> FNLA's long association with both China and Rumania did nothing to encourage it to develop and inculcate a Marxist political philosophy or programme.

The National Union for Total Independence for Angola (UNITA), led by Jonas Savimbi, found its strongest support among the Ovimbundu population of the South and Central plateau region, who are numerically predominant in Angola. The movement also counted on strong support from Portuguese Angolans. UNITA also was a radical nationalist movement, which according to an OAU fact-finding Commission which visited Angola in 1968, concluded that, if elections had been possible before independence, it would have emerged as the largest party.<sup>18</sup>

UNITA attempted to give its nationalist programme a socialist "colouring," perhaps to provide credibility in its search for support from Peking or to differentiate itself from the other two movements on a political basis rather than a factional or ethnic one. Many of its military and

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<sup>17</sup> Davidson, op. cit.

<sup>18</sup> Colin Legum, op. cit. p. 17.

political statements, at least until the Lisbon coup, were laced with Maoist terminology and rhetoric. The movement even went to the point of adopting a concept of a "people's war" based on the peasantry similar to Mao's.

Concluding that the struggle for independence would be long, bitter and cruel, Savimbi emphasized the need to organize and act from the base of a politically educated peasantry.<sup>19</sup> Requiring patience and discipline, the UNITA leadership noted that, the political mobilization of an illiterate, widely dispersed peasantry was inevitably a difficult task avoided by the MPLA and FNLA who preferred the easy and self-deceiving payoff of an external propaganda campaign.<sup>20</sup> In Savimbi's view the ineffectiveness of the FNLA-led insurgency in the North was due to Roberto's failure to understand the importance of political education. Handing out weapons and urging people to fight without first imparting a clear sense of sociopolitical purpose was self-defeating.<sup>21</sup> Savimbi therefore instructed his organizers to relate to the peasantry through local sociocultural values and economic grievances.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> "The Constitution of UNITA." Article 2, Paragraph 4. Quoted in Kwacha-Angola, No. 2, June 1966, p. 8.

<sup>20</sup> Marcum, The Angolan Revolution Vol. II, op. cit. p. 169.

<sup>21</sup> Davidson, op. cit.

<sup>22</sup> Marcum, The Angolan Revolution Vol. II, op. cit.

### 3.4 THE ALVOR AGREEMENT.

In August 1974, after the new government had been legitimized in Lisbon the U.N. Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim went to Lisbon to negotiate with General Spínola and his government to prepare the Portuguese African colonies for independence. At the end of the talks Portugal promised "to make early contacts with the liberation movements" to begin formal negotiations for self-government. It also promised "to oppose any secessionist moves to dismember Angola."<sup>23</sup>

The OAU capitalized on the Secretary-General's visit, and acting through President Kenyatta of Kenya, initiated a meeting between the leaders of the three Angolan liberation movements on January 3, 1975 in Mombasa, Kenya. At the end of the Summit meeting the three leaders signed an accord pledging to cooperate peacefully, to safeguard Angolan "territorial integrity" and to facilitate "national reconstruction." The three leaders also agreed to start formal negotiations with Portugal to establish the procedures and time-table leading to independence.<sup>24</sup>

On January 10, 1975 at Alvor in Portugal, Agostinho Neto, Holden Roberto, and Jonas Savimbi met with the Portuguese government for the first Angola independence conference. After less than a week of negotiations, the four parties signed a new accord on January 15, 1975. The Alvor accord

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<sup>23</sup> Colin Legum, Africa: Contemporary Record, 1974-75, pp. C38-39.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. p. B 538

confirmed the three liberation movements as "the sole legitimate representatives of the people of Angola." It proclaimed Cabinda to be "an unalienable component of Angola", and it set November 11, 1975 as the date for independence. During the transitional period, the accord stipulated that the country was to be administered by a coalition government of the three nationalist parties and Portugal. The transition government was mandated to draft a new constitution and conduct legislative elections during the transition period.<sup>25</sup> By creating the need for the movements to reach out, mobilize popular electoral support, and organize on a national scale, Portugal hoped to encourage the establishment of a single polity. The Alvor agreement also provided for the formation of an Angolan national army in which each liberation movement was to have 8,000 men, while Portugal was to maintain 24,000 troops.<sup>26</sup> According to the agreement, Portuguese forces were not scheduled to be out of the country until February 29, 1976.

Despite the Alvor agreement, the three liberation movements were still deeply divided, and a three-way partition of Angola seemed possible. A long time observer of the Angolan scene noted that "Angola at this point is an open and inviting area for outside influence," but went on to implicitly minimize the possibility of U.S. involvement, saying

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<sup>25</sup> John Marcum, The Angolan Revolution, Vol. II, op. cit. p. 255

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

that:

The Angola situation could present great-power difficulties only if either China or Russia massively step up assistance to its ally and the other then reacts.<sup>27</sup>

At this point, the U.S. could have acted expeditiously to forestall competition with the Soviets, and modestly improve its diplomatic position in Africa by encouraging conciliation in Angola. In particular, the U.S. could have encouraged the OAU to take up a continuing role as a political arbiter, thereby minimizing the hazards of a large-scale external intervention. The U.S. could have made a clear commitment to a foundation stone of African unity --- resistance to outside intervention --- and thereby created real political difficulties for a Soviet intervention. Instead, the U.S. chose sides by supporting the FNLA, the movement with the largest army and the one most disposed to follow a military rather than a political strategy.

### 3.5 U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN THE ANGOLAN CRISIS.

The struggle by the three liberation movements for control of independent Angola rapidly escalated into an international confrontation, and the Ford Administration simplistically portrayed the conflict as "communism" versus "anti-communism." The MPLA was constantly described as "Marxist", "Soviet-backed" or just "communist", while the

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<sup>27</sup> Kenneth Adelman, "Report From Angola," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 52, April 1975, pp. 566 and 569.

FNLA and UNITA were classified as "anti-communist" factions.

Against that backdrop, at the January 1975 meeting of the National Security Council's 40 Committee the CIA requested approval of \$300,000 in covert support to help the FNLA during the predicted scramble for power. CIA officials asserted that the money would give the U.S. "some capital in the bank with one of the leaders of a government that was going to control a fairly sizeable country."<sup>28</sup> Therefore, aid to the FNLA was considered as providing the "most stable and reliable government in the place."<sup>29</sup> According to the CIA, Angola was "strategically important" not only for its natural wealth but especially for its location, adjacent to Namibia, from which a radical regime could support a liberation movement against South Africa. As such a "Soviet-backed" government in Angola was considered intolerable by both the U.S. and South Africa.

Angola's strategic location, next to Zaire and Zambia, both of which had natural resources important to the Western economy, also figured in CIA's calculations. Presidents Kaunda and Mobutu were concerned about an MPLA government and their fear of Soviet influence played a major part in the NSC decision.<sup>30</sup> The argument was advanced that U.S. aid

<sup>28</sup> Quoted in Murrey Marder, "The Angolan Involvement", Washington Post, January 6, 1976.

<sup>29</sup> Roger Morris, "The Proxy War in Angola", The New Republic, January 31, 1976, p. 20.

<sup>30</sup> President Kaunda was primarily concerned about Zambia's access to the Lobitc railway to the West coast which he

to the FNLA would signal to President Mobutu, that Washington was sympathetic to his support for the FNLA and his opposition to the MPLA. The U.S. was also most opposed to Soviet activities affecting Zaire, where it had roughly more than \$800 million invested (about three times more than in Angola). Therefore Zaire was a primary consideration in American decisions concerning covert aid to the FNLA.

One account of the 40 Committee meeting indicates that Kissinger found the CIA presentation on Angola to be "compelling." The request was therefore "routinely approved" after "the agency laid out the reasons for backing their man."<sup>31</sup> Given past connections with the FNLA and the tendency to think in terms of "our team" and "theirs", the 40 Committee rejected a proposal to give \$100,000 to UNITA, whose leader Jonas Savimbi was at the time predicting that there would be no civil war and was playing the role of a reasonable conciliator-aggregator.<sup>32</sup>

Subsequently rumors began to spread in Luanda of "heavy continuing CIA support for the FNLA." Roberto, in a series of conspicuous purchases, bought the city's television station and the leading newspaper.<sup>33</sup> U.S. officials in Luanda

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feared would be shut down by an MPLA government on advice. The New York Times, January 29, 1976.

<sup>31</sup> Roger Morris, op. cit. p. 21.

<sup>32</sup> Savimbi considered civil war unlikely given that "anyone who starts a war will force the unity of the other two movements against themselves." Financial Mail (Johannesburg), May 9, 1975.

denied the rumors of CIA support. John Marcum recounts that:

The American Consulate, unaware of covert U.S. assistance to Roberto, launched an inquiry to discover the source of the FNLA funding and reported back to the State Department that it probably came from Portuguese coffee plantation owners in northern Angola.<sup>34</sup>

However, the Soviet Union had long suspected that the United States would try to assert its influence in Angola after independence, and it was alarmed by the "40 Committee's decision.<sup>35</sup> Marcum's line of reasoning was supported by Roger Morris who maintained that:

...whatever the subsequent course of events, there is simple, damning evidence that the first Russian escalation came in reaction to the U.S. re-involvement with Roberto.<sup>36</sup>

Angolan transition government began functioning at the beginning of February 1975, but in a climate of mistrust and violence among the three parties. On March 23, the FNLA forces attacked MPLA military installations and training camps, killing several people, leading some observers to conclude that:

Beyond any reasonable doubt, what has occurred is a first terrifying attempt by Kinshasa-based Holden Roberto's FNLA to kill substantial numbers of MPLA soldiers and supporters and to instill a climate of fear in the country such as it did in 1961 on the Zaire border.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>33</sup> John Marcum, The Angolan Revolution Vol II, op. cit. p. 257.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. p. 257-258.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. p. 258.

<sup>36</sup> Roger Morris, op. cit. p. 21.



As the confrontation intensified, the MPLA indiscriminately armed its supporters --- including even teenage boys.<sup>38</sup>

Several correspondents in Luanda at the time agreed that Soviet arms deliveries began to increase toward the end of March, when the suspicion of the U.S. covert aid to the FNIA became quite obvious. As Murrey Marder reported:

Soviet arms went by air to Brazzaville, by truck to Cabinda, by rail to Pointe Noire, and by small craft down the Angolan coast. In April, chartered aircraft flew perhaps a hundred tons of arms into Southern Angola, and large shipments, including heavy mortars and armored vehicles, began to come in on Yugoslav, Greek and Soviet ships.<sup>39</sup>

As Soviet arms reached the MPLA, it began to recruit more men including the 3500- to 6000-man anti-Zairian, Katangese gendarmerie which had previously fought against the Angolan nationalist movements.<sup>40</sup>

Violence soon spilled into towns to the north and south of Luanda, with the MPLA increasingly taking the initiative. President Kaunda of Zambia visited the U.S. in mid-April and warned the Ford Administration that the Angolan situation was deteriorating. He also argued that as the fighting threatened to expand there was the danger of large-scale Soviet intervention.<sup>41</sup> Because of the Administration's preoc-

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<sup>37</sup> Jane Bergerol, Financial Times (London), March 29, 1975.

<sup>38</sup> Le Monde (Paris), May 15, 1975.

<sup>39</sup> The New York Times, September 25, 1975.

<sup>40</sup> Marcum, The Angolan Revolution Vol. II op. cit. p. 259.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

cupation with the imminent collapse of the government of South Vietnam, President Kaunda's warning was unheeded. The U.S. did not undertake an urgent diplomatic effort to save the fleeting chance that an election rather than a war could determine the governance of an independent Angola. The Ford Administration could have worked through the OAU and the U.N. or bilaterally with the Soviet Union to end the arms race. Instead, the U.S. accelerated that race by initiating the covert military and financial assistance to the FNIA.

### 3.6 THE ESCALATION OF THE U.S. COVERT AID TO THE "ANTI-COMMUNIST" MOVEMENTS.

The OAU prevailed upon the three leaders from Angola --- Agostinho Neto, Holden Roberto, and Jonas Savimbi --- to meet again under the chairmanship of President Kenyatta to find a solution to their conflict. Between June 15 and 21, 1975, they met in Nakuru, Kenya and negotiated a new agreement renouncing the use of force and delineating responsibilities for the remainder of the transition period.<sup>42</sup>

Before the Nakuru Summit began, the CIA went back to the 40 Committee for more funds and for authorization "to counter the growing Soviet shipment of military equipment to the MPLA." It also asked for authorization to initiate a new programme of support for UNITA.<sup>43</sup> In other words the U.S.

<sup>42</sup> Tony Hodges and Colin Legum, After Angola: the War Over Southern Africa, (London: Rex Collings, 1976), p. 69.

<sup>43</sup> Roger Morris, op. cit. p. 21.

via the CIA, was rejecting the possibility of a negotiated settlement to the civil war. As mentioned by Gerald Bender, Savimbi told the chief of the CIA's Angola task force that "the ultimate hope for Angola still lay at the conference table rather than the battlefield." But the CIA decided to take a hard line and did not plan on negotiations.<sup>44</sup> Kissinger favoured the CIA requests in general. However, he first wanted the State Department and the National Security Council to conduct thorough studies of the situation before the mid-July meeting of the 40 Committee.<sup>45</sup>

In response to Kissinger's request, a National Security Council task force on Angola was formed by the State Department's African Affairs Bureau, Bureau of Policy Planning and Bureau of Intelligence and Research.<sup>46</sup> The task force report, which was submitted to Kissinger in early July, 1975, strongly opposed the CIA plan. The report pointed out that the covert military actions recommended by the CIA might lead to increased intervention by the Soviet Union and other foreign powers. The level of violence in Angola would probably increase and, especially if there were widespread tribal or racial massacres, U.S. support for one or more of the rival movements would become a major political issue in the

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<sup>44</sup> Gerald Bender, "Angola: Left, Right and Wrong", Foreign Policy, No. 43, Summer 1981, pp. 56-57.

<sup>45</sup>

Tony Hodges and Coli Legum, op. cit. p. 72.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. p. 75.

U.S. and a source of embarrassment internationally. It would be impossible to ensure that the CIA operations could be kept secret, concluded the task force, and exposure would have a negative impact on U.S. relations with many countries as well as with large segments of the U.S. public and Congress. Moreover, the U.S. would be committing its prestige in an unpredictable situation over which it had limited influence. If the MPLA did come to power, the chances for the U.S. to establish working relations with it would have been greatly damaged.<sup>47</sup>

The chief spokesperson for the task force, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Nathaniel Davis, weighed in with his own memorandum against the CIA plan. He argued that:

To have even a slight chance of success, the U.S. would have to intervene in Angola with a much higher level of visibility and resources than that envisioned in the proposal for covert military operations.<sup>48</sup>

The paper itself admitted that the Soviets enjoyed a greater freedom of action in the covert supply of military equipment and could escalate the level of aid more readily than the U.S. Davis implored the 40 Committee to face the implications:

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<sup>47</sup> The report of the NSC task force on Angola is summarized by Nathaniel Davis, in "The Angola Decision for 1975: A Personal Memoir", Foreign Affairs, Vol. 57, No. 1, Fall 1978, pp. 109-124.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., pp. 113-114.

If we go in, we must go in quickly, massively and decisively enough to avoid the tempting, gradual, mutual escalation that characterized Vietnam during 1965-67 period. ...Unless we are prepared to go as far as necessary, in world balance of power terms the worst possible outcome would be a test of will and strength which we might lose. The CIA paper makes clear that in the best of circumstances we won't be able to win. If we are to have a test of strength with the Soviets, we should find a more advantageous place.<sup>49</sup>

Instead, Davis argued that the appropriate U.S. response should be to launch a diplomatic effort pointing to Soviet activities as a violation of the OAU's position against outside intervention in Angola.<sup>50</sup>

The Secretary of State rejected the task force's case against intervention, and on July 17, 1975, the 40 Committee unanimously approved the CIA action plan, and President Ford gave Kissinger and the CIA the go-ahead to implement it.<sup>51</sup> Reports indicate that \$14 million in cash was to go directly in two instalments to the FNIA and UNITA. Roughly \$15 million more in arms flowed through Zaire and Zambia to the U.S.-backed forces.<sup>52</sup> Davis resigned in August, soon after President Ford gave the go-ahead. "He believed the policy was utterly wrong," one official at the State Department re-

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> The complete account of the task force's position against military escalation in Angola and Kissinger's rejection can be found in Seymour M. Hersh, "Angola-Aid Issue Opening Rift in State Department", The New York Times, December 14, 1975.

<sup>52</sup> Roger Morris, op. cit. p. 22.

portedly stated, "and he was unable to carry out a policy he was inimically opposed to."<sup>53</sup> Within six months, virtually all of Davis' and the task force's prediction came true. The Soviet Union transported over 10,000 Cuban troops into Angola and flew in massive amounts of military equipment for use by the Cubans and the MPLA, while South Africa and Zaire intervened on the side of the FNLA and UNITA forces. In December 1975, the U.S. Senate voted to prohibit all further covert aid to the FNLA and UNITA. As a result the MPLA with the help of the Cubans pressed their advantage and defeated their opponents in the northern regions of Angola. South Africa withdrew its forces from the Southern regions, and by the end of January 1976, the MPLA was in total control of Angola.

### 3.7 DOMESTIC POLITICS INFLUENCING THE U.S. DECISION IN JULY 1975.

Internal politics had a significant effect on American verbal pronouncements and covert actions during the Angolan crisis. The April 1975 defeat in South Vietnam damaged American prestige abroad and President Ford moved quickly to mollify restive conservative forces in the Mayaguez affair in May.

"The congressional support for the Mayaguez incident was a surprise," said one official. "It showed the Administration that the antiwar alliance on the Hill could be turned."  
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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

Other officials recalled an almost euphoric mood in the White House and the State Department after the raids, a reaction fed by press accounts of the episode.<sup>54</sup> Before the Mayaguez episode, the ignominious end of the Vietnam war had raised questions about American power and resolve which troubled the Ford Administration.

To this set of factors was added the on-going contest between Kissinger and the then Defence Secretary, James Schlesinger. Early in June reports appeared which seemed to confirm the U.S. suspicion that Somalia had become another "Soviet satellite in Africa." Schlesinger showed aerial photographs of Soviet missile installations at Berbera to the Senate Armed Services Committee. He then proceeded to leak them to a mass circulation weekly --- just in case his point had been missed by the public.<sup>55</sup> In fact, the facilities had been there for several years but the Defence Secretary chose this particular moment --- during the SALT negotiations --- to express his astonishment and apprehension.

Schlesinger's point, of course, was that the Soviets were taking advantage of detente to expand their sphere of influence to the detriment of the U.S. Somalia was only the latest example. His charges that Kissinger was either naive about the Russians or so intent on saving detente that he was prepared to overlook almost any Soviet aggression struck

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid, pp. 21-22.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

a responsive chord in the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the right wing of the Republican party.<sup>56</sup> This line of criticism had the potential to reduce decision-making criteria to issues of personal strength. "There was plainly an incentive," as Roger Morris maintains, in the light of Schlesinger's attack, "for Kissinger to prove that he could stand up to the Russians."<sup>57</sup>

Seen in this context what Kissinger then did at the July meeting of the 40 Committee left little doubt that he pursued the U.S. policy in Angola presuming it would indeed be revealed --- and that the exposure would favourably resolve issues both of policy authority and his personal toughness toward Moscow.

The transfer of a nominally covert policy into the wider, less secure forum of the NSC study seemed an obvious bureaucratic sign to officials involved that Kissinger expected the policy to become public. Some sources now believe he commissioned the NSC review, hoping for a leak.<sup>58</sup>

This suggests that there was some sort of combativeness about Kissinger's approach to Angola and the prospect of Congressional controversy. Such bureaucratic conflicts came to the surface because President Ford had no personal polit-

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<sup>56</sup> Washington Post, September 25, 1975.

<sup>57</sup> Morris, op. cit. p. 22. Schlesinger was eventually fired six months later but in June it was not clear which of the two antagonists in the cabinet would prevail. Examples of Schlesinger's views of the significance of Soviet moves in Angola can be found in: James Schlesinger, "The Continuing Challenge to America," Reader's Digest, Vol. 108, April 1976. pp. 61-66.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. p. 22.



ical base in the country as a whole. Since he had no national power and since he was about to enter the election campaign in 1976, he could not exert sufficient control over strong cabinet figures like Kissinger and Schlessinger.

### 3.8 CONCLUSION.

Much of the impetus for the policy came from the CIA, another example of the agency's subordination of national interests. Angola appeared on the 40 Committee's agenda because of the agency's long-standing client relationship with Holden Roberto. Like so many CIA investments, this one was largely unexamined. It was enough that it existed as an "asset" to be used for American competition with the Russians. The pattern, according to George Shepherd, was a phenomenon all too familiar from Indochina.<sup>59</sup> The CIA intelligence report from Angola depicted Roberto's unorganized forces as bravely inspired by U.S. military and financial aid but sadly out-gunned by Soviet arms and rockets, and therefore in need of more U.S. help. But as George Shepherd and other observers emphasized, much of the CIA assessment came from the agency's close liason with the South Africa Bureau of Secret Service (BOSS), a source with a vested interest in a larger American involvement.<sup>60</sup> It is hard to imagine that the intervention would have taken place had the

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<sup>59</sup> George Shepherd, "Can U.S. Policy Change?" Africa Today, Vol. 25, No. 2, April-June 1978.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

CIA accurately described the weakness and incompetence of the FNLA. Still, the CIA's bias toward expanding its mission might have been checked by the State Department. But there, too, temperament and circumstances, such as the rivalry between Kissinger and Schlesinger, as well as the perception of Soviet expansionism in Africa, acted to push the policy along.

There might, of course, have been one last restraint on the urge for intervention --- the powerful National Security Council staff could have exposed the shallowness and deception in the CIA plan. But General Brent Scowcroft, Kissinger's deputy and later his successor as the National Security Advisor to the President, was reportedly a compliant onlooker as the 40 Committee made its decision.<sup>61</sup> The inability of the NSC to challenge the decision was an indicator of weakness in the President's knowledge of foreign policy. There is no evidence to suggest that President Ford raised any objection to the CIA plan. When the policy was being formulated, he also lacked the independent staff needed to examine the presidential interest in such decisions.<sup>62</sup>

The Ford Administration's decision to intervene in the Angolan crisis was partly due to a bureaucratic rivalry. And like Vietnam, the intervention in Angola was another foreign policy blunder.

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<sup>61</sup> Roger Morris, op. cit. p.23.

<sup>62</sup> George Shepherd, op. cit.

## Chapter IV

### U.S. REACTION TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN AND CUBAN LINKAGES IN THE ANGOLAN CIVIL WAR.

The Twentieth century has witnessed many changes --- changes which have also affected the structure of the international system. there has been a "Communications revolution" which has not only made the world a smaller place, but has also relatively diluted the rigidity of the boundaries of the modern "nation-state" or "state-nation".<sup>1</sup> The effect of such a Communication revolution on the sovereignty of the territorial "nation-state" has been discussed by John Herz.<sup>2</sup>

From the "balance of power" concept of the international system, there has been a move to a "bipolar" structure and then a "multipolar" structure. Also the world has witnessed a new phenomenon. If the post-1945 global system

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<sup>1</sup> Sheldon Gellar makes a strong case about the development of Nation-State and State-Nation. In rejecting the tribe-tonation approach, Gellar shows that where a "Nation" precedes the "State", we have a "Nation-State". On the other hand, when a "State" precedes the development of "Nation", it could be called a "State-Nation". Thus Nigeria may be regarded as a State-Nation" while Angola may be regarded as a "Nation-State". Refer to Sheldon Gellar, State-Building and Nation-Building in West Africa, (Bloomington, Indiana: International Center, Indiana University, 1972), Occasional Paper pp. 40-41.

<sup>2</sup> John Herz, "Rise and Demise of the Territorial State," World Politics, July 1957, p. 473.

witnessed alignments in the international system based on military capability, there has emerged a very important element --- economic capability of new states. How the economic capability could be used as an instrument of international politics was illustrated by the Arab oil embargo. Thus, it can be seen that military might alone is not enough of a criterion for international alignments.

For the new states, however there are many problems of political development within the new international context. The relative isolation in which the Western countries were able to resolve their problems of political development with little or no external interference is gone. The experiences in Zaire, Angola and Nigeria illustrate this point --- not to mention experiences in Southeast Asia. Furthermore, there has been a struggle among the world powers over spheres of influence. Such desires for spheres of influence take into consideration the political and economic capability of the new states. In a world in which the 1973 energy crisis almost crippled the Western economy, the presence of oil in a new State excited interests external to its borders. Often such interests form strong undercurrents of ostensible ideological conflict among both major and small powers.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Isawa Elaigwu, Journal of Asian and African Studies, Vol. 12, 1977, p. 216.

One other point is that new states or developing nations face certain challenges of political development --- state-building, nation-building, participation and distribution.<sup>4</sup> Whereas the old Western countries have had a chance of coping with these problems sequentially, the new states have to deal with them simultaneously. Very often, as in Angola, these states hardly had the opportunity to establish themselves before becoming arenas of international conflicts.

In most of the cases, such international conflicts in new states have their domestic linkages. Domestic tensions get aggravated because of subtle or covert external intervention. This chapter will deal with the linkages between domestic tensions (i.e. tensions among the Angolan rival factions) and their alignment with Cuba and South Africa; and the nature and impact of U.S. reaction and the differing pre-suppositions and claims put forward by the intervening parties in the conflict. One area of conflicting claims raises such questions as: was the Cuban massive intervention in Angola only a response to South Africa's military intervention as they claim; or when in fact, did South African

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<sup>4</sup> As quoted in Ibid., "State-building" refers to the ability of the central government of a state to penetrate and control subnational groups. "Nation-building", refers to the issue of creating unity among the various groups in a state. The challenge of "Distribution" deals with how to distribute allocatable resources relatively equitably among subnational groups. And the challenge of "Participation" deals with the extent to which the citizens of a state are allowed to feed an input into the policy and decision-making institutions of a state. Gabriel Almond and B. Powell, Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach, (Boston: Little, Brown, 1966)

troops first became actively engaged in Angola?

#### 4.1 SOUTH AFRICA - AMERICAN CONNECTION.

Few episodes in recent African international politics present so intriguing a subject for an investigator as the South African involvement in the Angolan civil war. Over the whole operation there hung at the time an official smoke screen, a deliberately created miasma, the product partly of a stringent censorship, partly of governmental denials --- to put it bluntly, simple lies. A western diplomat in Lusaka was quoted as saying:

I sometimes think that South Africa went into this war to assure an MFLA victory. They went in with a weak force at the wrong time, and they got out on the wrong foot. In between they lied and lied to a world that knew the truths

Again as the Guardian pointed out in its editorial, "the British newspaper reader still knows far more about the South African involvement in Angola than do the South African families whose men have been fighting there."<sup>6</sup> Of all the major outside assistance to the opposing factions in the Angolan conflict, South Africa's intervention was the most dramatic.

For South Africans the whole affair had a very special significance. They probably did not choose to go quite as far as Colin Legum is suggesting, that the intervention in

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<sup>5</sup> The Guardian (Manchester) January 28, 1976.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

Angola was "possibly the most traumatic event in South Africa's history since the Anglo-Boer war at the turn of the century". But clearly an episode in which as Legum pointed out "for the first time the South African army had been committed to fight in an African war," in which too, "for the first time in their modern history white South African soldiers ended up as prisoners of war in African hands," possesses a certain distinctiveness.<sup>7</sup> Although the brutal events in Soweto and Cape Town overshadowed the shocks of the Angolan Affair, at the time, between October 1975 and March 1976 the debate about the rights and wrongs of South African policy in Angola dominated political discussion in South Africa in a way that no other issue of foreign affairs has done at least in the course of the last decade.<sup>8</sup>

The South African intervention also produced varying response among African leaders. Progressive governments strongly denounced the involvement. Others took a more conservative stance and were less critical, stressing Communism and Soviet expansionist policy in Africa as the greater danger. "The reaction was thus caught up in the general milieu of ideological differences within Africa and globally."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Colin Legum and Tony Fodges, After Angola: The War Over Southern Africa (London Pergamon Press, 1976, p. 35)

<sup>8</sup> Ibid p. 39

<sup>9</sup> The Guardian op. cit.

There are several reasons for South Africa's interest in Angola. With its oil, diamonds, coffee plantations, its promise of mineral and agricultural resources yet to be developed, Angola is clearly one of the richest of South Africa's neighbours. As one South African industrialist said to a French journalist:

What does it matter to us if our African neighbours have collective farms or not ... so long as their cotton, sugar and fruits should reach our factories<sup>10</sup>

In the pattern of a Southern Africa co-prosperity zone, a friendly and prosperous Angola would clearly accord well with South Africa's interest. Also John Barratt, Director of the South African Institute of International Affairs, and former member of the South African Mission to the U.N., wrote that the reason for the involvement must be found in the context of the South African government's policy of detente in Africa.

The detente policy was conceived as a means of normalizing interstate relations and of working for stability in a region threatened by sudden and uncontrollable change. Change, it was recognized, would have to take place; but as far as possible, the issue threatening to lead to confrontation should be settled by negotiations. In this approach the Prime Minister Vorster appeared to have the general support of President Kaunda. The concrete results of this approach on the Rhodesian issue were not forthcoming as easily and quickly as was perhaps earlier expected ... Then a situation developed in Angola which was perceived in South Africa as a serious threat to detente--- namely the intervention, on behalf of the MPLA, of the Soviet Union and Cuba, powers which, it was felt, could only intend to destroy any possibility

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<sup>10</sup> Le Monde, August 18, 1975



of the peaceful resolution of differences in the area.<sup>11</sup>

So South Africa viewed the establishment of a Marxist-oriented government in Angola as a threat to the precarious detente that it had so laboriously established with a handful of African states, fearing particularly that such a government might pressure Zambia and Zaire into taking a more militant stance toward the minority regimes in Southern Africa.

But even more important rationale for the South African Government, as well as the U.S., is the potential strategic importance of Angola. South Africa and the U.S. shared a common interest, in that neither wanted to see an MPLA government, fearing that the result would be a socialist regime with close ties to the Soviet bloc. They believed that, if the MPLA came to power, the Soviet Union might gain air and naval bases on Angola's West African coast. That gain, in conjunction with the Russian airfields already established in Guinea, would ensure Soviet domination of the South Atlantic, including control of the oil shipping lanes around the Cape of Good Hope. Further, a Soviet-backed regime in Angola could manipulate that country's energy and mineral resources, to the detriment of Western interests.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> John Barratt, "Southern Africa: A South African View," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 54. Fall, 1976 p. 151

<sup>12</sup> Mohamed A. El-Khawas, *op. cit.* p. 36.

In addition to these shared concerns, South Africa wanted to protect its investment in the Calueque dam and the Ruacana hydroelectric plant (both located on the Angola-Namibia border) and to assure that the UNITA-FNLA faction would retain control over the Benguela railroad, thus easing the major economic crisis that afflicted both Zambia and Zaire. Also it wanted to avoid the presence of a Marxist and militantly hostile government in such close proximity to Namibia, believing that an MPLA-dominated government in Angola would supply weapons to the SWAPO, the leading liberation group in Namibia, and might allow Soviet arms shipments into Namibia. Pretoria's intervention in Angola was intended, in part to destroy SWAPO's base of operations in Angola.

Thus, South African-American intervention was based on the need they felt for a pro-western regime in Luanda as a way to halt possible communist expansion in the Southern African region. Their involvement drew on their long-term opposition to the spread of communism in Africa. Both Pretoria and Washington were determined to prevent the Soviet-backed MPLA from becoming the sole power in Angola and instead wanted to have a regime in Luanda that could be allied to "Western interests".

At this point it is necessary to draw a number of threads together in order to see more clearly the position of South Africans with regard to Angola. So far as their military dispositions were concerned, it would seem that its involvement in Angola, according to Tony Hedges, took three forms:

First, from at least as early as July, South African troops were engaging in "hot pursuit" missions across the Angolan border from Namibia to strike at bases and supporters of the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO).<sup>13</sup>

The South African troops were able to carry out these raids without any response from the Portuguese because of the political confusion that existed in Angola. For example, the South African Defence Ministry, announced on October 17, 1975 that its forces had hit two SWAPO bases and killed seven guerrillas in a "hot pursuit" mission.

According to Tony Hodges' estimation:

The second aspect of South African intervention was the military occupation of a series of installations along the Cunene River, including the pumping station at Calueque and the dam at the Ruacana Falls ... On August 12, South Africa informed Lisbon that it had taken over the Calueque pumping station and ten days later South African troops seized the city of Pereira de Eca, twenty-five miles north of the border.<sup>14</sup>

The Portuguese authorities in Angola reacted to the intervention by warning that "grave incidents have occurred in the area which would have international implications".

The final form of South African intervention in the Angolan civil war occurred when

A motorised column sped over 400 miles into Angola in the space of two weeks before being halted. By October 26, the column had forced the MPLA out of Sa da Bandeira, and in the first week of November, the Column drove the MPLA out of Benguela and Lobito. On November 12, the South Africans captured Novo Redondo. They were eventually halted

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<sup>13</sup> Tony Hodges, "The Struggle for Angola", The Round Table, Volume 66, No. 261, April 1976. p. 181.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid p. 181.

on the River Queve, South of Porto Amboim.<sup>15</sup>

Undoubtedly this dramatic South African intervention shifted the military balance in the civil war in favour of the FNLA-UNITA factions, a major setback for the MPLA, which was only reversed after the arrival of massive Soviet arms shipments accompanied by thousands of Cuban troops.

Significantly, the July 1975 decision by the National Security Council's "Forty Committee" to expand CIA involvement coincided with the South African plan to intervene militarily in Angola. It seems that the primary South African-American objectives were the same: to sustain the role of the FNLA and UNITA in the transitional government, and, thereby, to counterbalance the growing influence of the MPLA. Although Dr. Kissinger repeatedly denied that there was any collusion between Washington and Pretoria, South African officials insisted that their country's intervention in Angola was based on "an understanding with American officials that the U.S. would rush sufficient supplies to counterbalance the weapons superiority of the MPLA/Cuban forces."<sup>16</sup> Further, the London Economist reported that Secretary of State Kissinger secretly asked Israel to send troops to fight alongside the South African forces in Angola:

...Despite the friction between Israel and America, Mr. Kissinger in early 1975 secretly asked the Israeli Government to send troops to Angola in

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid. pp. 181-182.

<sup>16</sup> John Marcum, "Lessons in Angola" Foreign Affairs, Volume 54, No. 3 April 1976, p. 422.

order to co-operate with the South African army in fighting the Cuban - backed Popular movement.<sup>17</sup>

Although the Israelis were reluctant to commit troops to the Southern African arena, according to the report in the Economist, they eventually sent South Africa some military instructors specialising in anti-guerrilla warfare plus equipment designed for the same purpose.<sup>18</sup>

The South African strategy was designed to force the MPLA to fight on two fronts simultaneously in order to stop the FNLA-UNTA coordinated drive from both the north and south. In preparation for a final showdown with the MPLA, according to El-Khawas, it was decided that the CIA would concentrate on solidifying the FNLA's position in the Northern Angola and that the U.S. aid would be channelled through Zaire, which also wanted to stop Russian domination in Angola.<sup>19</sup> Zaire also housed a little-known U.S. air base, which was used to airlift supplies and materials into Angola, and U.S. and British mercenaries were transferred through Zaire, with the CIA setting up training bases for FNLA forces on the Angolan border.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> The Economist November 5, 1977, p. 90.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. p. 90.

<sup>19</sup> El-Khawas, op. cit. p.37.

<sup>20</sup> "Mercenaries and Africa," Habari, Washington D.C., February 4, 1976.

For its part, South Africa would in turn buttress UNITA forces in the Southern Angola. Jonas Savimbi, UNITA's leader, aware that his group was militarily the weakest of the three Angolan parties, was willing to commit himself openly to a policy of detente and cooperation with South Africa. In return, Pretoria sent armed forces into Southern Angola in August 1975 to assist UNITA in its bid to stop the MPLA from gaining control in Luanda.<sup>21</sup>

Significantly, the U.S. raised no objection to foreign interference in Angola as long as the Western-backed FNLA-UNITA coalition, with the support of foreign forces, was forcing the MPLA to relinquish control over vast areas in the central and southern regions of Angola. On November 28, 1975, at a time when more than 2,000 South African troops were fighting side by side with UNITA, Dr. Kissinger said that, "to the best of my knowledge, the South Africans are not engaged officially in Angola."<sup>22</sup> Indeed, not until South African Prisoners of War were shown on television did American officials break their silence about South Africa's military intervention in Angola.

The "unholy" alliance between UNITA and Pretoria disenfranchised that Angolan faction in the eyes of a considerable number of countries throughout the world, and led numerous governments to recognise the MPLA as the only

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> M. El-Khawas, "Power Struggle in Angola," Journal of Southern African Affairs, Vol. 1, October 1976, p. 58.

politically acceptable faction in the civil war. Initially, OAU's response to foreign involvement was to avoid further entanglement in the Angolan civil war. The Organization's chairman, President Amin of Uganda, appealed to member states not to give recognition to either of the rival governments in Angola. But revelation of the South African involvement in the civil war proved to be the turning point of African attitudes toward the Angolan crisis. Both conservative and progressive African governments found the South African intervention intolerable; it pushed most of the African countries who were seeking for a unified government of the three liberation movements to recognise the MPLA government in Luanda. The decision to disavow the anti-MPLA rival government for accepting South Africa's help led more and more African nations to recognise the MPLA government as the sole legitimate government in Angola.

The rival government of Roberto and Savimbi was not officially recognised by any African country, but was quietly supported by many conservative and moderate African governments, such as Ivory Coast, Gabon and Senegal because of their general dislike of Communism and distrust of Soviet moves in Africa.<sup>23</sup> The shift in the African opinion due to the South African intervention was reflected by President Nyerere of Tanzania, when he said that:

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<sup>23</sup> Henry Hayward in Christian Science Monitor, December 5, 1975.

Independent Angola has been invaded by South Africa. And its government is also now being attacked with American money, American arms, and American and other Western mercenaries...The MPLA government is fighting South African aggression. It therefore needs military support from its friends, to consolidate the formal independence.<sup>24</sup>

But Soviet and Cuban intervention sparked outraged protests from U.S. officials. It is ironic that, even as Dr. Kissinger was condemning "extra-continental" interference in the Angolan affairs, William Colby, the CIA Director, was telling the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that "CIA has been covertly supplying two of the contending Angolan parties with rifles, machine guns, vehicles ammunitions and logistic support."<sup>25</sup>

There is some evidence to suggest that the South African involvement in Angola was undertaken with U.S. approval and with the backing of Zambia and Zaire. According to Tony Hodges, Radio RSA in Zaire reported on January 19, 1976 that:

South Africa is involved in Southern Angola at the specific request of anti-Communist states. And these states are not only America and the countries of Western Europe. Top Western diplomatic sources are quoted as saying that the Republic originally entered Angola at the specific request of a leader of a black state, that on more than one occasion in the past month South Africa's informal allies in Black Africa pleaded with South Africa to help stop the Communist onslaught.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Washington Post, January 12, 1976.

<sup>25</sup> El-Khawas, op. cit. p. 57

<sup>26</sup> Tony Hodges, Op. Cit. p. 183



However, there were clearly a remarkably wide range of parties urging the South Africans to intervene. Among them was a group with most to gain from a South African intervention. This group was made up of Portuguese emigres, army officers, businessmen, farmers, and others, whose livelihood had been lost with the collapse of the Portuguese power. Also there was evidence to suggest that the South Africans were in direct contact with both Savimbi and Roberto.

Much more detailed are Savimbi's accounts of his contacts with the South Africans. This was given to Bill Coughlin, a freelance journalist, and published in the Manchester Guardian:

Dr. Savimbi realised towards the end of September that UNITA needed help against the Cubans. The South African forces at that stage were concentrated around the Cunene river project, just inside Angola.

Dr. Savimbi flew to Zaire to ask President Mobutu for help and Mobutu made eleven manned armoured cars available to him in mid-October. Mobutu told him that an "American friend" wanted to meet him. He met the American in Mobutu's house. The American told him that no American troops would be sent to Angola but help would be given through Zaire.

Thereafter, light American equipments began to arrive including mortars, anti-tank guns and rifles. But this was not enough and Savimbi then asked President Mobutu, President Kaunda of Zambia, and President Houphouet-Boigny of the Ivory Coast to ask for secret help from South Africa.

This was done and shortly afterwards a South African armoured column of 1200 to 1500 men moved up the West Coast.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> The Guardian (Manchester), February 16, 1976.

Some aspects of Savimbi's account received confirmation from other sources. According to the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), the Zaire radio reported Savimbi's visit to Kinshasa on September 1975 and he was quoted as saying that "within thirty days very great changes would take place in Angola as far as the military situation is concerned."<sup>28</sup> In November 1975, Tony Hodges visited an area under the control of UNITA, and met there "a highly trained United States personnel working with UNITA at Silva Porto. Some of these Americans arrived in Angola at least as early as September."<sup>29</sup>

In regard to the contacts between Zambia, Zaire and the Ivory Coast and South Africa, Savimbi's account was confirmed by the South Africans, when Mr. Vorster addressing Parliament on January 30, 1976, said that there had been consultation with other countries on South Africa's involvement in Angola, but added that it was up to the countries involved to identify themselves. A week later, the Defence Minister, Mr. Botha, told Parliament that "South Africa's action had the blessing of several African countries as well as at least one "free world power." The defence Minister when pressed for more information refused to say whether

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<sup>28</sup> BBC (London), Summary of World Broadcasts (SWB): Part IV, September 20, 1975. p. 15.

<sup>29</sup> Tony Hodges, op. cit. p.185. Hodges quotes David Amble of the Christian Science Monitor as stating that "300 American mercenaries had been sent to Angola in the previous three months." January 2, 1976.

this power was the United States but pointedly noted: "I would be the last man to destroy our diplomatic relations with the United States."<sup>30</sup>

It was not surprising to see Zambia and Zaire welcoming the South African intervention in Angola. Both countries were concerned with the prospects of an MPLA victory. Mobutu had already committed a substantial number of Zairean troops to assist the FNLA offensive from the north, and Kaunda was known to have been friendly with Savimbi and was deeply concerned with the vital Benguela railway linking Zambia with the Angolan Atlantic ports being controlled by an unfriendly government in Luanda.

As to the identity of the "free world power," some high ranking members of the South African Government hinted on so many occasions that this was the United States. In the defence of the Southern Atlantic the two countries' strategic interests overlapped, and there was ample evidence of consultation by the two Governments at a higher level. The Washington correspondent of the Guardian, Simon Winchester, reported that:

before the Angolan civil war broke out, American military collaboration with South Africa had been increasing. The CIA has arrangements with the South African Secret Services whereby they cooperate closely on a basis similar to American intelligence with NATO governments.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid p. 183

<sup>31</sup> The Guardian (Manchester), December 19, 1975.

Although the White House publicly denied any contact between U.S. officials and Pretoria concerning South Africa's intervention, the collaboration between the two governments in the Angolan civil war, was so apparent that the U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., Daniel Moynahan felt that he had to minimise it. He stated on December 14, 1975, that there was only a "convergence in policy" between the two governments; while still denying any coordination of the U.S. and South African operations, he added, "we are doing the same thing, sort of."<sup>32</sup>

While Pretoria's role in Angola was undoubtedly motivated, to a large extent, by its own particular interests, it was in full accord with the interests of the NATO powers, Washington in particular--- and carried out with active American collaboration. The military equipments which Pretoria obtained from its allies in NATO played a major part in its operations in Angola. An editorial in Le Monde pointed out that:

France, notably, cannot ignore the fact that the helicopters, mortars, machine guns and other weapons used in the conflict by South Africa were furnished by Paris or manufactured under French license<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Statement of December 14, 1975, quoted in Ernest Harsch and Tony Thomas, Angola: The Hidden History of Washington's War. (New York, Pathfinder Press, 1976) p.109. The Washington correspondent of the South African Sunday Times, reported on January 6, 1977 that at the time of the South African intervention, Kissinger took "great pains not to be seen with South Africans" but surreptitious contact between the governments was maintained through the CIA.

In an interview with the New York Times' Cape Town correspondent, Henry Kamm, a high South African official indicated that Pretoria had actually received encouragement from Washington to go into Angola. The intervention, Kamm reported, was initiated "on the understanding that the United States would rush sufficient supplies to make it possible to counter the Soviet-supported movement." That understanding, the official added, had been based on contacts with American officials. "We had been in touch," he said. "We felt that if we could give them a lapse of time they could find ways and means." Earlier in the conversation the South African official remarked, "We accepted the utterances of Kissinger and others. We felt surely he has the necessary pull to come forward with the goods."<sup>34</sup>

Of all the external powers supporting the anti-MPLA factions the U.S. had clearly been the most closely involved with South Africa. But unfortunately for the South Africans, American involvement in Angola developed into a major issue of American domestic politics. Distrust of the CIA and a passionate refusal to become involved in another Vietnam-

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<sup>33</sup> Le Monde. December 19, 1975. The January 8, 1976, issue of the Long Island, New York, paper Newsday reported that the South Africans used four C-141s, bought from the United States during the previous two years, to ferry troops and equipments to at least three sites within Angola. Sean Gdervasi said at his December 19, 1975, Press Conference that according to "high sources in the Defense Department" U.S. cargo planes were air-dropping supplies to South African columns operating in Angola. Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> The New York Times, February 7, 1976.

type situation had a profound influence on many Americans thinking about Angola. But most important of all, especially among those familiar with Africa, there was an awareness, as Jonathan Steele, the Washington correspondent of the Manchester Guardian reported of "the damage which the link with South Africa is seen to be having on Black Africa." Jonathan Steele quoted a remark by Senator Clark, who said that "for us to stay with South Africa will be a disaster." According to Steele, Senator Clark's view "is at least as widely held on Capitol Hill as the more commonly publicized theme that the secret American commitment in Angola could become another Vietnam."<sup>35</sup> Given this mood, it was hardly surprising that on December 19, 1976, the Senate should have voted so decisively by 72 to 26 to cut off any American aid to the FNLA and UNITA.

#### 4.2 SOUTH AFRICAN WITHDRAWAL

Frustrated in his attempts to persuade the U.S. to provide the aid needed if the South African-backed Angolan factions were to match the military strength of the MPLA and its backers, Mr. Vorster was left with two options: either South Africa must continue alone (with perhaps a token support from some Western countries), or it must end its Angolan involvement.

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<sup>35</sup> The Guardian, (Manchester), January 9, 1976.

The Vorster government not entirely unmindful of reactions at home, is reported to have reviewed the Angolan situation in mid-December, 1975. South Africans were "stunned," according to Stanley Uys, to learn of the capture of four of their soldiers in Angola. And with the mounting disquiet over the steady trickle of news of casualties in the "operational area," Uys added, "It is widely felt that South Africa had miscalculated the support it would receive in Angola from Western and African countries."<sup>36</sup> This disquiet was shared by the cross-section of the South African society and not confined only to opposition politicians or English-language newspapers. On December 15, 1975, the French newspaper Le Monde quoted a South African diplomatic source as saying that, South Africa had decided to withdraw from the Angolan conflict. This was confirmed by the account which Savimbi gave to Bill Coughlin.

In December South Africa told Savimbi that it was withdrawing its troops. It was said then that South Africa had not received the support it had expected from the United States and that South Africa could not fight alone against the Russians and the Cubans. No further reinforcements could be sent without asking the South African Parliament openly for them.<sup>37</sup>

At this point, according to Coughlin, Savimbi approached President Kaunda and told him that he wanted to speak to the South African Prime Minister himself. The meeting between Savimbi and Vorster took place on December 20, 1975. In re-

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid, December 18, 1975.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid February 16, 1976.

turn for South African help, according to American intelligence sources, Savimbi provided information on the location of SWAPO guerrilla bases. His bargaining with South Africa transformed Namibian nationalists of SWAPO from adversaries of the MPLA to adversaries of UNITA.<sup>38</sup> Stanley Uys reported that after the meeting:

...the government now regarded the military situation in Angola as 'hopeful' and was confident that the MPLA was not winning the war. Withdrawal was now out of the question because too many vital issues --- the defence of South West Africa, the security of Zambia and Zaire, the Cunene River scheme --- were at stake. At least a friendly or neutral Southern Angola is absolutely vital in South Africa's interest.<sup>39</sup>

According to Stanley Uys, South Africa would not yield to pressure to withdraw from Angola because it believed that too many vital interests were at stake.

During the Christmas holiday period Prime Minister Verster held a series of consultations with senior ministers, army officers and officials from Bureau of State Security (BOSS). And as the Financial Times reported:

...a clear split within the military and political hierarchy has occurred --- with the 'hawks' favouring continued support for the FNLA and UNITA, and a growing number of 'doves' arguing that South Africa should return to its often-stated policy dictum of non-intervention in the affairs of its neighbours.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Johannesburg Star, Weekly edition, March 13, 1976.

<sup>39</sup> The Observer (London), December 21, 1975.

<sup>40</sup> The Financial Times (London), December 29, 1975.



The debate between the 'doves' and the 'hawks' was vigorously conducted, and the Guardian correspondent in Lusaka mentioned in his despatch that:

BOSS (the Bureau of State Security) is reliably said to have argued for withdrawal on the grounds that South Africa cannot face what it sees as the military might of the Marxist World fighting on behalf of the MPLA. The South African army, many of whose soldiers have been killed or wounded in Angola, naturally wishes to redeem these losses. Pretoria's military commanders also seem to think that a Popular Movement victory in Angola would precipitate a Cuban-backed guerrilla invasion of Namibia.<sup>41</sup>

Prime Minister Vorster still undecided, continued to hope "for a greater and more open military commitment to the anti-Marxist forces from American and other Western powers." But when such an assurance was not forthcoming, as a result of the failure of the Ford Administration to persuade Congress to grant roughly \$60 million to another intervening power, Zaire, South Africa was not prepared "to fight on behalf of the free world" by itself. Vorster therefore decided to pull the South African forces back from the Angolan frontlines into Southern Angola.<sup>42</sup>

Within a few weeks of the South African withdrawal, all the main towns of central and southern Angola were captured by the advancing MPLA and Cuban forces. The retreat of South Africa's troops to the border area led MPLA and its allies to halt the march of their forces on South African positions

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<sup>41</sup> The Guardian (Manchester), January 22, 1976.

<sup>42</sup> Washington Post, April 26, 1976.

and to give the green light for quiet diplomacy to mediate the conflict, and possibly, to avert what for a time seemed as if there might still be a violent confrontation between Cuban and South African forces in Southern Angola. In fact both sides behaved with considerable circumspection. In early March 1976, with Britain, Nigeria and Soviet Union acting as intermediaries, the South African government received from Luanda assurances that no attempt would be made to interfere with the work being done at Ruacana power station; and that the MPLA government would respect the Namibian border. Thus Pretoria assured of the safety of Namibia and some degree of access to Angola's energy resources, the South Africans were finally able to withdraw their troops from Southern Angola and into Namibia. That, on March 27 1976, ended South Africa's covert military involvement in the Angolan civil war.<sup>43</sup>

Was the South African Angolan campaign indeed the "disastrous blunder," the "crazy adventure" that many opponents of the Nationalist government alleged it to have been?<sup>44</sup> Cer-

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<sup>43</sup> John Marcum, op. cit. p. 277.

<sup>44</sup> Among the adverse comments on the Angolan involvement may be quoted the remark of Professor J. Van der Vyfer, of the Law Faculty at University of Potchefstroom, who said that "South Africa's escapade in Angola would probably prove to be the blunder of the century." (Sunday Times, London, February 1, 1976). A year later, an editorial in the Cape Times of February 7, 1977 and quoted in the Guardian of February 9, 1977, referred to the Angolan involvement as "an act of folly" and as "a political and diplomatic debacle, a blunder for which the country had already paid dearly." On the other hand, a public opinion poll conducted by Market Research Africa in May 1976 showed that

tainly the intervention had been a failure. South African forces may not have suffered a decisive defeat at the hands of the Cubans; they indeed, as Defence Minister P.W. Botha implied in his speech to Parliament on January 26, won most of their engagements. But clearly, if only through strength of numbers and equipment the Cubans gained the upper hand. The implication of such a military setback was profound. As the Cape Town correspondent for Le Monde wrote, "for the first time the economic-military basis of apartheid no longer seems invulnerable."<sup>45</sup> By intervening, the South Africans produced a situation in which the Cubans and the Russians were forced to build up a really massive presence. Nor did the South Africans succeed in scotching the threat by SWAPO. Although the Namibian liberation movements had obviously suffered grievously from South African attacks, it was now in a position to receive a much greater volume of support than ever before.

The South African failure in Angola was not catastrophic. Links with Zambia and Zaire were not broken, and some fragments of detente were preserved. In the last resort, South

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a majority of white South Africans supported the government's Angolan policy. Asked whether they thought the government was right or wrong to have sent troops to Angola, 60% said 'right,' 18% said 'wrong' and 18% 'no opinion.' Among Afrikaners the break-down was 70%, 14%, and 16%. And English-speakers, 55%, 22% and 23%. Forty-six per cent of both communities felt that the government did not keep the country properly informed. (The Argus, May 12, 1976.)

<sup>45</sup> Le Monde, February 5, 1976.

Africa was not forced to surrender any vital interests. Yet the whole affair was for many white South Africans a severe psychological shock. However, it gave hope and encouragement to the Nationalist government's most formidable opponents --- the young men and women of the black townships; "our restless youth," as one of the homeland leaders declared, "is espousing the cause of the MPLA."<sup>46</sup> Between Angola and Soweto there was clearly a direct connection. Certainly it would have paid the South Africans not to have become involved in the Angolan conflict.

#### 4.3 THE CUBAN DIMENSION.

The Cuban involvement in the Angolan civil war, which turned the tide of the conflict, is an extraordinary event in post-war African political history. Some observers believe it will turn out to be an isolated episode, while others believe it will begin a new phase in the cold war. Seldom has a military operation involving a limited number

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<sup>46</sup> The Guardian (Manchester) January 24, 1976. In December 1975, the Fourth Annual Congress of the Black Peoples Convention announced its support for the MPLA as the legitimate government of Angola. (The Times December 23, 1975). Black reactions were described in a series of reports in the South African Sunday Times of February 22, 1976. Howard Lawrence reporting the reactions among the "coloured" community in Cape Town, noted that "in the townships, at the lowest socio-economic level, gang names are changing from the "Panorama Kids" and "Naughty Boys" to "Cuban Kids" and "MPLA Terrors." Lawrence also noted also that in "Coloured" bars with television, "when South African soldiers appear on the screen, the customers hiss" but "when scenes are shown of MPLA or Cuban soldiers, there are shouts of exultation."

of regular troops raised so many questions in international politics about motives, intentions and potential consequences.

The Cuban operation during the Angolan war must be viewed in phases, rather than as part of some grand plot formulated at the outset.<sup>47</sup> At least four phases can be discerned and discussed in terms of the number of Cuban soldiers in Angola, the apparent goals of the Castro regime, military exigencies resulting from the intervention of external forces against the MPLA, and the impact of Cuban assistance on the outcome of the conflict.

According to U.S. intelligence sources no more than 100 Cuban advisors were in Angola before the beginning of the summer of 1975 when approximately 200 more advisors arrived.

... The big buildup began after Armando Acosta, a member of the Cuban Communist Central Committee, met MPLA leader Agostinho Neto in Mozambique last June. During the summer, about 200 more Cubans

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<sup>47</sup> Edward Gonzalez in the Problems of Communism, (Vol. 25, January-February 1976, pp. 1-19) gives a valuable analyses of the impact of Cuban domestic factors on the Angolan operation. While I disagree with Gonzalez on a variety of details, I am in complete agreement with his conclusion that "actual policy behind Cuba's Angolan involvement appears to have been largely incremental and reactive". The extensive account, in the "Washington Post" (January 10, 1977), of the Cuban intervention in Angola by the Colombian, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, was more forthright on the question of Cuban independence from Soviet control: "Far from what has so often been said it was an independent and sovereign act of Cuba. Only after the decision was made, and not before, was the Soviet Union informed." There is some truth in this assertion. That Castro could have made his offer of aid prior to a request from either MEIA or the Soviets is entirely in character with his temperament and his aspirations for leadership of the Third World.

trickled into Luanã.<sup>48</sup>

This intelligence leak is confirmed by Cuba's deputy Prime Minister Rafael Rodriguez, who said in his interview with Hugh O'Shaughnessy of the Observer (London) that:

... in the spring and summer of 1975, ...Cuba sent 230 military advisers to Angola at the request of the MPLA leader, Dr. Antonio Agostinho Neto. They set up four training centers for Angolan fighters.<sup>49</sup>

Their presence was neither initiated nor funded by the Soviet Union, rather it was part of Cuba's general military assistance programme to a number of Third World countries and liberation movements. As Joseph Mastrangelo said in his Washington Post article:

The Cuban intervention surprising as it was to most of the world, arose from a long background of involvement with Africa. As Castro has noted, African blood runs abundantly through the veins of many Cubans. Cuba has provided advisers and small-scale assistance for more than a decade to a variety of African countries and independent movements.<sup>50</sup>

In his interview with Italian journalist Della Sera in January 1976, Castro said that "Cuba had been aiding the Angolan liberation movement for ten years." There were indications that this aid included instructors in Communist organization and tactics and training of a few Angola leaders in Cuba. Thus, the Cuban assistance during this period can be charac-

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<sup>48</sup> For estimates of the timing and numbers of Cubans, in Angola based on leaks from U.S. intelligence sources, see Newsweek, December 29, 1975.

<sup>49</sup> The Observer (London), February 26, 1978.

<sup>50</sup> The Washington Post op. cit.

terized as an attempt to help train and organize the green MPLA army which American sources believed had almost no officers over the age of thirty.

It was natural for the MPLA to turn to Cuba for military instructors to help rebuild its military after the 1974 leadership crisis and defection of Chipenda's wing. When by March 1975 FNIA-MPLA fighting and feverish efforts by all three parties to build up separate armies portended a military race to power, the MPLA sought Cuban counterparts to the Chinese who were training FNIA forces. By late spring 1975, some 250 Cuban military advisers had reportedly set up and staffed four MPLA training camps. As fighting escalated in June and July the MPLA appealed for increased help.<sup>51</sup> In August, after clearing with pro-MPLA leadership within the Portuguese government and ascertaining that the Soviets would not themselves send troops for fear of triggering an American response, the MPLA reportedly welcomed another 200 Cuban infantry instructors in Luanda.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> See the analysis by Don Oberdofer, Washington Post, February 18, 1976.

<sup>52</sup> Robert Moss gives the following details. On July 16, in Havana, Premier Castro asked visiting AFM leader Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho to arrange for Portuguese permission for Cuban military to enter Angola. In August, the MPLA sent Iko Carreira to Moscow to ask for help, only to have the Soviets suggest that he tries the Cubans. Shortly thereafter Commander Raul Diaz Arguelles (later killed in action) led a Cuban delegation to Luanda where he arranged for the increase in Cuban assistance. Sunday Telegraph, January 30, 1977. Much of this is confirmed by Cuban sources. "Washington Post", January 12, 1977.

On September 7, 1975 troops embark from Havana, arriving in Angola at the end of September, bringing the total number of Cubans in Angola to approximately 1000.<sup>53</sup> If this second phase of Cuban involvement, spanning most of October, is viewed in isolation or only in relation to the fact that it preceded the South African and Zairean invasion by a few weeks---as the State Department and a number of American and British journalists have portrayed it --- then it could be considered as the turning point in the Angolan crisis, when Cuba decided to provide the assistance necessary for an MPLA victory. For instance Colin Legum dates the Russian and Cuban decisions to win in Angola much earlier, with which I disagree. He argues, for example that:

It is not yet possible to fix with certainty the exact date when Moscow first began to arrange with Fidel Castro to bring a large number of Cubans --- -By July, however, the Russians were almost certainly going for broke.

By September, two months before the date set for independence on November 11, the Russian and Cuban military aid was of a size that promised military supremacy to the MPLA. The scale of the Soviet/Cuban intervention increased sharply in early October, three weeks before the South African forces entered Angola in any size --- The Russian and Cuban contention that their military intervention was the result of the South African invasion is clearly an ex post facto rationalization.<sup>54</sup>

But the Cuban involvement did not occur in isolation.

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<sup>53</sup> Colin Legum, "The Soviet Union, China and the West in Southern Africa", Foreign Affairs, Volume 54, July 1976. pp. 750-751.

<sup>54</sup> The Observer op. cit.



The decision to increase the number of Cubans in Angola came in response to a request by the MPLA,<sup>55</sup> which had become gravely concerned by a number of ominous developments in August. The first invasion by South Africa in August constituted a major escalation of the war; in addition, no one in Angola (including the Portuguese) knew if it was a single action or part of a larger plan to push further into MPLA - controlled territory. "Allegations were made as early as August 1975 that South African troops had advanced further into Angola than the immediate defence of the Cunene River Scheme required."<sup>56</sup> Before the end of August, the MPLA was convinced that a major South African invasion was imminent. The party was also threatened in the north when the FNLA and Zairean troops, along with former Portuguese commandos, moved to within thirty-five miles of the capital only days after the South African thrust into the South. The massing of Zairean troops on the borders of Cabinda further threatened the MPLA's hold over the oil-rich enclave. Moreover, the seizure of power by the Portuguese in mid-August meant that the MPLA was forced to surrender some of its control in the capital to a Portuguese regime which the party considered to be hostile. The fall of the Goncalves' government in Lisbon at this time, and to replaced by a pro-American junta, confirmed the MPLA's worst fears about

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<sup>55</sup> Africa Research Bulletin Vol 8, September 1975. p. 3735A.

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The Washington Post, February 18, 1976.

the Portuguese. Finally, the millions of dollars worth of American weapons to the FNLA and (for the first time) to the UNITA, approved by the "Forty Committee" in July, began to arrive in late August and early September, signaling to the MPLA a major American escalation whose magnitude was as yet unknown.

In light of these developments it is highly unlikely that, when the Cuban Government agreed to the MPLA request to increase its presence in Angola, either the MPLA, Cuba or the Soviet Union believed that approximately one thousand Cuban troops could provide the MPLA with a decisive edge for winning the war outright. If this had been the intention, surely the new arrivals would have been sent immediately on offensive missions instead of remaining in Cabinda. In fact, according to U.S. intelligence sources, Cubans were not sent to the front until late October, after the South African invasion.<sup>57</sup> Thus the magnitude of the Cubans' second phase was not sufficient to measurably increase the MPLA's offensive power. At best, the Cubans helped to consolidate control over those parts of the country where the MPLA had already been dominant.

The third-phase --- which lasted only a few weeks --- was initiated by the October invasion by South African troops and a large assortment of mercenaries. According to an article written by a Colombian writer Garcia Marquez, who has a

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close personal contacts with the Cuban Government and with Fidel Castro:

...the decision to send troops to Angola was taken on November 1975 at a meeting of the Cuban Communist Party. South African troops had crossed into Angola in October and it was becoming clear that Dr. Neto's Popular Movement could not withstand South African pressure on top of that of its rival nationalist movements. The Cuban plan was given the name of Operation Carlota, after a slave woman who led a black revolt in Cuba in 1843. On 7 November, the first Cuban contingent of 650 men flew to Angola by way of Barbados, Guinea-Bissau and Congo with orders to hold out until the arrival of reinforcement by sea.<sup>58</sup>

This escalation, along with the FNLA/Zairean thrust in the north, not only threatened the MPLA but the Cubans as well. Both were now clearly on the defensive; few observers familiar with the situation in Angola at the time were prepared to wager against the probability that the anti-MPLA forces would reach the capital.<sup>59</sup> It would have been difficult to dispute Fidel Castro's depiction of the situation in early November when the leadership of Cuban Communist Party decided to grant the MPLA's request for a substantial increase in troops and weapons:

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<sup>58</sup> The Times, (London), January 11, 1977. For a different version and chronological account see Colin Legum "Foreign Intervention in Angola," Africa: Contemporary Record, 1975-76 p. A3ff.

<sup>59</sup> In early May 1976 it was revealed in the South African Parliament that the Defence Minister Botha had boasted to an MP that South African troops could have easily gone to Luanda and were, in fact, poised to take the capital when they pulled back because "the U.S. had pleaded with South Africa not to send its forces to Luanda." Quoted in the Daily Telegraph (London), May 7, 1976. American officials later dismissed this as "phony."

When the first Cuban troop unit arrived in Angola on November 7th the foreign interventionists were 25 kilometers from Luanda in the north, their 140 millimeter artillery was bombing the suburbs of the capital and the South African fascist had already penetrated more than 700 kilometers into the south from the Namibian border, while Cabinda was heroically defended by MPLA and a handful of Cuban instructors.<sup>60</sup>

The only way to interpret the Cuban dispatch of an additional two to three thousand troops by independence day (November 11) as offensive operation would be to ignore the role of the South African, Zairean, and mercenary forces. In fact, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger appears to have viewed the situation in precisely those terms with respect to those same events prior to independence, Kissinger argued in a testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that:

The UNITA forces launched a successful counter offensive which swept the MPLA out of the Southern and most of the central part of Angola. In the North the FNLA also made significant advances. By independent day -- November 11 -- the MPLA controlled only the former colonial capital of Luanda and a narrow belt across Northcentral.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Fidel Castro, "Angola African Giron," speech commemorating the 15th anniversary of the Cuban victory at El Yagiron (Bay of Pigs), Havana, April 19, 1976. The complete speech can be found in Granma (Havana) May 2, 1976, (Weekly Review edition).

<sup>61</sup> 'Angola.' Testimony by Kissinger to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's Subcommittee on African Affairs, January 29, 1976. p.4 The same perspective is apparent in his major policy statement on Angola delivered in San Francisco, February 3, 1976 and quoted in New York Times, February 4, 1976.

From this perspective the Secretary of State could conclude that Cuban actions during the third phase represented an effort "to take unilateral advantage of a turbulent local situation..."<sup>62</sup>

Whereas Kissinger overlooked the presence of foreign troops and assistance to FNLA/UNITA forces, he greatly exaggerated the importance of Soviet and Cuban assistance to the MPLA before independence. For example, on the night of Angolan independence the Secretary of State told the Pittsburgh World Affairs Council that "the forces of the MPLA achieved control of the capital with substantial Communist assistance," completely ignoring the vital fact that Luanda had always constituted the very core of MPLA strength in Angola.

The fourth and final phase of the Cuba operation during the Angolan war commenced around independence day when, in Castro's words, "Cuba sent the men and weapons necessary to win the struggle."<sup>63</sup> By the end of 1975 an alleged 7000 Cubans were in Angola, and by late January 1976, the number had risen to over 12,000. The war ended the following month. The FNLA, UNITA and the remnants of their foreign backers were no match for the MPLA and Cuban forces.

While this account of the phases of Cuban intervention fixes the decision to provide the material and manpower necessary for a quick and undisputed MPLA victory to the first

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid

<sup>63</sup> Castro's speech in Granma, May 2, 1976.

week of November 1975, it does not answer the question of whose decision it was to meet the MPLA's request for help. The debate on Cuba's large-scale military involvement in Angola has focused on whether the Cuban government acted on its own or as a reluctant Soviet-directed surrogate in Africa. According to David Rees:

Cuba is less of an autonomous global actor than an instrument of Soviet foreign policy. That is, Cuba promotes Soviet political and strategic objectives in the Third World, while receiving necessary logistical support in return for its major operations in Angola and elsewhere.<sup>64</sup>

Another view, put forth by some observers such as Zdenek Cervenka and Sir Herbert Marchant, the former British Ambassador to Cuba, maintains that Cuba is a self-directed revolutionary internationalist committed to combatting imperialism and to promoting national liberation and socialism in the Third World:

Cuban objectives in Angola essentially reflected Fidel Castro's view of his country's "traditional role," with Cuba as the vanguard of revolution in the Third World...the Cubans seek to pursue an independent role in the affairs of the Third World, whatever their ties with Moscow or their dependence on Soviet economic and military support.<sup>65</sup>

Most U.S. officials, including the Secretary of State, and a host of journalists argued that the Cubans went to Angola to pay off their approximately five and one-half bil-

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<sup>64</sup> David Rees, "Soviet Strategic Penetration of Africa" Conflict Studies, (No. 77, November 1976.)

<sup>65</sup> Zdenek Cervenka, "Cuba and Africa," Africa: Contemporary Record, 1976-77 p. 86. This view was also supported by Sir Herbert Marchant, in The Times, (London), August 16, 1977.

lion dollars "IOU" to the Soviet Union for military and economic assistance extended since 1960.<sup>66</sup> In other words, as "surrogates" of the Soviets. Both the MPLA and the Cubans have vociferously denied these charges. In a speech on April 19, 1976 marking the fifteenth anniversary of the Bay of Pigs invasion, Castro asserted that the Soviet Union "never requested him to send soldiers--- Cuba's decision was made absolutely under its own responsibility." Castro claimed that Cuba's cooperation with Africa was the natural "result of our principles, our ideology, our convictions and our blood."<sup>67</sup> Cuba's explanation of its role in Angola was again given by its Foreign Minister, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez:

...It is obvious that we have a close relationships with the Russians. But when we first sent troops to Angola we did not rely on a possible Soviet participation in the operation. We started it in a risky, almost improbable fashion, with a group of people packed in a ship and in those British Britannia, the operation was coordinated with the Russians, who were beginning to send military supplies to help President Agostinho's MPLA government in Angola. But the thing started off as a purely Cuban operation.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Newsweek, for example, noted that "most U.S. officials believe the Cubans are in Angola because the Soviets presented "IOU" for the 5.4 billion dollars in military and economic aid that Moscow has given them since 1960." (December 29, 1975 p. 34). Kissinger flatly stated that Cuban troops would not have been in Angola without being "under Soviet advice." Los Angeles Times, December 24, 1975.

<sup>67</sup> Grmma, op. cit.

<sup>68</sup> Interview with Hugh O'shaughnessy, The Observer (London), February 26, 1978.

While Americans are generally reluctant to accept Fidel Castro's word on most matters, The Washington Post confirmed Cuba's version in a story, based on allegedly reliable leaks, which maintained that high "American officials familiar with the available evidence do not believe that the Cubans were 'pressured' by Moscow into furnishing men for the Angolan battlefields."<sup>69</sup> Discussions by several journalists with State Department officials in the African and Latin American bureaus convinced them that Cuba's (and The Washington Post's) interpretation is essentially correct. The decision to send troops was made by the Cubans themselves. They consulted with the Soviets over logistics and strategy but, in the words of a leading expert in the State Department, "the Cubans were never pushed by the Russians to do anything in Angola they didn't want to do."<sup>70</sup> However, more important than whether or not the Soviet Union could command the use of Cuban troops in Angola is the fact that by early November there was a coalescence of interests among the MPLA, Cuba and the Soviet Union to have the Cuban government send the men "necessary to win that struggle."

There is no doubt that the Cuban role suited Soviet objectives in Africa which are to weaken Western and Chinese positions wherever possible on the continent. But it does

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<sup>69</sup> The Washington Post, February 18, 1976.

<sup>70</sup> For an interesting discussion of the debate among U.S. government officials over the relationship between Cuba and the Soviet Union in Angola, see The Christian Science Monitor, March 18, 1976 and April 7, 1976.



not follow that Cuba was "a tool of Soviet policy in Angola," nor that the Angolan war was a "war by proxy" --- a simplistic view held by some Western mass media. President Ford called Cuba's military assistance to the MPLA a "flagrant aggression," and blamed the Soviet Union for being privy to the crime.<sup>71</sup>

Some distinctive reasons have been proposed by some observers for the Cuban intervention in Angola. Colin Legum, for instance, maintains that:

The Angolan war came at a time when expectations about the normalization of relations with the U.S. had not materialized. Angola therefore offered an opportunity for Cuba once again to defy Washington by resuming its militant role in the front-line of Third World states fighting imperialism and colonialism. Second, by its military victory, Cuba showed it was able to tip the scales in a conflict in which the U.S. was also involved through Zaire and South Africa. This was an important boost to the morale of the Cuban population worn out by never ending austerity and depressed by successive failures in economy.<sup>72</sup>

Further reasons for the Cuban involvement in Angola was provided by an Argentine journalist Mario Marrero Diaz who said in Jeune Afrique that:

The most important aspect of Cuban assistance to the MPLA was that it was given absolutely free of any ties or expectation of economic returns --- a true gesture of international solidarity. In order to emphasize this point, the Cuban government declined an offer of coffee supplies from Angola despite an acute shortage and rationing at home. Cubans had their weekly coffee rations cut from 45 to 30 grammes in October 1976 due to rising prices

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<sup>71</sup> Newsweek op. cit. p. 34

<sup>72</sup> Colin Legum and Tony Hodges, After Angola, The War Over Southern Africa, (London, Rex Collins, 1976), p. 15.

and drought which had cut domestic production. Castro said he had taken the decision to avoid destroying 'what we built with sweat and blood.' He described the Angolan offer as an "exemplary international gesture," but said that Angola needed to sell its coffee at high market prices to build up its economy --- an attitude which drew merited applause in Africa.<sup>73</sup>

There are a number of significant reasons why the Cubans were probably the most acceptable allies for the MPLA. The first is that, the similarity of Spanish and Portuguese languages made it possible for the Cuban soldiers to make themselves understood even by simple Angolans. Also, sixty per cent of the Cuban troops were black or of mix race, which made things much easier, because ever since the Congo (Zaire) war, Africa has been haunted by the spectre of 'white mercenaries.' And finally as Mario Diaz said in Jeune Afrique:

The life in Luanda with its customs, music and ways of life strongly resembles Rio de Janeiro or Havana. It makes sense of the "Luso-Afro-Brazilian" culture. The Cubans quickly became part of the local scene. For those who know the world of isolation in which the Americans (and for that matter, the Russians) live in Africa surrounded by interpreters, guides and their respective political doctrines, will understand the difference the Cubans represented for the Angolans.<sup>74</sup>

The African reactions to the Cuban intervention in the Angolan civil war were largely ambivalent. Most African leaders were opposed to intervention by any foreign powers, but they tended to blame both Russia and America for engag-

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<sup>73</sup> Jeune Afrique. April 16, 1976.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid

ing in East-West conflict in Angola. After South Africa's military intervention, Soviet-Cuban role was more generally accepted. However, many African leaders made a clear distinction between the role of the Russians and that of the Cubans. While others such as President Leopold Seghncr of Senegal strongly condemned the Cuban presence. A widespread feeling in Africa about the Cuban intervention was expressed by Ralph Uweche, Editor-in-Chief of Africa:

The lessons of Angola are loud and clear. It was left to Cuba with a population of under 10 million to rescue Angola, while a whole continent teeming with over 400 million inhabitants looked on helpless. The OAU, in spite of ample warnings, found itself unable either to prevent the civil war or to stop outside powers, and indded even South Africa, from intervening militarily in the conflict. Africa as at presently organized, is simply not equipeped to respcnd effectively to any sericus threat to her security. For how long must we remain in the role of impotent on-lookers while external forces and influences continue the malformation of our political and economic destiny.<sup>75</sup>

Cuba's influence in Africa was undoubtedly increased by its role in Angola, a paradox that may be explained by admiration for a small Third World country that took on such a massive commitment and carried it through so successfully. Positive feelings toward Cuba were undoubtedly a major factor in diminishing African hostility toward the Soviet Union.

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<sup>75</sup> Africa (London), June 1976.

#### 4.4 CONCLUSION

South Africa's military intervention in Angola appeared to have been a blunder. It also seemed out of character for a government devoted to the principle of nonintervention, which had made a major effort, with considerable success, to maintain cooperative functional relations with the FREIMO government of Mozambique.

Another important element in the South African involvement was the belief that the government was acting in the interest of the West, particularly the United States, which was then supporting the anti-MPLA forces too -- until the Congressional decision to cut off support in December 1975. Whether there was an actual encouragement from any source in the Ford Administration is not known (and officially it was denied that any U.S. "approval" was given). But at least the indications are that there was no positive discouragement, and that in fact the South African presence suited American policy, as the only means of preventing the collapse of the anti-MPLA forces.

Cuba's intervention marked a decisive turning point in the Angolan civil war, but it followed upon substantial intervention by others, including South Africa and Zaire. Though Fidel Castro's statement that "the first material aid and the first Cuban instructors reached Angola at the beginning of October" when it "was being insolently invaded by foreign forces" surely postdates Cuba's involvement, it seems likely that Castro is correct in saying that Cuba had

not earlier expected "to participate directly in the fight." According to him, it was on November 5, at the request of the MPLA (not Soviet Union), that Cuba decided to send a battalion of regular troops with antitank weapons." There can be quarrels over the time sequences, but there is no question that Cuba's mass intervention was partly an improvised response to South Africa's.

The South African intervention seemed to have been based on four miscalculations. In the first place the considerable increase in Soviet weapons support and the introduction of large numbers of Cubans were probably not fully anticipated. Second, given the emotional hostility to the South African government in Black Africa, it should not have been expected that any black states, even the so-called moderate ones, would permit themselves to be publicly associated with South Africa's intervention --- even if secretly connived at it. Third, if continued American support, material or moral, was expected, then there was a serious misunderstanding of the American mood and the working of the American system. This latter miscalculation was even more grave, if there was an expectation that the U.S. would become more openly and more directly involved itself in Angola, in opposition to the Soviet Union. Fourth, there was apparently a hope, which proved to be misplaced, that the OAU would, if given the chance, act to form a national government out of the three movements.

The Ford Administration limited not only its analysis of outside intervention to the Cubans but its condemnations as well. In so doing the U.S. government signaled to the world that, it viewed the Cuban intervention as "illegitimate" and threatening but not the intervention of South Africa. Through its selective criticism, U.S. unwittingly tainted its Angolan policy with scourge of South African racism. Despite its later calls for South African withdrawal, which appeared to be half-hearted afterthought, and adamant denials of any consultation between the U.S. and South Africa over Angola, the Ford Administration was unable to convince the majority of African leaders or the U.S. Congress that American policies and goals were independent of South African actions in Angola. Moreover, President Ford in his personal letters to African Heads of State on the eve of the OAU meeting in January 1976, infuriated a number of African leaders (e.g. Nigeria and Tanzania) by equating the South African intervention with the Cuban intervention (which had been viewed generally by most Africans as a legitimate help to the cause of African liberation). Thus, by appearing to have enlisted South African military intervention to resist "international Communism" in Africa, the U.S. communicated to the Africans that it feared Communism more than white racism in Africa. This U.S. policy alienated the majority of African leaders for whom the issue of white racism still remains paramount and tended to polarize African and world

opinion along lines which generated little support for American objectives in Angola.

## Chapter V

### CONGRESSIONAL OPPOSITION TO THE EXECUTIVE COVERT ANGOLAN POLICY.

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION.

The influx of American arms into Angola increased heavily in August and September 1975. By the beginning of November, the U.S. was organizing mercenary contingents for Angola. The CIA is reported to have hired French and former Portuguese soldiers, and the FNIA was given extra funds to recruit mercenaries from Britain and the U.S. Some of the Americans recruited were still on active duty in the U.S. armed forces but they volunteered for Angolan duty leaving behind letters of resignation that could be produced if necessary.<sup>76</sup>

While arming the FNIA and UNITA, and abetting the Zairian and South African invasions, the U.S. also considered a naval and aerial involvement in the Angolan crisis. Angola became independent on November 11, 1975, and between November 15 and 23, a U.S. task force was organized and given contingency orders "for a mission in the Angolan crisis." The aircraft carrier Independence capable of providing a

<sup>76</sup> John Stockwell, In Search of Enemies, (New York: Norton, 1978), pp. 222-224 and p. 259; and Sean Gervasi The Continuing Escalation of the Angolan Crisis, (New York: African Fund, December 19, 1975), p. 5.



significant air support, sailed from Portsmouth, England, the night of November 27. It joined the cruiser Foston and three destroyer escorts in the Azores and the task force was placed on full alert.<sup>77</sup> A secret report prepared by Sean Gervasi for the Center for International Security Studies in Washington, and leaked to The Observer, claimed that:

The mission is believed to be to provide tactical air support for strikes over Angola. The Indepen-  
dence carries 90 F-4 Phantom jets and was armed  
after November 15 with "several hundred tons of  
napalm, sidewinder missiles, anti-personnel frag-  
mentation bombs in pods."<sup>78</sup>

When rumours first began to circulate that the Indepen-  
dence had sailed for the Angolan coast, a Pentagon spokesman denied the reports and said that the ship was "conducting routine operations in the 'Meditarranean.'"<sup>79</sup> However, the task force was not sent to Angola.

## 5.2 THE SENATE DEBATE ON ANGOLA.

As the charges of covert U.S. involvement in the Angolan conflict continued to circulate in the European and American press, and no official denial came from the Ford Administration, Some members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, became more determined to discover precisely what the U.S. was doing in Angola and why? The Hughes-Ryan Amend-

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid.; and Sean Gervasi, op. cit. pp. 3 and 6; Facts and Reports, Vol. 6, No. 1, January 14, 1976, p.1.

<sup>78</sup> The Observer (London), January 11, 1976.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

ment to the Foreign Assistance Act, passed in December 1974, had led most Congressmen to believe that it was no longer possible for the U.S. to become involved clandestinely in a foreign war without Congressional approval. However, the situation in Angola proved otherwise. To gain a first hand view of the situation, Senator Clark visited Angola in August 1975, where he met the leaders of the three liberation movements. He returned to America, convinced that U.S. involvement was a mistake and communicated this to the Director of CIA. But William Colby disagreed and refused to divulge certain information about Angola, such as why the U.S. is supporting the FNIA. Clark reported on his trip to the full Foreign Relations Committee, explaining his objections to American policy in Angola. Accordingly, the Foreign Relations Committee invited testimony from William Colby, and Secretary of State Kissinger. Since Kissinger was out of the country he was replaced by Joseph Sisco, the Undersecretary of State.

Behind closed doors Administration representatives admitted that the CIA was covertly giving financial and military aid to the FNLA and UNIIA. For their part most of the Senators expressed strong doubts about the wisdom of deepening American involvement. Senator Clark argued that U.S. military aid was alienating most African leaders, to which Mr. Sisco responded that the U.S. also had to deal with the im-

mediate problem of Soviet influence.<sup>80</sup> Joseph Sisco was supported by William Colby, who stated that the U.S. had a general interest in preventing a new country from falling under Soviet influence.

While some Senators were generally attuned to the Angolan context, the Ford Administration was clearly focused on the global balance of power between the Soviet Union and the U.S. From this perspective, Colby and Sisco defended American covert aid on the grounds that it provided the U.S. with "bargaining chips" with the Soviet Union. The Committee strongly disagreed but the only action they could take would be to pass an amendment prohibiting such aid. They were prevented from doing so only by the factor of secrecy which still cloaked America's intervention in Angola.

Ironically, that cloak of secrecy was destroyed the next day when Leslie Gelb of The New York Times reported the essence of Colby and Sisco's testimony before the Foreign Relations Committee. The Washington Post published more details of the hearings the day after.<sup>81</sup> These stories began an unprecedented series of leaks to the press by various members of Congress and other opponents of U.S. policy in Angola within the Administration. According to a State Department intelligence expert, "only minor details escaped the

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<sup>80</sup> Leslie H. Gelb, "U.S. Officials Tell Senators of Arms to Angola." The New York Times, November 7, 1975.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.; and Walter Pincus, "CIA Aid in Angola Defended." the Washington Post, November 8, 1975.

attention of the public, all of the essential facts were published in the newspapers."<sup>82</sup>

Official acknowledgment came a full month later when in early December, Secretary of State Kissinger stated during a press conference that the U.S. was providing military and financial assistance for use in Angola. The admission of U.S. involvement not only resulted in a major debate in the media and among the public but it also lifted the secrecy restrictions on the introduction of legislation to cut off U.S. covert aid.

Differing perceptions of the lessons of Vietnam were evident in the debate on Angola. Some members of the Administration and its supporters in the Congress, argued that it was imperative for the U.S. to reestablish its "resolve" and its "will to resist" Soviet expansionism throughout the Third World. On the other side, it was argued that, after Vietnam, the U.S. should not become involved in remote civil wars in which it had no immediate interests. Senator Tunney articulated this viewpoint well when he said:

I am not an isolationist. I, too, am deeply disturbed by the spectre of Soviet expansionism. But the course of American foreign policy must not be determined by blind reactive opposition to every movement from Moscow. We must not fall prey to the myopia which removes every civil war, every nationalist struggle from its own geopolitical and social context and places it instead in the realm of some grand Soviet stratagem in a global

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<sup>82</sup> The New York Times was unrivaled in terms of general coverage of the Angolan debate, providing most major leaks and offering numerous analysis of developments throughout the Angolan conflict.

superpower conspiracy.<sup>83</sup>

The country's mood indicated that the American public, embittered and disillusioned by American lessons in Vietnam would not support even minor involvement in another remote and confusing civil conflict. This was confirmed in a nationwide poll conducted by Lou Harris, which was released on November 21, 1975, which showed that 72% of Americans felt that the U.S. should avoid involvement in all guerrillar wars when it appears that the U.S. is participating in another country's civil war.<sup>84</sup>

To a large majority of the Congress, media and the general public, several disquieting parallels existed between Angola in 1975 and Vietnam before the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution of 1964.

1. Both were civil wars in remote areas outside traditional spheres of American interest or influence;
2. Neither was vital to U.S. economic or security interest;
3. American involvement in both places followed the departure of a European power from its colony;
4. American allies in the conflict needed vast amounts of equipment, manpower, and training to operate all but the most rudimentary weapons and equipment;

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<sup>83</sup> Senator John V. Tunney, "The meaning of Detente", Speech at American University, Washington D.C., November 23, 1975.

<sup>84</sup> The Washington Post, November 21, 1975.

5. It was not clear in either case that it would make a significant difference to the U.S. which side won the war;
6. Both involved areas in which guerrillar war was the dominant form of conflict or a form of conflict which the U.S. was ill-equipped to handle; and
7. There was no "light at the end of the tunnel" in either conflict --- it was never clear when or how the wars would end.

Actually, the Ford Administration's decision to significantly increase its covert commitment in Angola four times in as many months in late 1975, provided an ominous sign that the U.S. was locked into another endless spiral of escalation with the Soviet Union.<sup>85</sup>

The Administration insisted that Angola was not "another Vietnam." This was doubted by many, including those who were concerned over the supposed threat which Soviet activities in Angola portended for the ability of the superpowers to compete on a global scale without resort to war. By emphasizing the global stakes in Angola, the Ford Administration indicated that it had failed to learn a vital lesson from the Vietnam tragedy --- a lesson which had not escaped a majority in the Congress and among the American people.

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<sup>85</sup> Gerald Bender, "La Diplomatie de M. Kissinger et L'Angola", Revue Francaise d'Etudes Politiques Africaines, Vol. 126, June 1976, p. 100.

Both "global" and "local" circumstances must be carefully considered before the U.S. commits itself to a faction in a civil conflict. After all, the U.S. did not withdraw from Vietnam or Cambodia because of a change in the perceptions of the "global" aims. The U.S. withdrew when it became clear that "locally" a victory required more than American aid. After spending over \$150 billion, it became obvious that more than money and arms were needed to forge a winning combination or to effectuate a desired solution. This realization forced Americans to take a hard look at the regimes of Lon Nol and Thieu, and most of them came to the conclusion that American prospects for victory ranged from poor to nil. By the time the war ended, few Americans disagreed with the proposition that sending further arms or men to Indochina would be a tragic waste.

Yet, the Ford Administration once again told the American people that global ramifications were more important than local Angolan realities. In fact, Kissinger underscored his preoccupation with the global dimension when he told Senator Clark that his opposition to U.S. intervention may be right in the African context, but it was wrong in the global context. However, neither Senator Clark nor most of the Senators were persuaded that it was possible to ignore the Angolan context and still win globally. On the contrary, Senator Clark was convinced that the U.S. was backing the only "sure loser," which guaranteed a loss globally. "Cur

task," the Senator observed, "was essentially to save the Secretary from himself."

The Angolan context had changed considerably by early December 1975, when the Senate Foreign Relations Committee endorsed Senator Clark's proposed amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act to cut off all covert aid to FNLA and UNITA. The Committee believed that the U.S. could not win, given the massive Cuban presence, an estimated \$100 million of Soviet arms, and the poor quality of FNLA/UNITA troops. The Committee therefore concluded that the only choice was an immediate cessation of aid. Given the magnitude and sophistication of the Soviet arms in the hands of Cuban troops it was no longer a question of the U.S. competing with the Soviet Union in arms supplies. Rather it was the question of who was going to operate the sophisticated American arms sent to Angola. Both Holden Roberto and Jonas Savimbi told Jon Blair of London Times that they did not have Angolans trained to utilize much of the equipment they received.

...when Zaire and South Africa sent military aid to UNITA in mid-September, both countries also had to send personnel to operate the equipment. In fact it was the poor quality of his army which prompted Savimbi one month later to ask an "American friend", whom President Mobutu of Zaire invited Savimbi to meet in Kinshasa, for U.S. troops to fight on his side. ...When the "American friend" (whom he assumed to be from the CIA) turned down his request, Savimbi announced that he had no alternative but to seek further and more direct South African assistance.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> The Times (London), June 26, 1976.



The Committee assumed that, if the FNLA and UNITA could not absorb or utilize the \$28 million in additional military aid, the difficult options would then include:

1. Increase South African participation (which would, in effect, amount to an American-South African alliance).
2. Hire mercenaries from around the world; and/or
3. Send American advisors and possibly some troops.<sup>87</sup>

These options were not acceptable to the Foreign Relations Committee and the only alternative was to cut off all further aid to Angola. When Senator Clark's amendment was vetoed by President Ford, Senator Tunney introduced an amendment to the Defence Appropriation Bill to prevent any American aid from going to Angola. The Tunney amendment instructed the Administration that none of the \$33 million earmarked for Angola nor any sum within the defence budget could be used for covert or overt action in Angola.<sup>88</sup>

Before the Senate vote, Dr. Kissinger pushed for a "compromise" over the Administration's \$33 million request during a private meeting with about two dozen Senators. The Secretary of State restated the ideological assumptions that still underlay his policy: that the Soviet Union invariably acted in an expansionist and "imperialistic" fashion whenever the opportunity arose and that it was the duty of the

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

U.S. and other sympathetic nations to foil Soviet objective. Kissinger was able to persuade some of the Senators with that argument and sought for a compromise on the amount of financial aid, but Senator Tunney refused to withdraw his amendment.<sup>89</sup> For Tunney it was not a question of another \$10, \$28, or \$100 million in arms. Like many of his colleagues, he was more concerned about who would operate the equipment and fire the arms:

The U.S. cannot save a losing cause with money alone. We would have to supply aircraft, tanks, antiaircraft guns and other weapons. Who is to fly and operate them? There is no time for training programs, there are no allies ready to intervene with such equipment. We would have to send instructors and advisers and, in all probability, American troops in a pattern too reminiscent of Vietnam.<sup>90</sup>

In an effort to gain public support for continued U.S. aid for FNLA and UNITA, the Ford Administration tried to whip up cold war fears of "communist expansionism." Daniel Moynihan, the U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., was particularly eloquent on the question of Soviet "hegemonial aspirations." If Washington were unable to "proceed properly" in Angola, he said,

the Communist would take over Angola and will thereby considerably control the oil shipping lanes from the Persian Gulf to Europe. They will be next to Brazil. They will have a large chunk of Africa, and the world will be different in the

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<sup>89</sup> Gerald Bender, op. cit. p. 104.

<sup>90</sup> John Tunney, "Testimony Before African Subcommittee of Senate Foreign Relations Committee," Quoted in Washington Post, December 16, 1975.

aftermath if they succeed.<sup>91</sup>

Kissinger also tried to present a variant of the old "domino theory." He pointed to the dominoes bordering on Angola --- Washington's allies Zaire, Zambia and South Africa. If U.S. did not stop Moscow in Angola, he insisted, the Soviet Union could be encouraged to press its political interests in other parts of the world. Kissinger subsequently linked Angola to the Middle East and Israel, reportedly saying to some visiting Israeli officials that:

if the U.S., because of Congressional opposition, failed to halt Soviet military activities in Angola, the Soviet Union and others might not take American warnings seriously in the future. In Dr. Kissinger's view, this could encourage Arab countries such as Syria to run risks that could lead to a new attack on Israel, backed up by the Russians.<sup>92</sup>

In a warning to the Senate not to cut off the Angolan aid, the Wall Street Journal, in its editorial, also focused on this aspect of the potential consequences for America if it did not oppose "the neo-colonialist Soviet thrust in Africa." The article continued:

Yet when all the economic, military and strategic considerations are set aside, the Soviet challenge in Angola is primarily psychological. Clearly the Soviets are in Angola and elsewhere testing American resolve in the light of the post-Vietnam reassessment here and the movement of the world military balance in the Soviet Union's favor. The American reaction will no doubt influence the extent of further testing.

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<sup>91</sup> The Washington Post, December 18, 1975.

<sup>92</sup> The New York Times, January 9, 1976.

That is by no means an opened-ended commitment in Angola and elsewhere. The cost and benefits need to be balanced, but \$60 million in arms is not much of a cost. If the U.S. publicly declared itself unwilling to take even small risks to limit Soviet expansionism, it will be an open invitation to even bolder challenges throughout the world.<sup>93</sup>

Such statements reflected not so much a fear of Soviet military advances, but rather a concern that, by gaining an increased political influence in Angola and the rest of Africa, the Soviet Union could strengthen its bargaining hand within the framework of detente. This consideration was evident during the hearings before the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Africa on November 6, 1975. At that time William Colby and Joseph Sisco tried to justify U.S. aid to the MPLA's rivals, and to countries such as Zaire, Zambia and Kenya, on the grounds that U.S. needed "bargaining chips" with the Soviet Union.<sup>94</sup>

This debate between Congress and the Executive represented tactical differences over what course would best serve the interests of the U.S. But the outbreak of the debate at the very beginning of the renewed American involvement in Angola was significant. Such differences over Vietnam did not arise until after Washington had unsuccessfully committed thousands of troops and a massive anti-war movement had developed in the U.S. With the memory of Vietnam and the CIA scandals still fresh, the American population was sensitive

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<sup>93</sup> The Wall Street Journal, December 19, 1975.

<sup>94</sup> Gerald Bender, op. cit.

to military intervention abroad. Several Senators recognized and feared that a major intervention in Angola would be met by a massive opposition. Such an anti-war movement could have grown even much broader than the one against the Vietnam war, with a far greater active participation by Afro-Americans. So the question they might have asked themselves was whether the risks of increased intervention in Angola worth the racial tension that might have resulted.

On December 19, 1975, the Senate voted 54-22 to attach the Tunney amendment to the Defence Appropriations Bill. On January 27, 1976, the House of Representatives concurred by a 323-99 margin and President Ford signed the act on February 9, 1976. All additional covert funds for Angola were therefore blocked, including the \$28 million sought by Kissinger. He offered the supporters of the Tunney amendment a compromise of \$9 million rather than the \$28 million originally requested, but they turned him down.<sup>95</sup>

Later in January Kissinger appeared before the Subcommittee on African Affairs of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations in one last defence of the Administration's policy in Angola. The blame for the failure of U.S. policy in Angola, he insisted, lay not with the Ford Administration but with the Congress for failing to provide the support for standing up to the Russians. His testimony was a string

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<sup>95</sup> Los Angeles Times, January 18, 1976.

of castigations of the congressional majority for their naivete and lack of spine:

Military aggression, direct or indirect, has frequently been successfully dealt with, but in the absence of a local balance of forces. U.S. policy in Angola has sought to help friends achieve this balance. Angola represents the first time since the aftermath of World War Two that the Soviets have moved militarily at long distance to impose a regime of their choice. It is the first time that the U.S. has failed to respond to Soviet military moves outside their immediate orbit. And it is the first time that Congress has halted the Executive's action when it was in the process of meeting this kind of threat...

I must note with some sadness that by its actions the Congress has deprived the President of indispensable flexibility in formulating a foreign policy which we believe to be in our national interest. And Congress has ignored the crucial truth that a stable relationship with the Soviet Union based on mutual restraint will be achieved only if Soviet lack of restraint carries the risk of counteraction...

Kissinger concluded that, after the Senate vote to block any further aid to the MPLA's rivals, the Cubans more than doubled their forces and Soviet military aid was resumed on an even larger scale. The scope of Soviet-Cuban intervention increased drastically; the cooperation of Soviet diplomacy declined.<sup>96</sup> Senator Dick Clark, Chairman of the Subcommittee on African Affairs disagreed profoundly. The important lesson of Angola, he maintained is that:

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<sup>96</sup> Henry Kissinger, Statement made January 19, 1976, before the Subcommittee on African Affairs of the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Hearings on U.S. Involvement in Civil War in Angola, 94th. Congress, 2nd. Session. (Washington D.C.: Government Publication Office, 1976).

We should not ignore the African liberation movements until their victories against the minority regimes are imminent and then back particular factions simply because their opponents are backed by the Soviet Union. The U.S. should make a new beginning in its African policy. It should be directed toward establishing connections between U.S. and African commitments to human rights and racial equality and between the U.S. commitment to international pluralism and African concepts of non-alignment. If the U.S. pursues such a new African policy, our cold war interests in Africa may very well take care of themselves.<sup>97</sup>

At the time of the Senate vote, almost \$9 million was still in the covert aid pipeline. The money had apparently been allocated but not yet spent. The flow of American arms and funds therefore continued. Mercenaries were hired and arms flights from the U.S. to Zaire did not end until January 29, 1976.<sup>98</sup> The Tunney amendment applied only to covert aid to the FNLA and UNITA so indirect assistance through Zaire and Zambia was not affected. Furthermore, Kissinger indicated in late January that he would seek covert aid for the FNLA and UNITA.<sup>99</sup> Saudi Arabia is reported to have given \$50 million to UNITA after the Senate vote.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> The Washington Post, February 2, 1976; and John Stockwell, op. cit. p. 233.

<sup>99</sup> The Washington Star, January 30, 1976.

<sup>100</sup> Senator Tunney made this assertion and repeated it in his testimony before the Subcommittee on African Affairs, op. cit. p. 166. William Schauffle, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, and the Saudi Arabia government denied the allegation. See Ibid. p. 201. Radio Riyadh, January 8, 1976, reported in B.B.C., Summary of World Broadcasts, Vol. 4, January 10, 1976, p. B/8.

Despite the Congressional actions, extensive American involvement in Angola persisted. It must also be remembered that South African and Zairean troops were still fighting in Angola alongside the FNIA and UNITA after the Senate vote, so the anti-MPLA factions were in no sense emasculated by the Tunney amendment. Therefore continued Soviet and Cuban aid to the MPLA should be viewed in this context as the Soviet Union did not see any change in American policy.

### 5.3 U.S. REACTION TO THE MPLA VICTORY.

After the defeat of the FNIA and UNITA, the U.S. did not attempt to develop a working relationship with the new MPLA government in Luanda and this may have made the People's Republic of Angola (PRA) more dependent on the Russians. Several observers called upon the U.S. to accommodate itself to the MPLA and even offer financial assistance for the reconstruction of Angola. An editorial in the British journal West Africa pointed out that continued fighting would increase Soviet influence over the MPLA while acceptance of the MPLA victory would have the opposite effect.<sup>101</sup> In fact, in early February 1976, an aide to Senator Tunney returned from Angola and reported to the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, that a number of MPLA cabinet ministers and top party officials "all took great pains to point out the danger of forcing the MPLA into a cycle of

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<sup>101</sup> West Africa, No. 3056, January 26, 1976, p. 99.



ever-greater reliance on the Soviets by refusing to deal with them."<sup>102</sup> Senator Tunney's aide, Mark Moran, noted:

My impression is that there are several positions in the MPLA, and there is a quandary over what they recognize as the need for eventual U.S. economic and financial assistance. They need a softening of Washington's position to legitimize their own standing in the movement.<sup>103</sup>

Mark Moran further indicated that the MPLA was interested in immediate discussions with the U.S. about normalizing relations.

The MPLA suggestion was rejected by the State Department. In actual fact the MPLA were not looking for formal recognition, as the leaders told Mark Moran:

...the MPLA recognizes the political difficulty of the U.S. formally recognizing our movement. ...informal ties such as those existing between the People's Republic of China and the U.S. would suffice.<sup>104</sup>

This indicated that the PRA welcomed talks with American representatives and did not insist on diplomatic recognition as a precondition. But the State Department announced that the MPLA government would not be recognized until Cuba began to withdraw its forces. However, a few months later when the MPLA responded by announcing the beginning of the Cuban withdraw, the condition for U.S. recognition was raised from "substantial" to "complete" withdrawal of Cuban troops, signaling what one top Angolan expert in the State Department

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<sup>102</sup> The New York Times, March 26, 1976.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> The Washington Post, February 17, 1976.

described as a "harder U.S. line on Angola."<sup>105</sup> In late June 1976, contrary to strong recommendation by its U.N. Ambassador William Scranton, Ford Administration vetoed Angola's application for membership in the U.N.<sup>106</sup> The "line" hardened even more after the execution of the American mercenary, Daniel Gearhart, which Kissinger stated "hurt any chance of American aid to Angola or any other improvement in relations."<sup>107</sup>

The U.S. refusal to grant diplomatic recognition to Angola ran counter to the policies of other Western countries. France recognized the PBA on February 17, Britain the next day and West Germany did so on February 19, 1976. Gulf Oil and Boeing were allowed to resume their economic ties with Angola. In the case of Gulf, the Ford Administration may

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<sup>105</sup> The Director of the Washington office on Africa, Ted Lockwood, noted that the Angolan Desk Officer in the State Department told him on May 28, 1976, that the U.S. was moving toward a harder line on Cubans in Angola. Cited in Angolan News Summary, June 25, 1976. p. 8.

<sup>106</sup> When Angola's membership to the U.N. first came in May 1976, Ambassador Scranton recommended that the U.S. support the application in the Security Council while suggesting an abstention as fallback position if Kissinger felt that it was too early to indicate such a positive act. The option of a veto was not even discussed as a possibility by Scranton. Nevertheless, the U.S. asked Angola to delay their request for membership in May and proceeded to veto it when it was proposed in late June. The Washington Post, June 28, 1976, (Anxious to avoid alienating African leaders during the sensitive Rhodesian negotiations, the U.S. did not veto Angola's second application for membership in late November 1976).

<sup>107</sup> Los Angeles Times, June 11, 1976; President Ford described the execution as "unjustified and unwarranted," adding that "it will make even more difficult any steps toward the normalization of relations between Angola and

have feared that failure to start operating again would lead Gulf's oil concession being turned over to either an Italian or French firm.

#### 5.4 CIA'S COVERT OPERATIONS IN ANGOLA.

"Covert action" as practiced by the CIA has been defined as "clandestine activity designed to influence foreign governments, events, organizations or persons in support of U.S. foreign policy conducted in such a way that the involvement of the U.S. government is not apparent."<sup>108</sup> Since the early 1970's, the CIA had pursued its most substantial African covert actions in Angola. As the recent paramilitary, political and propaganda operations unfolded in Angola, both U.S. policymakers and distressed African observers were struck by its connection to earlier American intervention in the Congo (Zaire). Secretary of State Henry Kissinger suggested that Angola's independence was fraught with the same dangers for U.S. security as Zaire's independence in 1960: We cannot ignore, for example, the substantial Soviet build-up of weapons in Angola, which has introduced great power rivalry into Africa for the first time in fif-

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the U.S." Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> U.S. Congress, Senate Select Committee to study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, Final Report: Foreign and Military Intelligence, Book I, 94th Congress, 2nd Session, April 26, 1976, p. 131.

teen years.<sup>109</sup> The Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, William Schanfele, saw "obvious parallels between Soviet actions throughout Zaire's independence crisis in 1960 and Moscow's behaviour in Angola today."<sup>110</sup> From another perspective, an editorial in a government-owned newspaper in Ghana complained that:

The U.S. is now fighting tooth and nail to prevent the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola from taking the reins of government just as it used Tsombe to destroy Patrice Lumumba in order to prevent his socialist-oriented party from taking power at independence in the Congo.<sup>111</sup>

The CIA covert activities in Angola bear comparison with similar U.S. efforts in other parts of the Third World. In Laos, Vietnam, Chile, Cuba, etc. a prime motive of covert intervention was fear of external communist subversion and its international implications for U.S. foreign policy. Angola constituted the terrain for a particularly wide variety of covert action techniques employed by the CIA in the Third World. These included propaganda, manipulation of labour unions and student organizations, subsidization of political leaders, parties, and, military and internal security functionaries.

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<sup>109</sup> The New York Times, November 25, 1975.

<sup>110</sup> U.S. Congress, Subcommittee on African Affairs of the Foreign Relations Committee, Angola, 94th Congress, 1st Session, January 3, 4, 6, 1976, p. 174.

<sup>111</sup> Quoted in The New York Times, January 4, 1976.

Covert action provided the most direct and aggressive U.S. assistance to political leaders in Angola. But realization of its proximate objectives also depended upon:

1. degree of significant, often closely coordinated, overt support from the U.S. and other pro-Western countries;
2. the relative effectiveness of local political or military groups; and
3. the scale of Soviet and other foreign Communist intervention.

In Angola, there was a dearth of U.S. covert and other overt support for the FNLA against the Portuguese, and even the CIA assistance dropped off at the end of the 1960's. A burst of Chinese and CIA aid for a FNLA-UNITA coalition in 1974-75 produced a competitive Soviet effort on behalf of the MPLA. This fact, and the ramifications of South Africa's intervention, laid the bases of the decisive military thrust by the Soviet Union.

Events moved rapidly in Angola after the coup in Lisbon as rival factions vied for power and the CIA's role in this early period of the Angolan crisis is vague. John Stockwell reports that:

In July 1974, the CIA began funding Roberto without the 40 Committee approval, small amounts at first, but enough for a word to get around that the CIA was dealing itself into the race... During the Fall of 1974 the CIA continued to fund Roberto, still without 40 Committee approval, and its intelligence reporting on Angola was predominantly

from Zairian and FMA's sources.<sup>112</sup>

The CIA funding of Roberto continued to increase throughout 1974 without 40 Committee approval. Then on January 26, 1975, the 40 Committee approved \$300,000 of further funding, marking the beginning of what was to develop into a \$37-million covert war.<sup>113</sup> In March, the CIA reopened its Luanda station. From that station and those in Kinshasa (Zaire), Lusaka (Zambia) and elsewhere, it supplied the Angola task force at CIA headquarters in Washington D.C. --- and through it, Henry Kissinger and other policymakers --- with intelligence reports.<sup>114</sup>

It has been argued that the CIA's interest had results of "infinitely greater significance than the U.S. government claimed"<sup>115</sup> In monetary terms, the amount spent represented a thirty-fold increase in CIA support for Roberto. This increase must be evaluated with supplies already being forwarded to Roberto from President Mobutu of Zaire. At the time, CIA reports to Washington --- apparently based primarily or solely on information from Mobutu and Roberto ---

<sup>112</sup> John Stockwell, In Search of Enemies: A CIA Story, (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1978) p. 67.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., p. 258. "This money came from CIA contingency Reserve Fund, and does not include additional unknown amounts in operational expenses incurred by the CIA staff and other facilities."

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> R. Lemarchand, The CIA: How Central? How Intelligence?, (Washington D.C.: University Press of America, 1978), pp. 350-51.

suggested that the FNLA was militarily stronger than the MPLA and UNITA. The expansion of U.S. aid "gave rise to speculation that the U.S. was intent on trying to assure FNLA dominance."<sup>116</sup> Stockwell points out that,

the original 40 Committee options paper acknowledged the United States' vulnerability to charges of escalating the Angola conflict when it stated that a leak by an American official source would be serious, that we would be charged with the responsibility for the spread of civil war in Angola.<sup>117</sup>

Furthermore, it was clear that accelerated U.S. aid preceded the expansion of Soviet arms shipments to the MPLA, which began only in March 1975, after a lull of nearly two years.<sup>118</sup>

The extent to which heightened CIA activity accounted for growing divisions in Angola over the next months is hard to determine. Stockwell charges that throughout the CIA office in Washington, the Kinshasa station was known for its "flagrant, semicover activities," which "ensured that American support of the FNLA would be widely known."<sup>119</sup>

<sup>116</sup> John Stockwell, op. cit. p. 67.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid. p. 68

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid. pp. 67-68. These activities were clearly carried out in direct opposition to official Portuguese efforts to achieve a coalition government in Angola. They also ignored the expressed view of U.S. diplomats in Luanda that the MPLA was the best organized group and the movement most qualified to run the country. Ibid. pp. 63-64

After the political divisions in Angola became an open warfare, CIA stations and bases in the Southern Africa region were made responsible for coordinationg and distrikuting the incoming war materials. On July 17, 1975, the 40 Committee met and authorised \$14 million for further paramilitary operations.<sup>120</sup> On July 19, the first C-41 flight of arms went out to Angola. Cargoes for additional flights were assembled in South Carolina from CIA warehouses in Texas.<sup>121</sup>

During a two-week trip to Angola as CIA task force commander for that country, Stockwell met both Roberto and Savimbi, to evaluate the state of affairs in order to guide future policy. After the trip he concluded that the U.S. has two options in Angola:

We could give the FNIA and UNITA enough support to win --- by going in quickly with tactical air support and advisors we could take Luanda and put the MPLA out of business before the Soviets could react. Otherwise, if we weren't willing to do that, we would further U.S. interests by staying out of the conflict. The middle ground, feeling our way along with small amounts of aid, would only escalate the war and get the U.S. far out on a fragile limb. It would help neither the Angolan people nor us. To the contrary, it would jeopardize the United States position in Southern Africa.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> U.S. House of Representatives, Special Subcommittee of the Committee of International Relations, Hearings on Mercenaries in Africa. (92nd. Congress 2nd Session, 1976), p. 42.

<sup>121</sup> John Stockwell, op. cit. pp. 58-59.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.



According to Stockwell, Kissinger however, rejected a similar State Department recommendation, and on December 9, 1975, acknowledged at a press conference that "U.S. aid to curb the success of the MLPA is being channeled through neighbouring countries (Zaire and Zambia)." <sup>123</sup>

At the end of 1975, the CIA's Angola task force consisted of the following units: (a) an intelligence gathering section; (b) a reports section; (c) a propaganda section; (d) paramilitary section; and (e) a supporting staff of assistants and secretaries. <sup>124</sup> As John Stockwell explains:

From the outset we were deeply involved in managing the war from Washington, from Kinshasa, and from advance bases in Angola --- the intelligence effort was always subordinate to their CIA officers' advisory activities. CIA communication officers trained FNIA and UNITA technicians at the Angolan advance bases. Kinshasa cables reported that CIA paramilitary officers were training UNITA forces in Silva Porto and the FNLA in Ambriz --- A retired army colonel was hired on contract and assigned full time to the FNLA command at Ambriz. <sup>125</sup>

Yet William Colby, the former CIA Director, in his book, The Honorable Men, states that, "no CIA officers were permitted to engage in combat or train there in Angola." <sup>126</sup>

The CIA propaganda section also had an important role. According to Stockwell, it disseminated favourable articles to as many news sources as possible. CIA officers in Lusaka

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<sup>123</sup> Hearings on Mercenaries in Africa, op. cit. p. 49.

<sup>124</sup> John Stockwell, op. cit. p. 168.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid. p. 177.

<sup>126</sup> William Colby, Honorable Men: My Life in the CIA, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978).

and Kinshasa submitted articles to local newspapers. If they were not picked up by the international news agencies, the articles were transmitted via agency cable to other stations around the world, who saw to it that they were reprinted in the world press. For instance, Reuters news agency picked up a false story from Lusaka, which reported the capture of twenty Soviet and Cuban military advisors by UNITA forces.<sup>127</sup> The story was carried by the Washington Post on November 22, 1975.

Throughout the CIA operation in Angola, the South African government was kept informed of all developments by the CIA station in Pretoria. As John Stockwell asserts:

To the CIA, the South Africans were the ideal solution for central Angola. Potts, St. Martin and the COS of Lusaka and Pretoria welcomed their arrival in the war. On two occasions the BOSS director visited Washington and held secret meetings with Jim Potts. On another, he met with the CIA station chief in Paris. The COS in Pretoria was ordered to brief BOSS ... and nearly all CIA intelligence reports on the subject were relayed to Pretoria so that his briefings would be accurate and up to date. ... Coordination was effected at all CIA levels and the South Africans escalated their involvement in step with our own.<sup>128</sup>

Yet throughout the Congressional hearings on Angola, and again in his book, William Colby stated that the CIA stayed well away from the South African support to UNITA.

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid. p. 194

<sup>128</sup> Ibid. p. 187-188.

## 5.5 SUMMARY.

That American policy toward Angola from the mid-1960's through the end of the civil war in early 1976 was dominated by U.S. domestic and global considerations to the exclusion of Angolan realities was never more evident than in the Ford Administration's decision to choose sides in that civil war. Once the Ford Administration's defence of its decision to intervene is stripped of its rationalizations, rhetoric and moralizing, what remains is a single-minded determination to respond to the Soviet Union in Africa. That determination is not the result of a conviction that one of the contending factions is better for the U.S. or for Angola, but originates from the simple fact that the Soviet Union is backing one of the factions.

Ironically, the CIA saw no real difference among the three parties. The CIA Director of African Affairs, James Pott, told Senator Tunney before the Senate vote on his amendment that it would make "no difference" to the U.S. which of the three parties won power. William Colby, the CIA Director gave a similar perspective before the House Select Committee on Intelligence in mid-December 1975. When asked about the differences among the three parties, he replied that:

They are all independents. They are all for black Africa. They are all for some fuzzy kind of social system, you know, without really much articulation but some sort of let's not be exploited by

the capitalist nations.<sup>129</sup>

If they were all so similar in outlook why were certain nations supporting one group against another?

1. Congressman Les Aspin: "And why are the Chinese backing the moderate group?"

2. Mr. Colby: "Because the Soviets are backing the MPLA is the simplest answer."

3.

Mr. Aspin: "It sounds like that is why we are doing it."

4. Mr. Colby: "It is."<sup>130</sup>

If Colby's answer did not sound as though it was straight out of the cold war handbook, neither did it have the ring of detente.

Moreover, even if we are to believe that Soviet Union was the cause of the Angolan civil war, why did the Ford Administration decide that Angola was the place to oppose the Soviet Union militarily? The question is especially important in that Washington saw no vital interests to protect and perceived no more than a slight difference to the U.S. no matter what the outcome of the civil war. Given the Soviets long time support for the MPLA, and the record of support for the Portuguese colonialism, the U.S. decided to compete militarily in an area where Moscow held a strong hand. Fur-

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<sup>129</sup> "The Pike Papers," The Village Voice, op. cit. p. 40.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid. p. 41

thermore, why did the Administration chose in mid-July 1975 to make its military stand on the side of the FNLA and UNITA? By early June intelligence sources had revealed that China was giving up on the FNLA and had told Roberto not to expect more than \$100,000 in aid by the end of of 1975, at which time all help would cease. Apparently the Chinese were very disappointed in the performance of the FNLA troops, a view which was shared by all American observers. Why, then, did Washington decide to inherit what the Chinese saw as a losing military cause?

President Ford and his Secretary of State criticized the Congress after the passage of the Tunney amendment for being naive about Soviet intentions in Angola and for not understanding how to deal with the Soviets in such a confrontation. However, after Vietnam, the Administration's assumption that the Soviets would choose to compromise in Angola when faced by U.S. military power also appears to be exceedingly naive. The Administration's path to intervention in Angola is strewn with unanswered questions, and profound misunderstanding. The policy failed because Congress was able to assess the mood of the country, after the Vietnam failure, better than the Administration. Also Congress was more concerned about the consequences of U.S. involvement in Angola on its relations with other African countries..

## Chapter VI

### THE ANGOLAN CONFLICT DURING DETENTE.

The Angolan civil war --- with the U.S. and People's Republic of China supplying aid to the FNLA and UNITA, and with the Soviet Union supplying aid to the MPLA --- provides an excellent backdrop to examine the boundaries and limits of detente and peaceful coexistence as defined by the Soviet Union and the U.S.; and to study the U.S. reaction to Soviet policy toward one national liberation movement during detente. This chapter will undertake those tasks. The second part of this chapter will examine the shift in Carter Administration's policy towards Angola.

The civil war in Angola almost saw the end of U.S.- Soviet detente. Alarmed over the Cuban involvement in Angola, the U.S. Secretary of State, Dr. Kissinger, in a speech to the Economic Club of Detroit in November 1975, said that,

it is difficult to reconcile this intervention with the principles of coexistence signed in 1972. The build up of weapons and men by the Communists in Angola had introduced greatpower rivalry into Africa for the first time in 15 years.<sup>1</sup>

To the Secretary of State the Soviet involvement was most of all resented by African nations.

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<sup>1</sup> The Times (London), November 25, 1975.

But the United States cannot be indifferent while an outside power embarks upon an interventionist policy --- so distant from its homeland and so remove from traditional Russian interests.<sup>2</sup>

For the Soviet Union the Cuban intervention in Angola was perfectly compatible with the 1972 declaration. In a speech welcoming Dr. Agostinho Neto, the MPLA leader, Premier Kosygin said that

If anyone saw a contradiction between this support for the national liberation movements and international detente, then that reply was that the detente was meaningless without the liberation of the colonial people.<sup>3</sup>

A radio Moscow commentator gave a bolder Soviet interpretations of detente, when he said in a broadcast that:

...detente does not mean freedom of action for reactionaries and aggressors of every hue.---Soviet Union has the right to promote unification and consolidation of all patriotic, anti-imperialist and anti-racist forces in Angola.<sup>4</sup>

Here, we have a few of the many conflicting interpretations of detente of the two superpowers. It would be difficult for anyone to accuse either the Soviet Union or the United States of being dishonest in interpreting and implementing the May 1972 detente declaration. Article one of the declaration states that the superpowers:

will act in such a manner as to prevent the development of situations capable of causing a dangerous exacerbation of their relations, so as to avoid military confrontation, and to exclude the outbreak of nuclear war between them and between

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> The Statesman, May 26, 1976.

<sup>4</sup> The Guardian, (Manchester), January 8, 1976.

either of the parties and other countries.<sup>5</sup>

Angola was the first country since the signing of detente to have the interests of the two superpowers seriously clashed in the Third World. The question which is usually asked is why did detente floundered in the Third World. Or perhaps more important is the question why the U.S. and Soviet Union find it difficult to shape their rivalry in the Third World in accordance with the intentions stated in the declaration on detente? To answer these questions we have to examine the rivalry policy moves of the U.S. and the Soviet Union in Angola.

The Soviet policy towards Angola displayed the usual doggerdness, unusual audacity and rare imagination in seizing opportunities when presented.<sup>6</sup> What gives the Soviet foreign policy in Africa a sustained momentum and direction is of course the perception of Soviet interests as defined by its ideology. But not only to gain "access to Angola's vast reserves of raw materials", as Vanneman and James emphasized in their article.<sup>7</sup> It is this mixture of ideology and interests that, in an important way, distinguishes Moscow's foreign policy from Washington's. Soviet major objectives in Africa, like the rest of the Third World are

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<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Strategic Survey, (London), June 1973, p. 46.

<sup>6</sup> Peter Vanneman and Martin James, The Soviet Intervention in Angola: Intentions and Implications, Strategic Review, Summer 1976, p. 93.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p. 93.



1. To spread the political and economic influence of the Soviet Union in a manner consonant with its position as a superpower.
2. To try to eliminate the Western (particularly U.S.) influence in Africa. This goal, it should be stressed, is pursued outside the Soviet-American detente declaration.
3. To promote Soviet Union's political-security interests.
4. To counter the ideological and political challenge of People's Republic of China.<sup>8</sup>

Colin Legum believes that:

Moscow has pursued these strategic goals in Africa through a series of tactical moves that at a first glance seem incoherent or even contradictory. Some observers therefore tend to characterize these tactics as "opportunistic". However, such a label is valid only to the extent that the tactical maneuvers represent pragmatic, ad hoc responses to promising opportunities created by developments on the African continent. Without such opportunities, any policy course - no matter how consistent and principled - would be futile.<sup>9</sup>

While the Soviet Union may approach Africa with a particular set of strategic objectives in mind, the tactics it employs must respond to the African contest. On the other hand, the U.S. policy, under Kissinger's stewardship, defined more sharply than ever before the globe in terms of areas of high priority, low priority or even non-involve-

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<sup>8</sup> Colin Legum, "USSR and Africa: The African Environment," Problems of Communism, January - February 1978, pp. 1-2.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

ment.<sup>10</sup> Thus, for the U.S., Africa became an area of non-involvement after an active involvement during the Congo (Zaire) crisis.

The Soviet Union, whose capabilities now permit it a global role, sees the world in terms of opportunities. It loses no opportunity to try to diminish the influence of Western powers in the Third World (especially in areas where it has strategic interests of its own).<sup>11</sup> Of course the Soviet Union is not involved to the same degree all over the globe, but unlike the U.S., Soviet Union attempts to relate its policies to an event or a political happening, however small. For instance, some commentators maintain that USSR's policies

toward the Third World show an even greater desire to undermine the position of the People's Republic of China than that of the West. In the case of Angola, evidence suggests that Sino-Soviet rivalry was a crucial determinant of Soviet policy".<sup>12</sup>

As a global power with a global view derived from Marxism-Leninism, the Soviet Union has always shown a greater degree of interest in Africa than the United States. The Soviet concept of national democracy enunciated in 1960 ideologically related the Soviet Union to the emerging nations.

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<sup>10</sup> Raymond Aron, "The Imperial Republic: The United States and the World, 1945-73", (New York, Prentice Hall, 1975).

<sup>11</sup> Colin Legum, "Angola and the Horn of Africa", in Stephen S. Kaplan, Diplomacy of Power: Soviet Armed Forces as a Political Instrument, (Washington D.C., The Brookings Institute, 1981), p. 572.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 573.

Some Third World countries like Guinea, Mali, Ghana, Algeria, and Syria pursued domestic and foreign policies that merited them the title of national democracies. Despite serious diplomatic set-backs -- in seven African countries the military seized power between November 25, 1965 and February 24, 1966,<sup>13</sup> which nearly shattered the concept of national democracy -- Moscow never retreated from Africa.

The Soviet Union has had two substantial assets in its efforts to establish and extend influence in Africa. First, its ideology provides an analytical framework that regards change as inevitable and justifies the exercise of violence to promote change. Marxism-Leninism is also explicitly anti-colonial. These qualities inevitably appealed to the continent when the first and overriding order of business was to liquidate colonial empires. What was remarkable about Soviet policy in the 1960s and 1970s was how quickly this substantial advantage in its competition with the West and the U.S. was allowed to dissipate. The second advantage parallels the attraction of Soviet anticolonial philosophy. European powers and the U.S. have been tied in complicated ways to the white colonial outposts in Southern Africa. While these regimes would have been targets of black African nationalism and the emerging sense of black identity in any case, Marx-

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<sup>13</sup> In Zaire, Dahomey, Central African Republic, Upper Volta, Nigeria, Ghana and Mali. For a good analysis of the Soviet African policy, see C. I. Ntutu, "Nigeria and Soviet Attitudes to African Military Regimes", 1965-70, Survey, Volume 22, No. 11, Winter 1976.

ism-Leninism has served the Kremlin leadership well by anticipating the winds of change, while American identification its Western European political, economic, military and cultural foundations led it to resist change and support regimes that otherwise embrace few principles that correspond to the American national experience. Given these two substantial advantages for the Soviet Union in Africa, it is surprising how little durable success the Soviets have achieved there.

When the military overthrew Kwame Nkrumah on February 24, 1966, the atmosphere in Moscow was one of complete bewilderment. The Ghana coup prompted a critical analysis of the role of the military by Soviet Africanists and the government. The significance of the coup was that Soviet criticism of Ghana, Nkrumah and the Convention People's Party (CPP) became systematic. Although the immediate rationale in Moscow was that the coup was inspired by U.S. secret agents, some elements of Nkrumah's policies were however, criticized.<sup>14</sup> The "non-democratic" policies of Nkrumah and C.P.P. were soon castigated in Moscow. Nkrumah was accused of relying on his close aides and thus systematically isolating the masses from the party and government; consequently "the citizen was deprived of any possibility of free expression".<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> See V. Sidenko, "Ghana: The Coup and the Imperialists", New Times, (Moscow), No. 10, March 9, 1966, pp. 14-16. V. Shelepin, "Africa: Why the Instability", Ibid., No. 52, December 30, 1968, pp. 21-24.

<sup>15</sup> N. Gaurilov, "Africa: Classes, Parties and Politics",

The Soviet Africanist, G.I. Mirsky, in his book "Army and Politics in the Countries of Asia and Africa", which was reviewed in International Affairs, offered the hardest attack on Nkrumah:

The political and state system which existed in Ghana before February 1966 were connected with one party and one man.<sup>16</sup>

Thus Nkrumah, like Stalin was guilty of the "personality cult". Mirsky remarked that Nkrumah accumulated "unlimited powers" and that he was alone in the seat of power after liquidating his enemies. According to Mirsky, the CPP did not represent the masses:

A revolutionary regime must have a clear social and political orientation.---At the head of the state must be a well organized party strongly connected with the people and also dependent on their activeness. The party is summoned to battle; it must be an ideologically armed organization, but not a club of intellectually revolutionaries.<sup>17</sup>

The implication of the above analysis by Mirsky means that the CPP as a "mass" party existed only in the minds of a few intellectuals.

The MPLA answered much of the Soviet description of a good party. Unlike its rivals, the FNLA and the UNITA, the MPLA was a true "mass" party and was not primarily dependent on support from a single social and ethnic groups. The Soviet Union has consistently supported the MPLA since 1961, and

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International Affairs, (Moscow), Vol. 7, July 1966, pp. 42-43.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

in 1975 it was determined to ensure MPLA's victory.

Perhaps the only reasons for this determination are the obvious considerations - the Chinese support for the Zaire-backed FNLA, the South African armed intervention in October 1975, the infirmity of the United States still wincing from its humiliation in Vietnam, Soviet strategic interests in the Southern Africa, and the suddenness of the military coup in Portugal - made the Soviet Union firmly commit itself to the victory of the MPLA. Yet it is still difficult to attribute the decisiveness of any of these considerations in Soviet Union's policy towards Angola.

At this point it is worth examining the degree to which the Chinese factor (involvement in the Angolan civil war) was actually responsible for the unusual and unprecedented decision of the Soviet Union to intervene on the scale and the manner it did in Angola. Of all the observers on the Angolan event, it is Colin Legum, who mostly attributes the maximum weight to the Chinese factor in the Soviet policy calculation. Most American and Western commentators, (as well as U.S. State Department Officials) have interpreted the Soviet intervention in Angola solely as an extension of Soviet-American competition in Africa. In this perspective the MPLA victory is then viewed as a major diplomatic and political gain for USSR against the U.S. But according to Colin Legum:

While this interpretation contains some elements of truth, it is an inadequate framework for analysis of what actually happened in Angola.---For it

leaves out an extremely important element - the rivalry between the Soviet Union and China for influence in Africa. Only if this rivalry is given the emphasis it deserves can one understand the true nature of the struggle that is taking place.---18

Legum explains that, by 1973 the Russians had few worthwhile connections in sub-saharan Africa other than Somalia and Congo - Brazzaville. On the other hand, the Chinese not only had scored some gains in Tanzania and Zaire but, with the exception of the African National Congress liberation movements in Africa had greater rapport with the Chinese than with the Russians. Soviet Union was determined to outdo the Chinese and thus decided by March 1975 to step up armed assistance to the MELA.<sup>19</sup>

Colin Legum's explanation of the Chinese factor in the Soviet policy in Angola has some serious flaws. The Soviet preoccupation with China was not so great as to exclude or minimize the American stance in Moscow's calculations. Yet his explanation is supported by Peter Vanneman and Martin James who argued that:

The emergence of China as an independent great power in its own right diminished the global power and influence of the Soviet Union more than any other single development since Second World War.---Since the Sino-Soviet rift became public knowledge in 1960, much of Soviet foreign policy has been devoted to containing China and diminishing its influence. Sino-Soviet involvement on

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<sup>18</sup> Colin Legum, "Soviet Union, China, and the West in Southern Africa", Foreign Affairs, Volume 54, No. 4, July 1976, p. 745.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 750.

opposite sides in Angola mirrors the multiple arenas and identities in which this struggle takes place: there is competition for influence in Africa, in the Third World, in the Communist World, and throughout the globe. Soviet successes in Angola illuminate the advantages of a global superpower such as the USSR over a mere great power such as China.<sup>20</sup>

However, Siri Valenta, in his analysis of "The Soviet - Cuban intervention in Angola" maintains that:

From the Soviet point of view, the most dangerous onlookers were the United States, China, and South Africa, all of which backed the FNLA and UNITA.---Soviets gave particular prominence to a story in the New York Times in late September which reported that the United States and China were coordinating their efforts on behalf of the FNLA and UNITA. Shortly after the invasion, the director of the Institute of African Studies, Solodovnikov, stated that in Angola, "the present leadership of the People's Republic of China, in its struggle against the MPLA, entered into a conspiracy with the United States".<sup>21</sup>

It is difficult to determine whether comments like that of Solodovnikov on "U.S.-Chinese collusion" in Angola reflected Soviet Union's fears or meant to rationalize Soviet involvement. In fact, China was the only dominant outside power that responded to the OAU call for neutrality among the rival parties in Angola; and fearing that cooperation with South Africa and the U.S. would harm its reputation in Black Africa, withdrew its military advisors from the FNLA bases in Zaire before October 1975.<sup>22</sup> Therefore from the

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<sup>20</sup> Peter Vanneman and Martin James, op. cit., p. 98.

<sup>21</sup> Siri Valenta, "The Soviet-Cuban Intervention in Angola, 1975," Studies in Comparative Communism, Volume 11, Nos. 1&2, Spring-Summer 1978, pp. 14-15.



point of view of Siri Valenta:

Soviet public statements not only were designed to justify the intervention but also were perhaps a reflection of Soviet fears of the first real precedent for Chinese-American detente - the most fearsome of Soviet nightmares.<sup>23</sup>

But Colin Legum argues, that:

if the Russians had been primarily concerned with neutralizing U.S. aid, they could have invoked the Moscow accords to prevent the development of a situation which could lead to military confrontation between them. But this would have meant leaving the field clear for the Chinese to spread their influence through FNLA and Zaire.<sup>24</sup>

Some Soviet actions in Africa in recent years appear to have been direct responses to Chinese ventures. For instance, as David Ottaway mentioned in his Washington Post dispatch, although Tanzania had long maintained warm relations with China and displayed a general coolness toward the USSR, yet President Podgorny stopped first in Dar es Salaam on his African tour in 1977, and he used that occasion to announce a new \$19.2 million Soviet loan to Tanzania.<sup>25</sup> Perhaps the main factor behind USSR's initial decision to back the MPLA in Angola in early 1975 seems to have been a desire to prevent the Chinese from becoming the dominant outside power in Southern Africa, as China was providing military assistance to the FNLA and other liberation movements in

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>24</sup> Colin Legum, op. cit., p. 751.

<sup>25</sup> David Ottaway in Washington Post, March 27, 1977.

Southern Africa. Thus, China was in a good position to have some influence in such a vital region.<sup>26</sup>

But as David Albright maintains this hardly indicates any Soviet grand design because of China:

To begin with, the bearing which any individual objective has had on Soviet behavior has varied from place to place. To some extent, of course, this variation has reflected the relevance of that objective in specific contexts, but relevance alone does not account for it. There have been cases where, on the surface of things, a particular goal would appear to be relevant yet has had no perceptible impact on Soviet actions.---More significant, there has been no evident hierarchy of objectives. In some situations, the USSR has managed to pursue a number of goals simultaneously because they have been essentially complementary. For example, the Soviet Angolan operation served both to check the growth of Chinese influence and to diminish Western influence.<sup>27</sup>

So as John Marcum wrote, the Soviet involvement in Angola

"was not an aggression but as a response, in stages, to Chinese rivalry, and to the shipment of U.S. aid which seemed almost designed to provoke the Russians into seeking maximum advantage".<sup>28</sup>

As a number of commentators have argued, since Kissinger's diplomatic coup in June 1971 which resulted in normalization of relations between Washington and Peking, the Soviets are concerned but not preoccupied with China, and the present Soviet leadership believes that they have sufficient

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<sup>26</sup> See Colin Legum, op. cit., for an extensive treatment of the evidence on which this reconstruction is based, pp. 747-753.

<sup>27</sup> David E. Albright, "The USSR and Africa: Soviet Policy", Problems of Communism, vol. 27, January-February 1978, p. 34.

<sup>28</sup> John A. Marcum, "Lessons of Angola", Foreign Affairs, volume 54, No. 3, April 1976, p. 407.

power to advance their interest without conceding anything of substance to Washington in order to gain either its neutrality or its support in the Soviet attempt to limit China's influence. In fact, once the Kissinger-Nixon leadership decided to play the three - cornered U.S.-Sino-Soviet rivalry, with U.S. placing itself in the advantageous position of a "balancer" between the two Communist powers, Moscow, too, chose to play this game but of course from a weaker diplomatic position. Weak as Moscow is in this triangular constellation, it has not yet conceded anything of substance to Washington anywhere, - Europe, Asia or Africa.<sup>29</sup>

Thus, Moscow could not have invoked the 1972 accord, as Colin Legum maintains, because the accord which laid the basis for the superpower detente has been interpreted by Soviet Union in a fashion that does not preclude intense rivalry with the United States. What detente basically means to the Soviet Union is simply that the great power competition be within the bounds of crisis-management; continuing negotiations with its principal protagonist, the United States, on SALT and peace in an area of vital interests to both -- Europe, are the other aspects of Moscow's detente policy. Africa and the rest of the Third World are the "grey areas" where the two superpowers have not been able to lay down rules for their competition, other than the one which says that while competing they will take care to see that they do

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<sup>29</sup> Bharat Wariavwalla, "From Defender to Balancer", China Report, January-February, 1976, p. 8.

not collide.<sup>30</sup>

The Angolan crisis was in many ways unique. The tenacity of purpose, audacity, and imagination brought the Soviet Union rich dividends for a variety of reasons and convergence of many factors which may not repeat themselves in all details elsewhere. The South African intervention, an American administration severely circumscribed by the Congress, U.S. limited covert involvement, a well organized and determined local actor (the MPLA), the Chinese involvement, all impelled the Soviet Union to seize the opportunity to extend its influence.

#### 6.1 AMERICAN POSTURE.

To Dr. Kissinger, the purpose of the American policy towards Angola was clear from the beginning. In a speech at Georgetown University on April 6, 1977, over one year after the Soviet intervention in Angola, the former Secretary of State, concerned over the attempted military coup in Zaire, justified the U.S. covert intervention in Angola on the grounds that the Soviet Union must not be permitted, under the blanket of detente, to seek "geo-political gain" in far-off corners of the world.<sup>31</sup> For Kissinger, the essence of detente was restraints. Ever since he joined the Nixon Administration he sought to evolve a code of conduct among

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> International Herald Tribune, April 7, 1977.

the great powers, not formally arrived at but implicitly understood, that would be conducive to stability. Therefore, the Soviet acts in Angola was incompatible with the Kissingerian notion of detente. Towards the end of November 1975, when the Ford Administration's detente diplomacy proved totally ineffectual, Kissinger warned that "time is running out; continuation of an interventionist policy must inevitably threaten other relationships."<sup>32</sup> The Soviet press agency, Tass, accused the U.S. of sending military personnel and weapons to Angola "for the reinforcement of the forces of the foreign interventionists."<sup>33</sup> An editorial in Izvestia, the same day sharply rebuked Kissinger that:

Some would like to convince us that the process of detente in the world and support of the national-liberation struggle are incompatible things. Similar things have been maintained before, but in vain. The process of detente does not mean and never meant the freezing of the social-political status quo in the world---<sup>34</sup>

When the Soviet arms buildup in Angola continued, Kissinger went so far as to say that he might postpone his visit to Moscow later in January 1976, to continue the arms control talks. But he did not postpone his visit, nor did he make any progress on Angola when he met with Brezhnev during his three days in Moscow. On the contrary, at precisely the same time that Dr. Kissinger was in Moscow, the MPLA Foreign

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<sup>32</sup> The Times (London), November 25, 1975.

<sup>33</sup> Quoted in Parameters, March 1978, p. 32

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in Ibid

Minister, Jose Eduardo dos Santos was also there, getting pledges of additional Soviet support. Santos whose departure coincided with Dr. Kissinger's, told reporters at the airport that "the Soviet Union is in the forefront of helping the Angolan people to repel the aggression of racist and imperialist forces."<sup>35</sup>

For Moscow, the hub of detente is trade, credits and technology from the West, partly with the U.S. in the area of strategic arms and freezing the status quo along the Berlin Wall in Europe, but without denying itself the right to change the status quo by diplomatic means, or asserting its right to change the internal situation of a European country (e.g. the cautious Soviet attempt to bolster the Armed Forces Movement in Portugal in 1974-75). Above all detente symbolized equality with the West which every Soviet leader since the Bolshevik revolution has hoped for. But for Moscow, detente never signified the absence of rivalry with the West, though the imperatives of the nuclear age demanded that rivalry be kept below flash point. Detente or no detente, Moscow has always been ready to press for advantages wherever there was an opportunity.

This Soviet conception of detente clashed with Kissinger's conception. For the balance of power practitioner like Kissinger, detente meant regulating the totality of Soviet-American relations in such a manner as to provide global

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<sup>35</sup> The Guardian (Manchester), January 10, 1976.

stability. Obviously, such a relationship could only be built on restraints by the super powers in pursuit of their interests. For Kissinger, restraining the Soviet Union, whether in Asia, Middle East or in Angola, or striking an agreement on strategic weapons with the Soviets, or tying the Soviets to the U.S. by an agreement on certain mundane things, were different aspects of the same policy that sought to provide a stable and predictable levels of the Soviet-American global competition.<sup>36</sup> For Brezhnev, Angola was one thing distinct from SALT. The two interpretations of detente clashed over Angola.

In Kissinger's scheme of global stability the Third World mattered little, and when a part of it did, like OPEC, Kissinger dealt with it in his usual fashion - bully the oil producers and at the same time provide them with sufficient incentives to draw them into some arrangements with the U.S. But, for Kissinger, the only criterion by which he judged a nation's importance was power, and how that power could be fitted into his grand equation of global stability was his central concern. As Stanley Hoffman rightly says Kissinger's world order policy was "both too arrogant and too tight, too much obsessed by stability to succeed".<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> The Economist, April 30, 1977, p. 75.

To Washington, Angola appeared more as another area of Soviet-American contest than an area where local factions were fighting for power. It was not so much the internal dynamics of the Angolan situation that concerned the U.S. as its external manifestations. The assertion made by some analysts that it was really the prospect of a leftist MPLA faction coming to power that provided the main impetus to the American policy towards Angola flies in the face of facts. The U.S. had already accepted the Marxist FRELIMO regime in Mozambique and for that matter a variety of leftist regimes in the sub-saharan Africa. For the United States what was really at stake was the Soviet involvement in Angola.

## 6.2 THE INCONSISTENCIES IN CARTER'S ANGOLAN POLICY.

American foreign policy toward Third World conflicts in which Soviet Union is involved has always been shaped by two competing perspectives --- that of the global strategists and that of the area specialists. Generally, the globalists look first (and at times exclusively) at the ramifications of the conflicts for overall East-West relations. If the Soviets are thought to be acting badly, the globalists argue that the U.S. should back a competing side or withhold U.S. cooperation in some other area of special interest to the Soviet Union. The area specialists, on the other hand focus on the local causes of conflict --- the ethnic, religious,



racial, or national factors behind them. They counsel against U.S. involvement in a struggle simply as a reaction to Soviet participation.

American specialists on Asia and Africa, for example, continually warned against grafting a global construct onto local conflicts fired by historical, ethnic, political, and economic realities. Some argued that it is a mistake to lump the Chinese, the Khmer Rouge, and the Vietnamese into the same category<sup>38</sup> --- an argument whose truth is quite evident today. One of the presumed lessons of Vietnam was that the U.S. should not become entangled in Third World disputes, even if the Soviet Union is involved, so long as the major issues at stake are local in nature and not fundamental to the basic interests of the U.S.

Apparently not all American policy-makers understood that lesson, for at the same time that the U.S. was disengaging itself from Vietnam in early 1975, the global strategists in the Ford Administration, led by the Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, were involved in clandestine intervention in the Angolan local conflict. Although Congress halted U.S. participation in the conflict in December 1975, that hardly ended the covert activities and the debate.

Throughout the 1976 presidential election campaign, candidate Jimmy Carter criticised the Ford Administration's globalist posture in Angola. Shortly before the election he

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<sup>38</sup> Gerald Bender, "Angola, The Cubans, and American Anxieties," Foreign Policy, No. 31, Summer 1978, p. 7.

asserted:

I think that the U.S. position in Angola should be one which admits that we missed the opportunity to be a positive and creative force for good in Angola during the years we supported Portuguese colonization. We should also realize that the Russian and Cuban presence in Angola, while regrettable and counterproductive of peace, need not constitute a threat to United States' interests, nor does that presence mean the existence of a Communist satellite on the continent.<sup>39</sup>

Once elected, Carter chose Congressman Andrew Young as his ambassador to the U.N. Less than two months before the election, Young had testified before the Senate African Affairs Subcommittee that:

the U.S. should begin revising its Southern Africa policy by recognizing the MPLA government in Angola.<sup>40</sup>

In his new post, Young urged the U.S. not to withhold recognition of the PRA on the basis of the Cuban presence. The Cubans, he asserted, were helping to provide order and stability in the newly independent country.<sup>41</sup>

Cyrus Vance, the new Secretary of State, appeared to join President Carter and Ambassador Young in rejecting the previous administration's globalist attitude toward Angola. Vance emphasized that:

The most effective policies toward Africa are affirmative policies...A negative, reactive American policy that seek only to oppose Soviet or Cuban involvement in Africa would be futile. Our best course is to help resolve the problems which

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<sup>39</sup> Quoted in Ibid. pp. 5-6.

<sup>40</sup> Washington Post, September 18, 1976.

<sup>41</sup> Gerald Bender, op. cit.

create opportunities for external intervention.<sup>42</sup>

At the beginning of Carter's Administration, Africa had a greater salience in the U.S. foreign policy concerns. The new Administration accelerated Kissinger's late effort to reach negotiated solutions in Zimbabwe and Namibia. Thus in the spring of 1977, Ambassador Young, testifying before the Senate upon his return from Southern Africa stated that "there really is no clear break (with the Kissinger policy) and no completely new initiative... It is much more an evolution from that policy." He went on to testify about U.S. goals:

I think I would say that our policy is not just majority rule, but a commitment to move as rapidly as possible to achieve a transfer to majority rule without violence, or with a minimum of violence... in order to keep the resources that we require from Africa coming to us uninterrupted, it requires a certain level of peace and reasonableness in the change process.<sup>43</sup>

The new Administration took a harder line against South Africa's apartheid policies by announcing U.S. support for majority rule in South Africa as well as U.N. arms embargo against South Africa.

Elsewhere in Africa, specifically in Angola, the Carter Administration tried to formulate policies without always deriving those policies from the exigencies of Soviet-American competition. Anthony Lake, the Director of the Policy

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> U.S. Congress, Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on African Affairs, Ambassador Young's African Trip, June 6, 1977, p. 14.

Planning Staff at the State Department, summarized the Carter Administration perspective on Africa when he rejected a negative policy and said:

This does not mean we are unconcerned about the presence of Cuban troops in Africa or the flow of Soviet arms there --- on the contrary. But I am convinced that we do more harm than good by dramatizing the East-West factor. Such dramatic excesses can make crises more dangerous; they can cut across that sense of African nationalism that is the surest barrier to external intervention; and they can inhibit the African diplomatic efforts that offer the best hope of resolving disputes before they become conflicts. When we look at African questions as East-West rather than African in their essential character, we are prone to act more on the basis of abstract geopolitical theorizing than with due regard for local realities.<sup>44</sup>

Basically, the Carter Administration decided that it would not permit the Soviet Union to preempt the role of African liberation advocate. It concluded that automatic opposition to any movement receiving Soviet aid was counterproductive and often counterrevolutionary and that overtures to Soviet allies such as Angola could lead to a weakening of its ties to the Soviet Union.

The Carter policies involved assumptions that were less moral than realistic:

that the costs of U.S. intervention to frustrate political change were too high; that radical governments were usually established in response to internal conflicts and problems and that their economic and national interests were more important than their ideologies;... that U.S. interests in

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<sup>44</sup> Anthony Lake, Lecture at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, October 27, 1977. (U.S. Department of State Bureau of Public Affairs, Office of Media Services) p. 2.

certain areas, from export markets to access to vital raw materials, involved the need for more cooperative relationships; and that the U.S. image as an opponent of political and social change and supporter of "friendly authoritarian governments was detrimental to the interests of the U.S. and had corrosive political consequences for American institutions and behavior.<sup>45</sup>

Central strands were apparent in the Carter Administration's Angola policies, and there was an essential agreement among the architects of these policies: President Carter himself; Secretary of State Vance; Ambassador Young; Anthony Lake; and Richard Moose, the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs. There was an early, forthright and strong attempt to identify the U.S. as a supporter of (however limited) the most important foreign policy aspirations of the African States: majority rule in the white-dominated countries and the refusal to make Africa a battleground in Soviet-American competition. The Administration therefore tried to deemphasize explicit cold war competition with the Soviet Union in Africa. The Carter Administration was of course concerned with the tremendous growth of Soviet arms and military assistance and Cuban troops in Angola and other parts of Africa. Indeed it was continually preoccupied with Soviet intervention and with preventing other conflicts from reaching a point where the Soviets and Cubans would be invited in, particularly in Zimbabwe. But the new administration knew that most African states did not perceive the in-

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<sup>45</sup> Jon Kraus, "American Foreign Policy in Africa," Current History, Vol. 80, No. 463, March 1981, pp. 97-98.

roduction of Soviet military advisers and arms and Cuban troops as a threat to African states. Soviet and Cuban entry into Angola was legitimized in African eyes because Angola was being attacked by South Africa. As Kenya's Foreign Minister observed:

The Cubans have changed the history of Africa. On the question of racial subjugation in Southern Africa, no one can convince me that the Azanians (South Africans), Zimbabweans and Namibians should not get assistance from elsewhere if they are denied assistance by the West.<sup>46</sup>

African countries have noted, however, that the U.S. has not been prepared to provide direct assistance to African liberation groups seeking to remove colonial and white minority rule in Southern Africa, which systematically subjugate the Africans in political, economic, cultural and human terms.

At the same time, the Carter Administration did not try to oppose or mount discriminatory political and economic pressures against the Angolan government. But despite substantial support for the recognition of Angola by Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, and the African bureau at the State Department, President Carter bowed to domestic pressure and to Zbigniew Brzezinski, refusing to recognize the MPLA government in Angola unless Cuban troops were withdrawn.<sup>47</sup> But the continued UNITA guerrilla resistance, with occasional attack from Zaire by the FNLA forces, and South African mil-

<sup>46</sup> To the Point, Vol. 5, No. 32, August 11, 1978, p. 24.

<sup>47</sup> Jon Kraus, op. cit. p. 98.

itary raids on SWAPO bases in Southern Angola, made the MPLA government too insecure to abandon Cuban support. Nonetheless, the Carter Administration in many ways officially supported openings to Angola, providing Export-Import Bank aid and encouraging U.S. foreign investment in exchange for Angola's cooperation in negotiations in Zimbabwe and Namibia.<sup>48</sup>

### 6.3 CARTER'S POLICY SHIFT IN ANGOLA.

During the early part of the Carter Administration, the anti-globalist character of U.S. policy on Angola was apparent in the American posture toward the negotiations for a settlement in Zimbabwe and Namibia. It was also reflected in the Administration's relatively calm reaction to the invasion of Zaire's Shaba province in March 1977, by Katanga rebels who fled Zaire for Angola in the mid-1960's. The Carter Administration found no evidence of Angola/Cuban instigation or support.<sup>49</sup>

By the beginning of summer 1978, it was apparent that the globalist perspective formed the bases of American policy in Angola, and to some observers it was largely due to the growing influence of Carter's National Security Adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski. Gerald Bender asserted that:

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

Whereas Carter appeared to share Young's keep-cool approach to Soviet and Cuban activities in Africa throughout most of his first year in office, the president clearly took up Brzezinski's refrain after the Soviet-Cuban military presence in Ethiopia increased dramatically in early 1978. By March, in a speech at Wake Forest University, Carter was suggesting that Soviet military and diplomatic activities in Africa were poisoning East-West relationship, a message repeated by administration spokesmen at every available opportunity.<sup>50</sup>

President Carter's new tough line on Soviet and Cuban involvement in Angola predates the second Katangese invasion of Shaba province in May 1978, which led to strong and insistent American denunciation of Angola/Cuban/Soviet intervention. Although the Administration at first insisted that it had evidence of Angolan and Cuban support (evidence that did not convince Congress or the State Department), the real reason for the Administration's alarm, as Jon Kraus suggests:

was growing Soviet-Cuban involvement in Africa; 1,000 Soviet military advisers and heavy equipment and roughly 16,000 Cuban troops arrived in Ethiopia in early 1978, and small-scale Cuban military assistance was extended to a number of other African states. However, the administration's concern had its origin less in Africa than in superpower competition and in non-African events like Soviet agitation against the neutron bomb in Europe, the pro-Communist coup in Afghanistan in April 1978, and President Carter's sharp decline in popularity.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Gerald Bender, op. cit. p. 7.

<sup>51</sup> Jon Kraus, op. cit. p. 98.



The Shaba crisis gave the Administration its first opportunity both to demonstrate U.S. willingness to intervene in Angola and to openly seek the loosening of Congressional restrictions on presidential powers. Commenting on the U.S. airlift of Moroccan troops and equipment to Zaire during the Shaba attack, the New York Times noted that:

the techniques of crisis management were being born again in Washington, plainly to test the nation's tolerance for involvements that it has bitterly opposed since the final escape from Southeast Asia.<sup>52</sup>

According to Jan Austin and Barry Garrett:

All of this was just what National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski had been urging for months --- often against the wishes of the State Department which had advocated a more low-keyed approach relying on diplomatic initiatives, aid and economic ties to build U.S. influence in Africa.<sup>53</sup>

Brzezinski's view that the U.S. must respond to the global implications of what was seen as Soviet and Cuban boldness in Angola seemed to have won out in Washington.

In his strongest public statement on Angola, Brzezinski told NBC's "Meet the Press" on May 28, 1978:

I do not believe that this kind of Soviet-Cuban involvement ought to be cost free and there are a variety of ways in which concerned countries can convince (them) that their involvement, their intrusion, is not only conducive to greater international instability, but in fact carries with it consequences which may be inimical to them as well.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>52</sup> New York Times, May 20, 1978.

<sup>53</sup> International Bulletin, June 5, 1978, p. 5.

<sup>54</sup> quoted in New York Times, May 29, 1978.

Among the options considered were steps to punish Soviet Union by interrupting cultural, scientific or technical exchanges and slowing down trade and advanced technological transfers to the Soviets. Although the Carter Administration wanted to isolate the Strategic Arms Limitation (SALT) negotiations from the other pressures, the arms talk was affected by the new U.S. hard line.<sup>55</sup> One form of pressure on Soviet Union which was implemented was Brzezinski's visit to China in May 1978. During the trip, close consultations on military, foreign policy and technological issues and strong anti-Soviet statements made while in Peking was clearly calculated to squeeze Moscow.

Brzezinski was reportedly also argued for months that such direct pressures on Soviet Union should be combined with stepped-up economic and military aid and covert assistance to groups and nations seeking to oust Cuban forces from Angola and other parts of Africa. In a major study of Brzezinski and his role in the Carter Administration, Elizabeth Drew said officials told her that Brzezinski:

has brought up the idea from time to time that perhaps the U.S. should cause trouble for Angola's president Agostinho Neto ... perhaps by giving some support to Jonas Savimbi whose anti-government rebels are also backed by South Africa.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Jan Austin and B. Garrett, op. cit. p. 6

<sup>56</sup> Elizabeth Drew, New Yorker, May 1, 1978, p. 111.

And the Washington Post reported that White House strategists for at least two months attempted to develop a plan to permit the U.S. to funnel sophisticated arms and funds clandestinely to anti-MPLA forces fighting in Angola.<sup>57</sup>

Some observers indicated that such U.S. policies might have encouraged South Africa to form its overall strategy. The South African government has given high priority to the fall of the MPLA regime in Angola.<sup>58</sup> In September 1977, the South African Press Agency featured prominently an address to a symposium in Pretoria by Alberto Marini, an Argentine military expert, urging South Africa to launch a preventive war against Angola:

Angola is the ideal place for the free world to develop... full-scale war to put an end to Communist rule in the region. The best way to attain this is to take advantage of the existing structure of the UNITA movement.<sup>59</sup>

At times this seems to be precisely what South Africa is attempting. According to UNITA leaders, the anti-MPLA movement receives arms, training and logistical support from South Africa.<sup>60</sup> In addition South Africa has mounted its own operations in Angola, claiming the right of "hot pursuit" of SWAPO forces into Angola and also to protect its interests in the large Cunene River Basin hydroelectric project. How-

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<sup>57</sup> Washington Post, May 29, 1978

<sup>58</sup> Gerald Bender, Op. Cit. p.16.

<sup>59</sup> Quoted in Johannesburg Times, September 24, 1977.

<sup>60</sup> Times of Zambia, April 20, 1979.

ever, the Angolan government gave some evidence to show that the South African attacks were aimed more at destabilizing Angola than at crippling SWAPO forces. For example, in January 1978, Yugoslav engineers began exploring the possibility of reopening the large iron-ore mine at Cassinga, vital to Angola's economic recovery, while a Japanese company attempted to negotiate the contract for purchasing the ore. In early May, South Africa launched a "hot pursuit" against SWAPO forces in Cassinga (about 160 miles north of the Angolan-Namibian border) destroying part of the mine.<sup>61</sup>

Such attacks have firmly convinced the Angolan government that South Africa would launch another major invasion if the Cuban forces were withdrawn. It is precisely in this context that one must evaluate the People's Republic of Angola's perception of its need for the Cuban military support. As editorialized by the New York Times:

... the latest South African attack on Angola has merely provided one more justification for the presence in Angola of Cuban troops. The widely held belief that the Neto regime would fall at the hands of UNITA, were Havana to withdraw its help, overlooks the South African dimension of Angola's circumstances.<sup>62</sup>

The important series of articles about UNITA by Leon Dash established that Savimbi's movement is far more formidable than the MPLA or Cuba ever imagined, but also that it is clearly not capable of winning a military victory without

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> New York Times, May 16, 1978.

foreign materiel and physical support.<sup>63</sup>

Carter and Brzezinski used the Shaba attack as an opportunity to tell Congressional leaders that restrictions on such aid imposed by Congress have "tied" the president's hands. Carter singled out the Clark amendment prohibiting aid to anti-MPLA factions in Angola. Brzezinski argued that a major factor preventing the U.S. from decisively confronting the Soviet challenge in Africa had been what he called a "self-imposed paralysis" of will in the U.S. following the Vietnam war. He described the war as a "trauma" which must be gotten over as quickly as possible. Part of this recovery appears to be the restoration of greater presidential power and freedom of action in conducting foreign policy.<sup>64</sup>

Beyond the presidential restrictions, however, the Carter Administration's frustration in searching for means to confront the Soviets and Cubans in Angola was due in large measure to the political weakness of the U.S. position in Africa. The U.S. was outflanked. So far Soviet Union have championed causes that are popular in black Africa --- defending the MPLA government in Angola against South African forces and defending the territorial integrity of Ethiopia against Somalia. As long as they stick to such causes, Soviet Union and Cuba make it difficult for the U.S. to intervene on the other side without drastically reducing its

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<sup>63</sup> Leon Dash, "A Long March in Angola", The Washington Post, August 7-13, 1977.

<sup>64</sup> Jan Austin and B. Garrett, Op. Cit. p. 7.

credibility among a wide spectrum of black Africans.

The difficulties faced by the Carter Administration in demonstrating U.S. credibility in the Angolan situation may help explain its reaction to the second rebellion in Zaire's Shaba province. It is not clear whether high administration officials really believed that the Angolans, Cubans, and Soviets were responsible for that threat to the Mobutu regime, whether they simply charged them with this responsibility in order to create a case of Communist "intervention" against which the U.S. could effectively demonstrate its resolve in Angola, or some combination of the two. What was clear about that episode was that the policy adopted involved the creation of a series of illusions. The first of these involved the technical question of direct Angolan/Cuban/Soviet involvement in the Shaba rebellion. At best a gross exaggeration reminiscent of the anti-Communist hysteria at the height of the Cold War, and at worst sheer fabrication. The charge to this effect made by the President himself now appears to have been based on a combination of half-truths and shreds of circumstantial evidence relayed from unreliable sources.<sup>65</sup> Careful scrutiny of the evidence for the charge failed to convince even those in the American government who approached the matter with some degree of skepticism, and the Carter Administration itself moved rapidly away from its original position.<sup>66</sup> Thus a month after the President

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<sup>65</sup> Robert Price, op. cit. p. 50.

had repeatedly charged Communist "responsibility" for the Shaba fighting, Secretary of State Vance was telling Congress that Communist involvement had been "blown out of proportion...in the papers and the media."<sup>67</sup> What Mr. Vance neglected to mention was that it was the Carter Administration itself that had fed the press the information that resulted in the illusion of Communist intervention in Shaba. Indeed, despite Administration back-pedaling on the issue, the Shaba "crisis" became fixed in the media, the public mind, and the language of international affairs as an instant of Communist intervention.

Another illusion introduced into the Carter Administration's Angola policy as a result of the Shaba rebellion involved the utilization of an external explanation for a problem that was in fact produced by internal causes. The evidence of economic and political disintegration in contemporary Zaire is widely known and acknowledged. Zaire's potential riches and the national opportunities they present have been squandered through its government's ill-conceived economic policies, the extraordinary venality of the political elite, and a system of ubiquitous public corruption on the most grandiose is an everyday manifestation.<sup>68</sup> After the

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<sup>66</sup> Gerald Bender, op. cit. p. 16.

<sup>67</sup> International Bulletin, July 3, 1978.

<sup>68</sup> For an excellent and brief summary of the Mobutu regime's record, see Jean Rymenam, "The Zairian Fiction," Le Monde Diplomatique, May 1977, pp. 8-11.

Shaba rebellion of May 1978, even the ultra conservative and anti-Communist journal To the Point, reported that the population is:

being driven into the arms of the rebels, by poverty, hunger, disappointment and chaos as much as by the brutality, terror and corruption of the Zairean army in their mist.<sup>69</sup>

In spite of the incontrovertible evidence of internal collapse, the Carter Administration chose to blame outside intervention for the threat to the Mobutu regime. This failure to accept the indigenous basis of threats to a U.S. client is another illusion built into the Carter Administration policy in Angola. It fits into the conventional American policy paradigm which for decades has provided the same simple explanation for all losses in U.S. influence in Africa (--- they are produced by the machinations of Communist foreign policy).

Because U.S. was unresponsive to the substance of the problems affecting Zaire, the policy followed by the Carter Administration in response to the events in Shaba contained serious potential costs. The diplomatic interest of the U.S. in being considered a friendly outside power by the states of Sub-Saharan Africa was hurt by this policy. Most states in the region, seeing through the illusion of Angolan/Cuban/Soviet intervention, refused to back the concept of a "Pan-African" force proposed by the U.S. and France. Presidents Nyerere of Tanzania and Obasanjo of Nigeria, both

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<sup>69</sup> To the Point, Vol. 5, No. 27, July 7, 1978. p. 24.



made major public declarations defining the Shaba situation as an internal affairs in which Western powers had intervened to protect foreign economic interests and attacking U.S./French organized "Pan-African" security force as an instrument of neo-colonialism. Addressing an OAU meeting, General Obasanjo declared:

We totally reject as an instrument of neo-colonialism any collective security scheme for Africa fashioned and teleguided from outside Africa for economic, political or military interest of any superpower bloc.<sup>70</sup>

President Nyerere told a specially called assemblage of foreign diplomats in the Tanzanian capital that:

this talk in Europe and America about a Pan-African Security Force is an insult to Africa...It makes little difference if the European and American initiators of this plan find African to do their fighting for them. There were Africans who fought with the colonial invaders...We must reject the principle that external powers have the right to maintain in power African governments which are universally recognized to be corrupt, or incompetent, or a bunch of murderers, when their people try to make a change.<sup>71</sup>

The unfortunate aspect to the support provided by the U.S. for the intervention in Zaire against the Katangese rebels was not simply that the legitimating "Pan-African" force failed to materialize, but that the Carter Administration placed the U.S. behind the ex-colonial power, Belgium, and the most active neo-colonial power, France, in their efforts to protect and extend their political and economic inter-

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<sup>70</sup> New York Times, July 20, 1978.

<sup>71</sup> International Bulletin, Vol. 5, No. 13, July 3, 1978, p. 5.

ests. Given the sensitivity in Africa to the colonial past this can hardly be viewed as in the longterm diplomatic interests of the U.S.

#### 6.4 CONCLUSION.

Interestingly enough, none of the Soviet actions in Angola necessarily contradicted the Soviet interpretation of peaceful coexistence or detente. Leonid Brezhnev, speaking at the 25th Congress of CPSU in February 1976, emphasized that his party has not "in conditions of detente ---- become reconciled to capitalist exploitation" and promised that the Soviet Union "will continue to support peoples who are fighting for their freedom."<sup>72</sup> Yuri Andropov, another member of the Soviet Politburo, was even more explicit. Andropov, delivering an address dedicated to Lenin's 106th birthday in April 1976, declared:

We do not expect that in detente the monopoly bourgeoisie and the governments that carry out their will will side with the revolutionary struggle of the oppressed peoples. The Soviet Union makes no such demand on the West. But the West may make no demands on the Soviet Union to renounce its solidarity with those who are waging a struggle against exploitation and colonial oppression.<sup>73</sup>

Throughout the Angola crisis, Soviet actions fit well within the confines of Soviet ideology. It may thus be reasonable to expect that other efforts to support national liberation movements will be similarly constrained ---  
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<sup>72</sup> World Marxist Review, No. 3 March 1976, p. 36

<sup>73</sup> New Times (Moscow), No. 16, April 1976.

stressing that constraint implies limitation, not termination. While Kremlin is clearly interested in maintaining its identity with national liberation movements, even in an era of detente, it is nonetheless evident that the Soviet leaders feel obliged to explain their actions in ideological terms. In such cases, ideology becomes not only a potential motivator, but also a potential constraint.

Soviet policy toward the MPLA may be viewed most accurately not as an aberration of policy, but rather as a selective application of a policy both motivated and constrained by ideological considerations. Thus, even on the context of improved Soviet-American relations, the U.S. must expect the continuation of Soviet efforts to aid some selected national liberation and revolutionary movements in the Third World.

Ideology serves a "legitimizing function",<sup>74</sup> but is not so strictly defined that it proves a straightjacket on Soviet policy. Thus, if a liberation movement, once in disfavor, is now supported by the Soviet Union, it may simply be argued that the more progressive wing of the movement has gained ascendancy. The converse is also true.

In Soviet-American relations and in U.S. policy toward national liberation movements as well, it may be wise for the U.S. to learn from Soviet flexibility. If Soviet-American

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<sup>74</sup> R. Judson Mitchell, "Continuity and Change in Soviet Ideology", Current History, Vol. 69, October 1975, p. 137.

can relations are to be guided by the principles of peaceful coexistence, then the U.S. as well as the Soviet Union must be willing to support the concepts and ideals on which it was founded. If American-African relations are to improve, then the U.S. must be willing (and able) to differentiate between Soviet-supported national liberation movements and Soviet-dominated national movements, and should adjust accordingly. And Soviet support for national liberation movements during detente and peaceful coexistence should not be permitted to lead to U.S. support for the other side in local confrontations.

## Chapter VII

### CONCLUSIONS

United States policy toward Angola did not appear to be unique or produced responses peculiar to Angolan conditions. Instead, U.S. policies were shaped by the general concerns that determined America's posture toward the whole of Southern Africa, and there are several crucial determinants to identify these policies.

First there was United States' desire after the Second World War to open areas in Africa for American economic penetration as sources for raw materials needed by American industries, and also as areas for investment and market for U.S. manufactured goods. Several of the colonial powers resisted the U.S. thrust, and this sometimes created a conflict of interest between the U.S. and the colonial power. For example in Congo (Zaire) the U.S. tried to establish a direct relationship with the African leadership instead of relying on Belgium to act as a broker. Ironically Portugal's underdeveloped economy forced it to open its African colonies to foreign investment, as a response to the rise of the African national liberation movements. This created an alliance between Portugal and American interests.

Another determinant of the U.S. policy in Angola was the overriding desire of America to maintain stability in the Southern African region, preferring the white minority regimes to the liberation movements committed to the establishment of independent African states in Southern Africa. This U.S. decision was as a result of a set of Cold War premises depicting profound political, economic and social changes as leading inevitably toward Communism and Soviet expansionism in Southern Africa.

Thus, even where the U.S. acknowledged the urgent need for political and social changes, there was always an overriding stress on change without violence. This has acted as a fundamental constraint on America's unwillingness to give support to any liberation movement in Portuguese Africa. The perceived need for a United States' military base on the Azores, moreover, reinforced Washington's links to the Portuguese regime. From the first treaty signed in 1943 until the military coup in Portugal, the American base on the Azores provided Lisbon with leverage against any U.S. action which might undercut its position in Africa.

President Kennedy's 1961 U.N. Security Council initiative criticising Portugal's colonial policy shocked and angered Portuguese Premier, Antonio Salazar. In reaction to the U.S. vote, a carefully-organized demonstration took place in front of the U.S. embassy in Lisbon.<sup>1</sup> More important, Sa-

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<sup>1</sup> The New York Times, March 28 1961.

lazar refused to permit formal re-negotiation of the Azores base agreement, a posture maintained by his successor, Marcelo Caetano, until President Nixon's informal contacts early in 1969.

The U.S. acquiescence in informal extensions of the Azores base rights meant a tacit acceptance of the Portuguese view of its colonial policy. A far better position would have been a firm refusal of informal extensions. The U.S. government should have announced in 1961 that it insisted of formal re-negotiation, and, in its absence, would leave the bases and end all U.S. aid related to the bases. Once acquiescing, subsequent U.S. diplomatic initiatives lacked substance, for it seemed clear to the Portuguese government that no withdrawal would take place, however uncomfortable the U.S. government might be with Portugal's colonial policy. Undersecretary of State George Ball --- who talked with Salazar secretly in Lisbon in 1963 --- made no impact, belying the significance of Menen William's subsequent claim that Ball was the first U.S. official to talk "sense" with Salazar and wrench him away from his preoccupation with Portugal's "Luso-tropical" grandeur.<sup>2</sup> Dean Rusk's December 1968 conversations with Caetano, probably represented an intimation that the U.S. government was prepared to give more open support to African policy.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> William Minter, Portuguese Africa and the West, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972), p. 86.

<sup>3</sup> Africa Today, December 1968-January 1969, p. 4.

A firm refusal to continue the ties on an informal basis might have failed. Salazar might have insisted on the primacy of the Portuguese colonial vision over any more immediate economic and security interest, but he would have had no doubts about the United States' will to act. Acquiescence, on the other hand, was bound to fail, because in Salazar's authoritarian society no accessible alternative elites existed for whom persuasion would have led to some basic shift in Portuguese African policy. Portuguese business interests were generally pleased at the moderate U.S. policy about continued investment and trade, but they had little discernible impact on Salazar. In any case, their interests lay (like his) in strengthening Portugal's African ties, because the bulwark of their economic strength resided in the exploitation of Angolan coffee, diamonds and petroleum. On the other hand, the Portuguese military elite was accessible to U.S. influence, through continuing participation in U.S. Defence Department officer training programme and through informal exposure to American political culture, but there is no evidence of the impact of this experience on those officers who became frustrated with the wars in the Portuguese colonies.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> U.S. Business Involvement in Southern Africa, Part II, Hearings before the House International Relations Subcommittee on Africa, 1971, pp. 91-114.



Nowhere in U.S.-Portuguese relations between 1961 and 1969, were there any signs of U. S. economic leverage to press the Portuguese government into formal re-negotiation. This impotency is paradoxical partly because of the great potential of U.S. economic preponderancy, and partly because a basic doctrinal element of U.S. policy was that the Portuguese should be encouraged in every way to turn to EEC membership to spur greater economic development than the African colonies could provide.<sup>5</sup> Even if this policy preference had been pushed with some hint of coercion, it would probably have not appealed to the small group of industrialists who controlled the Portuguese economy. They were unlikely to forego their profitable Angolan monopoly for a marginal future as the EEC's poorest member. The Azores agreement of 1971 represented the culmination of Portuguese efforts to link the two issues. In exchange for a new lease the American government enthusiastically agreed to provide vast amounts of economic assistance which not only eased Lisbon's financial crises but bolstered its colonial resolve.

The most dramatic demonstration of the Nixon Doctrine in Southern Africa took place when United States and Portugal reached a new agreement over the Azores bases. The new Azores pact remained witness to the overall strategic significance of the Portuguese empire to the Nixon Administration.

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<sup>5</sup> John Marcum, "Portugal and Africa", Issue, Vol. 15, June 1972.

Soon after the Portuguese coup, President Nixon and General Spínola met and in an exchange of remarks, General Spínola alluded, rather obliquely, to the colonial situation when he said:

A very important factor underlying the success of these talks was a total identity in the thinking regarding a staunch defence of peace, the respect for democratic principles, and the hallowed principles that underlie the right to self-determination of peoples which is expressed in the free will of those peoples regarding the choice of their destiny.<sup>6</sup>

President Nixon responded by assuring General Spínola of the continuing support of the U.S. "Because," President Nixon stated, "an independent, free, prosperous Portugal is vital not only to the Atlantic alliance but vital also to the interests of the people of Portugal."<sup>7</sup>

A British expert on Portuguese colonial affairs, Basil Davidson believed that it was Spínola's objective

to contrive that Portugal should somehow retain its position of "privileged economic intermediary" between African land and labour on one side, and on the other all those interests which now exploit them or wish to exploit them principally the large transnational corporations concerned with the extraction of minerals, including oil.<sup>8</sup>

Davidson concluded that with this in mind,

Spínola rightly sees this as the only sure guarantee of 'survival' now, or Portugal's existing 'system' of power relationships, however archaic

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<sup>6</sup> State department Bulletin, Vol. 71, No. 1829, July 15, 1974, p. 119.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p. 120.

<sup>8</sup> Basil Davidson, "The New Portugal and Africa", The New Statesman, Vol. 87, No. 2253, May 24, 1974, p. 724.

and stultifying these in fact may be; and he believes that Portugal's NATO allies will support him in this. What he seeks in short, is some kind of NATO - buttressed 'neo-colonial solution.'<sup>9</sup>

Davidson conjectures that:

This means that the wars will go on so long as the Junta and the government are prepared to agree with him, since there is every reason to believe that the liberation movements are saying what they mean when they reject any such solutions.<sup>10</sup>

Whatever course of action Spínola might have adopted, there was every reason to believe that the liberation movements would have negotiated for nothing less than Portuguese military and political withdrawal.

Given these and other factors U.S. foreign policy towards Angola should have sought to avoid great power rivalry, dominance, or conflict. During his African trip in February 1970, Secretary of State William Rogers made this quite explicit when he said:

We do not believe that Africa should be the scene of a major power conflict. We on our part do not propose to make it so. Fundamentally, we consider that such a course would be wasteful to all parties. It certainly would not be in the interest of the African states.<sup>11</sup>

The United States policy throughout the war of liberation against Portuguese colonialism was to maintain support of its NATO ally Portugal with occasional suggestions to Portugal (hardly enough to constitute "pressure") that colonial-

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid. p. 723.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> The New York Times, February 12, 1970.

ism was really out-of-date, and that it would be wise to think a bit about some kind of transition to "self-determination". While the assumption that "Portugal was there to stay" was only officially embodied in policy with the famous "tar-baby" option of NSSM 39, earlier policies under Kennedy and Johnson were not substantially different.

What NSSM 39 did mean is that when the April 1974 coup came in Portugal, and it was clear that there would be a transition to some variety of independence in Angola and the other colonies, the American policy-makers were relatively unprepared for a coherent policy to establish an acceptable substitute for Portuguese colonialism. This does not mean that the attempt was not made, but it was hasty, confused and unsuccessful in its own terms. Because of the United States' greater economic stake in Angola, and a strategic stake in maintaining the position of the Mobutu regime in Zaire, therefore the U.S. attempted to eliminate the MPLA as a factor in the future of Angola, and establish one variant or another of a "moderate" pro-Western government in that country: through support for FNLA and UNITA; through the invasions of Zaire and South African troops and through the use of mercenaries.

While Gulf Oil was permitted by the Administration to resume its operations in Angola following the MPLA victory, providing much needed foreign exchange to Angola, the June 1976 veto of Angola's application for U.N. membership showed that the failure of U.S. intervention was still not fully

accepted. Using the transparently silly justification of the continued presence of Cuban troops in Angola (as Angolan President Agostinho Neto commented, if presence of foreign troops were grounds for exclusion from the U.N., many U.S. allies would thereby be excluded), the U.S. maintained its position as the one Western power refusing to recognize the People's Republic of Angola.

American policy in Angola failed a major test at home. The outcry in the Congress and the instant reaction in the media, were all indications that the Ford Administration badly misjudged the political volatility of the secrecy surrounding the formulation of foreign policy. Angola, as the Administration tirelessly pointed out, was not Vietnam. But the parallels of civil war and covert involvements were too close for the Congress to appreciate the distinction.

U.S. policy toward Angola reflected primarily Secretary Kissinger's concern with Soviet activities and the effects of decolonization on political change in Portugal. He seldom consulted State Department experts on Angola or took their advice. Despite reviews of U.S. and Soviet relations with Angola, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that U.S. policy toward Angola did not grow out of a policy analysis which anticipated various events. It is true that Soviet and Cuban intervention was not easy to foresee. Still with a better understanding of Angola, the fragility of FNIA and its inability to maintain a firm regional base without a

great deal of assistance might have been recognized. Not enough sustained interest in and knowledge of Angola had preceded intense crisis activity.

On his return from his first visit to Africa, Henry Kissinger told the House of Representatives Committee on International Relations that along with preventing foreign intervention, and promoting cooperation among the communities in Southern Africa, the goal of U.S. policy was "to prevent the radicalization of Africa."<sup>12</sup> Upon his election President Carter disclaimed such a characteristically "cold war" posture toward African developments. In short order, however, events in Ethiopia, Angola and Zaire, with which the Soviet Union and Cuba were either involved, potentially involved or allegedly involved, shifted the policy emphasis of his Administration in precisely the direction he had disavowed. The "danger" of radicalization and concomitant Soviet involvement came to dominate U.S. policy concerns regarding Angola (as well as sub-Saharan Africa), and the fashioning of an appropriate response to this "danger" moved to the upper reaches of the foreign policy agenda. This thesis has been concerned with whether the "dangers" that occupied so much of various U.S. administrations' time and figured so centrally in the statements of its spokesmen are in fact real, and in that light, whether the policy designed as a response

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<sup>12</sup> U.S. Congress, House Committee on International Relations, Report of the Secretary of State on his Trip to Europe, Latin America and Africa, June 1976. (Washington D.C: Government Printing Office, 1976).

is appropriate to the national interest of the U.S.

Radical political transformation in black Africa, especially when it occurs with substantial assistance from the Soviet Union, is usually viewed as dangerous to the U.S. in one or both of two ways --- as a threat to certain tangible military and/or economic interests, and as a challenge to the credibility of U.S. power in Africa, which if not met would weaken the position of U.S. within the global system. Careful analysis of the context within which such radical transformations have occurred, or are occurring, reveals, however, that the calculation of these threats is based on assumptions that are no longer rooted in the facts of the real world. As such the "threats" are more myth than reality, and the policies developed to respond to them are dangerously "out of sync" with the environment in which they must operate. Significant strategic interests of the U.S., or the West generally, in black Africa simply do not exist --- the scenario of a blockade of Western shipping lanes being not only far-fetched but logically implausible. In contrast, very significant U.S. economic interests are found in sub-Saharan Africa. These, however, are not threatened by radical political transformations. Both the structure of the economic systems of African states and changes in the international economic system have led to a situation in which radical states are no less desirous than so-called moderate states of maintaining active trading relations with the West

and obtaining access to Western capital markets and technology.

The "credibility threat" is a more complicated affair because the behaviour of U.S. statesmen, as well as the reaction of the Soviet Union, are involved in its creation. Maintenance of U.S. credibility involves a concern with the psychological dimension of power --- with how a set of events is perceived. A given Soviet move becomes a threat to U.S. "credibility" only when it is perceived by various audiences (the Soviet Union themselves, U.S. allies, the American public etc.) as constituting a significant challenge to American interests, influence, desires, etc. When U.S. government spokesmen define Soviet moves in this manner, even when no tangible interests are at stake, they contribute to such a perception. If the U.S. could "propose and dispose" world-wide --- i.e., if it could exercise effective global hegemony --- then the definition of every Soviet action outside its circumscribed sphere as a challenge to U.S. credibility would pose little problem. Under such circumstances successful demonstrations of U.S. "resolve" would be guaranteed, and frequent opportunities to display America's will to act would indeed provide a means to underscore the credibility of U.S. power. Serious problems arise, however, when hegemony is not assured: when situations arise that preclude a successful exercise of power, or where the costs of success are prohibitive. In such situations the definition of a threat to the U.S., irrespec-



tive of whether or not tangible interests are at stake, creates the basis for undermining credibility rather than enhancing it. Thus if the Soviet Union is involved in situations where an effective exercise of U.S. power at feasible cost is highly problematic and in which no tangible U.S. interests are at issue, a concern for the credibility of U.S. power would dictate that government spokesmen avoid defining the situation as a direct challenge to the U.S. This is the lesson that the Angolan situation teaches, and that the Ford and Carter Administrations failed to learn.

I am not suggesting that under contemporary circumstances the U.S. adopt a weak or isolationist foreign policy --- i.e., an unwillingness, on principle, to exercise power

abroad. Rather what I believe these circumstances make imperative are two things: first, a rejoining of the concern for the credibility of U.S. power with a concern for the protection of tangible interests; and second, a sensitivity to the political reverberations created by the use of that power among states other than the Soviet Union. Instead of being an autonomous and overriding criterion in action decisions, credibility ought to be established and maintained as a concomitant of the willingness to use American power in defence of demonstrably established tangible interests. The criterion for engaging in a test of credibility, and for deciding on the extent of resources to be committed to it, would be the significance of the U.S. stake --- diplomatic,

strategic, or economic --- in any given situation. the use of power would be scaled to the nature of the national interest involved, up to and including military intervention. Intervention, however, would be directed to obtaining some tangible goal, with the intangible psychological aspect of power --- credibility --- following as a "side-benefit." In a world in which power is diffused, the pursuit of tangible interests can set up political reverberation among numerous states. Thus, policy must be sensitive to the historical and political context of any given situation so as to avoid acts which have unintended and unforeseen negative ramifications, placing in jeopardy other interests, or even the long-term security of the very interest being pursued in the short term.

In providing an analysis of U.S. policy toward Angola, my main concern has not been to offer a set of alternative policies but rather to question the appropriateness of the conventional foreign policy paradigm and some of the underlying assumptions about the nature of the international order and America's place in it in terms of which Angola policy has been generated. There is little doubt that elements within the last two administrations are aware that assumptions upon which policy during the 1950's and 1960's was based do not serve adequately in the contemporary world. This group --- usually referred to in the media as the "africanists" --- has pushed for policies that closely resemble some of the guide-

lines suggested above, and from time to time, has succeeded in defining the policy postures of the administrations. It has, however, lacked a fully elaborated and articulated foreign policy paradigm which could replace that which has served since the end of World War Two. That has been its weakness. Whenever some new action by the Russians or Cubans in Africa has raised the salience of the Cold War paradigm, the "africanists" have lost their hold over the direction of administration policy, and a set of policies with a very different thrust, but more consistent with the assumptions and logic of that paradigm, has become dominant. Indeed, the conventional paradigm offers a number of distinct advantages. Its simple dichotomous vision of the world provides unambiguous guide to action --- thus it is attractive to the hard-pressed maker of policy. It is rooted in the political culture of the country at large, and represents an important element in the belief system of powerful constituencies in Congress and the federal bureaucracy --- thus it is attractive to the politician. It is associated, at least until the Vietnam debacle, with decades of what in the American viewpoint is an impressive record of foreign policy success --- thus it is difficult to jettison for an untried perspective. These advantages, however, relate to domestic politics, not to the substantive relation between the paradigm and the reality it supposedly reflects. The general point of the analysis provided in this thesis is that this

relation is seriously askew and that therefore policy has been dangerously miscast.

What is called for is the elaboration of a new perspective that explicitly recognizes the changed nature of contemporary circumstances and the U.S. role in them. This means an acceptance of the Soviet Union as a genuine global power along with the U.S., and a concomitant willingness to accommodate Soviet actions that do not threaten tangible U.S. interests. In other words, it means the adoption of a non-zero-sum view of the relationship between U.S. and Soviet interest and influence, and a reluctance to claim a vital involvement in, and responsibility for developments throughout the world. Further, it means accepting a genuinely pluralistic world, in which the political identities and economic relationships of states cross-cut the old definition of a world built on two competing "blocks."<sup>13</sup> The working-out of the historical process in Africa reveals that this type of world is indeed emerging. What remains is to see if the U.S. continues the futile and ultimately dangerous effort to reshape this world in the mold of an outmoded global vision, or it can respond to changing circumstances with a policy characterized by what Stanley Hoffmann has termed "the imperative of modesty and devolution."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> For an elaboration of this position see Kenneth Jowit, Images of Detente and the Soviet Political Order, Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, University of California, 1977.

<sup>14</sup> Stanley Hoffmann, "Choices", Foreign Policy, No. 12, Fall

Finally, an essential element of any future U.S. role in Southern Africa would be to permit the forces of change to operate short of the point where African disorders would produce major international dangers. With this objective in mind, the first task of U.S. policy would be to help create a strategically sterile environment in Africa. Basically, this objective will require taking initiatives to remove Southern Africa as an area of direct or indirect cold war military competition and buffer it against disruptive intervention by external powers. This, in turn, means attention to the possibility of an understanding or agreement between the U.S. and Soviet Union, tacit or explicit, regarding security matters in Southern Africa. Such an understanding encouraged by a new spirit of "detente" between the two superpowers is a distinct possibility.

On these grounds there is reason to believe that the Soviet Union might possibly be receptive to American initiative in this direction. Sub-Saharan Africa is not a region of primary importance to Soviet strategic objectives. Like the U.S., the Soviet Union is not bound by general strategic commitments in Africa and has relative freedom of maneuver.

Such a pattern of Soviet-American cooperation, in short, would be a step of fundamental importance both in protecting Southern Africa and the rest of the continent from external

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meddling.

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