

ANGOLA AND NAMIBIA: COUNTER-REVOLUTION IN RETREAT

What was it that forced the South African government to the negotiating table on Angola and Namibia? PHAMBILI examines the combination of factors leading to the new developments in the balance of power in the region.

ONE year ago the SADF was pouring troops into Angola in a counter-offensive designed to install a UNITA government in Luanda; six months later after the historic battle of Cuito Cuanavale, South Africa was preparing to settle for an "independent" Southern Angola under Savimbi's control; and in March this year PW Botha warned that the South Africans would stay in Angola until the Cubans left.

Now, one year later, the SADF has left Angola, UNITA faces total destruction, FAPLA and Cuban troops have taken control of the border with Namibia, and South Africa has undertaken to implement independence with Namibia under UN Resolution 435.

This dramatic reversal is the result of a special combination of factors which have fundamentally shifted the balance of forces in the region, in favour of the forces of progress and national liberation, and against the forces of apartheid and counter-revolution. This special situation is made up of military, economic, international and "Namibian" factors. Anyone of these factors by themselves may not have decisively tilted the balance of force, but together these factors are so powerful that they forced the South African regime to totally reconsider its position in relation to Angola and Namibia.

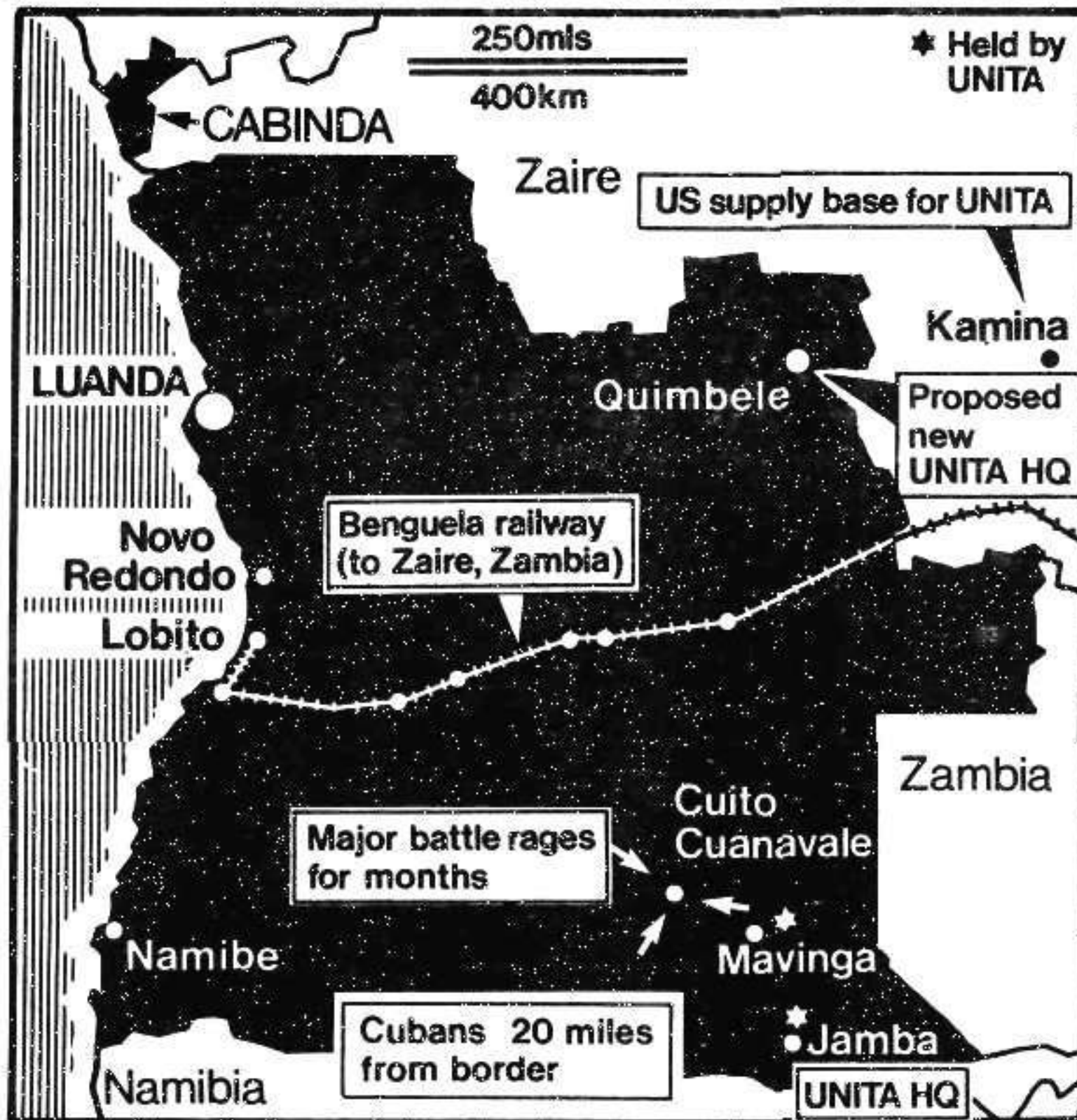
1. THE MILITARY FACTOR:

"We're waiting for PW Botha to bring his cowardly carcass to Cunene and we'll send that fascist back in a box".(FAPLA captain)

The last year has seen a major shift in the military balance of forces in the region, particularly in the Angolan conflict. The SA armed forces in all its forms (SADF, SWA Territory Force (SWATF), UNITA and the various mercenary forces) has lost its military superiority over the Angolan armed forces (FAPLA) and their allies - Cuban troops, Swapo and the ANC. It is now history that the turning point in the struggle for military superiority was the defeat of the South African combined forces in the battle for Cuito Cuanavale, the strategic base from which FAPLA launches its offensives against SADF\UNITA strongholds in Southern Angola. The combined SA forces failed to take Cuito Cuanavale after more than six months of fighting, 40 000 bombs against Angolan positions and many military assaults.

The defeat of SA forces at Cuito Cuanavale was a dramatic demonstration of the shift in the military balance of forces which had been taking place in this period. Faced by intensified South African aggression particularly since 1985, the Angolan government had been forced to massively upgrade and expand its armed forces, and to request extensive assistance from its Cuban and Soviet allies. The decisive factor in the development of Angola's military capacity was the recent strengthening of its air force to the point where it achieved military superiority over the SA air force. This was a critical factor because previously SA fighters had virtually unchallenged control over Angolan air space, and were able to raid virtually at will. The introduction of advanced fighter planes, including MIG 23s, flown by Cuba and Angola's most skilled pilots now decisively tilted the balance in favour of the Angolan forces. South Africa's outdated fighter planes were no match for the Soviet planes. South Africa could ill-afford to lose the planes that were shot down, being unable to replace them due to the arms embargo. The situation was now reversed, with Angola asserting control over its air space, and developing the capacity to strike even further South, if needs be.

The strengthening of Angolan forces enabled FAPLA/Cuban troops to push South to assert control over abandoned tracts of Angolan territory. Previously Cuban troops had been concentrated on holding a defence line further North. Now greatly strengthened



they were being actively deployed in large numbers in the South for the first time in assisting FAPLA forces to secure the territorial integrity of Angola against South African aggression. The extent to which the military initiative had shifted out of SA's hands was illustrated in June this year when SA troops attacked Angolan troops near the Caleque water scheme, 10 miles from the Namibian border. The Angolan forces retaliated by attacking SA troops at the Caleque dam (held by SA, although inside Angola) wrecking devastation from the air and leaving a large number of South African casualties.

By this time Angola's forces had advanced 200 km southwards and had deployed FAPLA, Cuban and Swapo troops in a line 400 km along the Namibian border. The Angolan air force had gained control of border airspace, having built airfields with sophisticated radar, air surveillance and missile equipment close to the Namibian

border. Angolan air and radar cover now extends 50 km inside Namibia, and there have been reports of Angolan aircraft entering Namibian airspace. The Angolan government had demonstrated its will and capacity to drive South and defend the territorial integrity of Angola against SA aggression. Angola's and Cuba's preparedness to move even further South if needs be was made clear, particularly by Cuba's leaders, although Fidel Castro and Angola's leaders have stressed that they would prefer a diplomatic solution on the basis of independence in Namibia and an end to the foreign intervention in Angola.

South Africa's Vietnam?

The shift in the military balance of forces was also reflected in the heavy casualties taken by SA/UNITA forces, their rapidly sinking morale, and the rejection of the war by growing numbers of white South Africans. Angola was fast becoming "South Africa's Vietnam". The extent of the moral crisis around the Angolan war was reflected when the official mouthpiece of the Afrikaans church, NGK, came out against the war. "It appears to us that the more or less permanent presence of SA troops in this foreign land can be questioned on Christian ethical grounds". The seriousness of this challenge to the regime's presence in Angola can be seen if we consider that the NGK has 1,7 million Afrikaner members, including PW Botha and 80% of his government.

Increasing numbers of young South Africans, both English and Afrikaans youth, rejected the illegal occupation of Namibia and invasion of Angola. Many others were simply not prepared to fight in a war which they didn't understand and where growing numbers of South African conscripts were getting killed and injured. This was expressed by 143 white conscripts who publicly refused to serve in the SADF, despite the fact that David Bruce had recently been sentenced to 6 years imprisonment for taking the same stand.

If morale was low among white troops, it was even lower amongst black members of the Namibian battalions making up the 24 000 strong SWA Territory Force (SWATF). There were mutinies in at least three SWATF battalions (101, 202, 701) during the recent Angolan invasion. More than 400 troops in 101 Battalion mutinied rather than fight against the Angolan army. One of the men who deserted said that they were sent to Angola "to fight against our will on the side of UNITA...FAPLA are using sophisticated weapons while we are armed only with light ones". Their unit of black

Namibians was forced to fight in the frontline while SADF troops held back in "a cowardly way". The notorious 32nd Battalion was virtually wiped out in fighting in Angola. The SADF has refused to release details of casualties of black troops, fearing that morale will sink even lower.

The loss of military superiority was an important factor in forcing SA to the negotiating table, to try and stave off the growing threat to their hegemony in the region. In particular, they were anxious to negotiate the *rapid withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola*, in order to reestablish their military superiority over Angola.

ANGOLA: THE COSTS OF THE WAR

- > Population: +_ 9 million (42% under 15, 4% over 60)
- > Displaced by the war: 700 000 to 1 million
- > Dead: 60 000 Crippled: 20 000
- > 1986: 53 000 children died as a result of war according to a UNICEF report, and about that number in previous years
- > One in four children die before their fifth birthday and nearly half are undernourished
- > The International Red Cross is feeding 100 000 people driven off farming land by UNITA attacks and the use of landmines to turn fields into death traps.
- > The Angolan government estimated that war damage has cost the country over R30 000 million

After liberation from Portugese colonialism

- > More than 30 000 middle/high level technicians left the country
- > +_ 2 500 factories were inoperative, mostly abandoned and sabotaged by their owners
- > Only 8000 of 153 000 registered vehicles were still in use, and scores of bridges linking the national roads had been destroyed

An added factor was that thousands of SA troops were bogged down around Cuito Cuanavale and failure to negotiate would have resulted in an even more disastrous and politically unacceptable defeat for them. On the other side, the Angolan people have not had a minute's peace since independence in 1975. They are eager to end the war providing they can replace it with a lasting peace.

2. ECONOMIC FACTORS

The economic crisis facing the regime grows more serious by the day. Sanctions are really beginning to bite, the country goes deeper and deeper into debt, loans are unobtainable, the country is rapidly running out of foreign reserves which are being used for loans, imports and to try and prop up the rand, the currency continues to slide with foreign investor confidence, inflation and unemployment are high, the growth rate is low, and the price of gold continues to fall. Despite the state of emergency's declared aim of stabilising the political and economic situation, the economy is in a deeper crisis than confronted it when the American banks demanded repayment of loans in 1985. Economically, things have gone from bad to worse, and the economic crisis threatens to degenerate into outright economic collapse.

In this context, the war in Angola and SA's occupation of Namibia has become economically insupportable. The SADF budget has more than doubled, from R3,8 billion in 1984 to R8,2 billion in 1988. A conservative estimate of SA's financial involvement in Namibia is about 1,5 billion per year, and the Angolan war costs roughly the same. With the rapid intensification of the conflict recently and the loss of expensive equipment such as planes, the cost of the war is escalating even higher.

The arms embargo also raises the cost of war materials for the regime, since it either has to develop its own weapons or pay inflated prices on the black market. The financial stakes are further raised by the fact that the Angolan forces are fighting an increasingly high-technology war, subsidised and equipped by the Soviet Union. The size of the burden the Angolan war is placing on the SA economy is indicated by the estimate of a well-known economist who said an end to the Angolan war could cut taxes by a quarter. The South African government hopes that a negotiated settlement will have further economic spin-offs by opening the way for expanded trade relations in the region, and the continent as a whole.

For the Angolan people, too, and their socialist allies, the economic burden of the war has been enormous. Defence expenditure takes up over half of Angola's national budget. Exports have been disrupted by the war, as has peasant food production, since UNITA mines the fields. Railway lines, water and electricity supplies are constantly sabotaged by SADF and UNITA bandits. As a result of the war, the currency (kwanza) is virtually worthless and barter is common. Angolans have a deep material interest in ending the war, since this will free Angolan society to plough their resources into social development and reconstruction, rather than war.

3. INTERNATIONAL FACTORS

As SA has stepped up its aggression against Angola so have Angola's allies, particularly Cuba and the Soviet Union, stepped up their support. They have been the source of enormous technical, military, material and moral support which has been vital to the survival of Angola. Cuba, in particular, with every fresh attack on Angola's independence, has sent more internationalist troops and technical personnel to defend it. This support has ultimately been the decisive international factor which has helped shift the balance of forces in Angola's favour.

Recent major developments in world politics have also been important: developments in the Soviet Union in particular have had a profound impact on the approach of the international community to regional conflicts.

The Soviet Union, under Gorbachev's leadership, has taken the political initiative in resolving regional conflicts, guided by the approach that where possible political rather than military solutions need to be found. This approach has contrasted sharply with the open militarism and interventionism of the Reagan administration, and has exposed it to the international community and the American people.

As a result, the Reagan administration has been forced to change direction. By being seen as a peacemaker in various regional conflicts, it hopes to regain some of its lost prestige. This is particularly important with the upcoming Presidential elections in November: a solution to the Angola/Namibian conflict could play an important role in getting the Republican candidate Bush elected. This helps explain why America is putting so much pressure on the SA government to see a negotiated settlement through to the end.

Reagan and Botha are also hoping that the prospect of an Angolan\Namibian settlement will take pressure off in the USA for further sanctions measures such as the Dellums Bill.

The Americans have probably made it clear to Botha that this is the government's last chance of getting a sympathetic deal from the US administration. If Dukakis is elected president, he has said he will recognise the Angolan government and cut all aid to UNITA. He has also promised to take a much harder line on South Africa. Commentators have said that even a Bush administration would result in a worsening of the SA regime's position in the region. The Reagan administration, on the other hand, has seen that the tables have turned and wants to salvage the situation for UNITA as best it can.

4. THE NAMIBIAN FACTOR

The balance of forces in Namibia have also swung against Pretoria in recent months. There has been an upsurge of armed and mass struggle led by SWAPO. Reports indicate that the armed struggle has not only intensified in the rural areas, but in the cities too, where there have been armed attacks on army convoys and other military targets by urban insurgents of PLAN (the Peoples Liberation Army of Namibia).

The last year has seen the rapid development of mass worker and student organisation in Namibia. Student organisation asserted itself in the four month schools boycott of 40 000 students, under the leadership of NANSO (National Namibian Students Organisation). Students were demanding that army bases situated next to the schools be removed, since students were getting injured and killed in fighting. On June 20 and 21 well over half of Namibia's workers came out in support of the students demands, led by their trade union federation, the National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW). The worker-led two days of national protest also demanded the release of detainees and an end to SA's military occupation of Namibia.

This upsurge of mass action against SA's illegal occupation also coincided with the collapse of Namibia's "Muzorewa option". South Africa's so-called Transitional Government of National Unity (TGNU) was designed to pave the way for an internal settlement in Namibia - ie elections under SA rather than UN supervision. Alternatively, if UN supervised elections were unavoidable, Botha

wanted the TGNU to form a 'moderate' bloc which would protect SA's interests and block SWAPO. For either option to succeed, the TGNU would have to win a degree of mass support, and this is what the South African government told them to do.

The TGNU tried to win mass support by projecting a liberal image. They campaigned for the release of detainees and started scrapping ethnic authorities. This brought them into conflict with SA: Botha stepped in this year and gave the Administrator General vast powers which enabled him to overrule decisions of the TGNU. This has exposed the TGNU for the sham that it is, and created even greater support for SWAPO. It is widely believed by 'Namibian experts' that SWAPO now has the support of over 70% of Namibians. It is being said that the TGNU option has collapsed and the regime is being forced to come to terms with the fact that they are going to have to deal with a SWAPO government in Namibia, like it or not.

Why is South Africa negotiating?

As has been shown above, a combination of factors has made it unviable for the regime to continue its course of attempting to impose its will in Angola and Namibia through force. A decisive shift against the regime in the military balance of forces, their inability to continue financing the war, heightened resistance by the Namibian people to SA's illegal occupation, and the pressure of international factors have all combined to force the regime to the negotiating table.

WHAT DO THEY HOPE TO GET OUT OF NEGOTIATIONS?

Negotiating could take the SA government down three possible roads. Obviously the best the SA government could hope for was that they would be able to impose their will at the negotiating table, where they had failed on the battlefield. The second best option was to salvage what they could out of the situation, with the assistance of the US government, by negotiating a deal which offered them a degree of protection. The third option, the one they have always chosen in the past, was to use the negotiations to buy time, only to sabotage the negotiation process when it suited them to do so.

Option one: imposing their will

In the third round of talks (in Cairo on June 24) the SA

delegation, headed by Pik Botha and the head of the NIS, attempted this option. They demanded the closure of ANC bases in Angola; an indefinite delay in implementing Namibian independence under Resolution 435; and an Angolan agreement that SADF control a strip of Southern Angola to prevent SWAPO fighters entering Northern Namibia. These demands were totally rejected by the Cuban and Angolan delegations.

Option two: total compromise

By the fourth round of the talks (New York on July 11) the SA delegation had shifted their position, and agreed to a radically different approach. This demonstrates the extent of the pressures on the regime, and the fact that they were negotiating from a position of weakness. The most important elements of the New York agreement represented a turnaround from what SA had proposed in Cairo. The principles they agreed were "indispensable to a comprehensive settlement" were:

- The total withdrawal of SA from Southern Angola
- The independence of Namibia under Resolution 435
- With the implementation of 435, the redeployment of Cuban forces to Northern Angola over 13 months, followed by the staged withdrawal of Cuban troops
- Respect for the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and borders of states; to abstain from the threat and use of force against states; not to interfere in the internal affairs of states; and not to allow their territories to be used for acts of "war, aggression or violence" against others
- Superpower guarantees both of Angolan security and Namibian independence

Probably the most significant indication of the shift in the balance of forces was the reversal of SA's position on the so-called 'linkage' question: SA had always maintained that UNTIL the Cuban troops left Angola, SA would continue to occupy Angola and Namibia, and SA would withhold independence from Namibia. Now Angola and Cuba had successfully turned this 'linkage' on its head: effectively all parties agreed that Cuban troops would only be finally withdrawn from Angola AFTER the withdrawal of SA forces from Angola and Namibia, and the implementation of independence for Namibia.

Another significant aspect of the agreement is that it totally excludes the question of UNITA. SA has again reversed its previous

position that UNITA would have to be part of any talks, by agreeing to leave UNITA out. Angola's position has been that the question of UNITA is an internal matter for Angolans, and that once SA aggression has been removed from Angola, the resolution of the UNITA problem would automatically follow. The question of UNITA is the subject of separate bilateral talks between Angola and America.

Option three: Sabotage

Although at this stage SA has committed itself to implement these agreements, there is no reason to believe that they are not considering the sabotage option. One view is that the reason SA committed itself to an agreement was to rescue its troops from Angola. By agreeing to a ceasefire and withdrawal, they could rescue the thousands of SA troops trapped around Cuito Cuanavale. This view goes on to predict that SA will now sabotage the peace process on one pretext or another. It has been pointed out that there are many issues over which SA is able to create stumbling blocks. Let us look at some of these issues.

A. Cuban troop withdrawal -

It is possible that SA will go back on the agreement and start insisting again on their old 'linkage' formula: that Cuban troops have to start withdrawing before 435 can be implemented. Even if they don't do this, SA could still create obstacles by insisting on an unreasonably short period for withdrawal of Cuban troops; or to insist as has been suggested that all Cubans including doctors, engineers, and other internationalist volunteers vital to Angola's development, be withdrawn. Clearly any of these scenario's would be unacceptable to the Angolan government. Already SA has suggested a 10-month withdrawal period, as opposed to Angola and Cuba's three to four years. Even the pro-American journal "Africa Confidential" has conceded that it will take two years to train FAPLA to fully take over the functions of the highly trained Cuban troops. Therefore any insistence by SA on a period of less than two years can be expected to be rejected by the Angolan government.

B. The question of ANC bases

Although the issue of ANC bases was not actually part of the talks, SA tried to introduce it, and may introduce it a later stage as a complicating factor. Angola and Cuba have taken a firm stand that ANC bases in Angola are not up for negotiation: "our support for the ANC is not a coin of exchange in the talks. The ANC, as well as

SWAPO, are recognised liberation movements, and the liberation movements, are not on the negotiating agenda". (Angolan negotiator). Angola has said that Namibian independence can not be made conditional on closing down ANC bases in Angola: "this would convert the Angolan government into a gendarme of the aspirations of apartheid". Nevertheless, SA may stand firm on its position that the agreement forbidding territories from being used for "acts of war, aggression or violence against others" means the ANC bases have to go.

C. Namibian independence

There are a whole series of issues around Namibian independence which SA may use to try and sabotage the peace process.

- Date for implementation of Resolution 435 - SA could delay the peace process indefinitely by refusing to set a date for the implementation of 435. The New York agreement stipulates that all parties have to agree on a date.
- Withdrawal of SA troops - there is a major build up of SA troops in Namibia. Under resolution 435 all but 1500 SA troops have to be withdrawn within 12 weeks of 435 being implemented, and finally SA has to disband or withdraw all troops from Namibia. An important part of the SADF in Namibia is the 24 000- strong SWA Territory Force. SA claims that SWATF is Namibia's "own national army", whereas Angola and Cuba (and the international community) insist that it is part of the SA forces and must be disbanded. A refusal by SA to do this could sabotage the peace process
- The role of the UN - according to Resolution 435 Namibian independence will be implemented under UN supervision. SA has already questioned the "bias" of the UN in favour of SWAPO (its aid to SWAPO and recognition of SWAPO as the authentic representative of the Namibian people). It could obstruct the UN on this basis. SA could also set up obstacles to the deployment of the UN peacekeeping troops in Namibia.
- "Free and fair elections" - there is some doubt as to whether SA will allow free and fair elections to take place in Namibia. Magnus Malan has already said that the SA government is not prepared to accept "SWAPO's red flag over Windhoek", although this contradicts other government statements. The

SA government may look for ways to make it impossible for SWAPO to participate in Namibian elections. The possibility remains that if the peace process breaks down, SA may hold its own elections, as it has often threatened to do in the past.

Other issues which may obstruct Namibian independence include the status of Walvis Bay (SA claims it as its own); SA's economic obligations to Namibia, and the imposition of a Nkomati-type accord as a condition for independence.

THE ROOTS OF COUNTER-REVOLUTION IN ANGOLA: CIA INVOLVEMENT

Less than a year after MPLA armed struggle was launched, a counter-revolutionary movement, the Union of the People of Angola (UPA) under the leadership of Holden Roberto, emerged.

The UPA -which later was renamed FNLA- revealed its true character by fomenting internal strife within the ranks of the oppressed resulting in the massacre of 8000 MPLA patriots.

As early as 1962, the FNLA formed GRAE (Government of the Angolan Republic in Exile). Based in Zaire this movement's aim was the elimination of MPLA rather than the Portuguese colonial system.

With its military wing under the leadership of the American mercenary, a so-called "Vietnam veteran" by the name of Bernard Meniherz it became abundantly clear that American imperialism was fighting against the liberation of Angola.

And later, it became known that FNLA was an aborted child of the notorious American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

About the true character of CIA leadership, John Stockwell, former chief of CIA Angola Task Force, has this to say: "a protected clique of ignorant and truculent men running a lawless machine which can lay waste a vulnerable nation in the space of a few months".

The UNITA Question

UNITA have been totally marginalised in the process of negotiations. SA has in effect been forced to leave them out of the negotiations, and leave the question of UNITA to be handled by America. Reports claim that American officials attempted to force the Angolan government to negotiate with UNITA as a precondition to negotiating the main settlement plan. But the Angolans and Cubans have steadfastly refused to include the question of negotiation with UNITA as part of the plan. In fact they have said that Cuban troop withdrawal is dependent on an end to South African aid to UNITA, as well as an end to South African occupation of Namibia and Angola, since these are the main sources of foreign aggression against the Angola government which had forced them to ask for Cuban assistance in the first place.

The US and SA governments are attempting to put pressure on Angola to negotiate with UNITA using other methods. The most prominent one seems to be to use a bloc of moderate African states to push for a 'government of national reconciliation' with UNITA. South Africa has even tried to call for 'Africans to solve Africa's problems' involving a government of 'national unity' in Angola, expulsion of Cuban ('foreigners') and bypassing the superpowers - as an alternative to the current peace talks!

The Angolan government's position is that there can be no negotiations with UNITA, but members of UNITA have been offered amnesty if they lay down arms. According to Angola's representative at the UN, United States calls for a settlement with UNITA are "an interference in the internal affairs of Angola." UNITA was created from outside Angola and is able to survive only because of the oxygen it receives from foreign forces. We do not see any possibility, even remote, of a dialogue with UNITA." President Dos Santos has explained why Angolans refuse to negotiate with UNITA: "Angolans see UNITA as synonymous with division, terrorism, suffering, mourning, grief, treason and a blot on Angola's history that must be erased."

In fact with the removal of SA forces "UNITA's oxygen" is in serious danger of being cut off. The dramatic shift in the balance of forces in the region is cutting off UNITA's options one by one:

1. Government of national reconciliation - after recent developments the Angolan government is objectively in a greater position of strength to maintain its hard line on UNITA. However

COUNTER-REVOLUTION IN ANGOLA: SAVIMBI'S LINKS TO PORTUGAL

Roberto's twin brother in counterrevolution was Jonas Malheiro Savimbi, a dropout from medical school in Portugal. This political chameleon, after having flirted with MPLA and FNLA formed UNITA in 1966.

From the outset like FNLA, UNITA's enemy was MPLA. This was confirmed after the coup de'etat in Portugal in 1974 when secret files of the fascist regime were opened. Savimbi's letters to Portuguese authorities about plans and strategies to liquidate MPLA were found.

In his own words Savimbi had this to say: "...it was our intention to weaken MPLA with hard blows and to undermine its authority aboard, so the world would wonder if it even existed". "The authorities know that we possess a mobile force on the banks of the Luanquinqa close to Zambia. It was this force that attacked the MPLA during April and May in Zambia and forced them out of Lutembo". (Extracts from letters Savimbi wrote to General Luis Cunha former Commander-in-Chief of the Portuguese armed forces in Angola -1972).

it is to be expected that the imperialists will intensify pressure on Angola to negotiate with UNITA.

2. Solution involving UNITA without Savimbi - analysts have raised the possibility of the Angolan government talking to a UNITA without Savimbi. But the Angolan government has rejected this, again from a position of strength. Splits have developed in UNITA over Savimbi's dictatorial style and collaboration with Pretoria. It is possible that UNITA may disintegrate under the pressure, with the dissident elements accepting the Angolan government's offer of amnesty.

3. The 'Savimbistan' option - SA and UNITA's plan to declare an independent republic in Southern Angola under UNITA control collapsed with the SADF/UNITA defeat around Cuito Cuanavale. FAPLA's counter-offensive has prevented UNITA taking towns along the Benguela railway line which would have been vital to their plan for a Savimbistan. With Angolan forces having sealed the Namibian border and launched a new offensive in September,

UNITA stands to be militarily crushed. Namibian independence only worsens the situation for UNITA, separating it from SA forces by hundreds of kilometres.

4. The Zaire option.- the only remaining option is for UNITA to move its main base to Zaire and North/East Angola (see map). They would be supplied through Zaire by America, and effectively sever their link with South Africa. This option is extremely risky because it relies fully on US support which won't be forthcoming if Dukakis wins the presidential election.

Even if he doesn't win, they will be isolated from South Africa, and without any social support base in the north of Angola. Angola is also unlikely to allow Zaire to provide a base for aggression against it. Therefore UNITA is in serious trouble.

What does all this mean?

Progressive opinion seems to be split between those who think the negotiations are a gigantic con by Pik Botha and his diplomats; and those who believe that Sam Nujoma will be in Windhoek by the end of the year! The truth is probably somewhere in between these two extremes. As Cuba's chief negotiator put it, it is no longer a question of whether SA is serious about a solution: "it is a matter of realities" which determine the seriousness of the various parties. It has been correctly pointed out that SA has signed several agreements to leave Namibia, and has gone back on all of them. Therefore the scepticism of in particular the Namibian people is not surprising. However the situation in 1988 is **qualitatively different** from the situations in 1978, 1981, and 1984 when agreements were reached and then broken by the regime. In that period the balance of forces was clearly in favour of the SA regime, which could act virtually as it pleased.

Now the SA regime can no longer act as it pleases. Reality dictates otherwise. Nevertheless, we should have no illusions that Botha and company have suddenly committed themselves to peace and justice in the region. They will do what they can to manoeuvre out of the situation or reimpose their control, if they are allowed to. The difference now is that the regime is hemmed in all fronts with enormous pressure being placed on them to implement whatever is negotiated. This pressure has resulted in serious divisions in the regime as to how to handle the situation, with various factions openly clashing with each other at the talks. But even the out and out militarists, like Malan have been forced to confront the reality that

South Africa can no longer unilaterally impose its will on the region, by force or by other means.

Prospects for a global negotiated political solution are therefore better than they have ever been before. However, the road to Namibian independence and peace in Angola is still fraught with landmines. The decisive factor will be the stepping up of the pressures which led the regime to negotiate in the first place: military balance of forces, international economic and diplomatic pressure, and the struggles of the Namibian people. Important too will be pressure on the regime from the people of South Africa to implement Resolution 435 and to end aggression against the people of Angola.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOUTH AFRICA

The future of the peoples of Southern Africa is indivisible: progress for the peoples of Angola and Namibia strengthens the struggles of South Africa's majority for national liberation, and weakens the forces of apartheid and imperialism. At the same time, as long as white minority rule remains intact, the people of Namibia and Angola will not be able to fully exercise their right to self-determination. Their freedom and independence will constantly be under threat from a decaying ruling class desperate to hold onto power. There is therefore a reciprocal duty of our peoples to assist each other in the fight for self determination and independence.

If a global political settlement is reached involving independence for Namibia under 435 and an end to foreign aggression against Angola, it will have major implications for the situation in South Africa. Firstly it will demonstrate that the regime is not invincible. Secondly it will confirm the position of democrats throughout the world that only comprehensive and effective pressure at all levels will force the South African government to the negotiating table. The Reagan- Thatcher- Kohl plea for "quiet diplomacy" will finally find its true place in the dustbin of history.

Finally, such a settlement will focus enormous pressure on the regime to negotiate with its own people.

Increasingly people in South Africa and in the international community will ask why on the one hand the regime is prepared to recognise the rights of neighbouring states to independence and self-determination; yet on the other hand it refuses to come to terms with the organisations of the majority in its own country, or indeed

to recognise its own peoples right to national self- determination.

COUNTER-REVOLUTION IN ANGOLA SOUTH AFRICAN DESTABILISATION

Since MPLA seized state power in 1975, the people of Angola never tasted any peace due to the American/South African/ UNITA counter revolutionary onslaught. On the eve of the victory of the revolution the new People's Republic of Angola (PRA) was invaded by the combined forces of UNITA and SADF from the southern flank while FNLA was attacking from the Zairean border in the north - all this at the instigation of US with former secretary of state Henry Kissinger master-minding the whole operation. Hence the so-called Kissinger's war.

On 23 October 1975 South African regular army troops supported by tanks and artillery penetrated deeply into Angola advancing between 60 and 70 km a day heading towards Luanda. At the request of the MPLA the Cuban party leadership decided to send, with great urgency, a battalion of regular troops with anti-tank weapons to help the new Angolan state to resist the invasion. However Angola was to know no peace as counter revolutionary forces of UNITA and SADF alliance with US support embarked on a protracted program of ruthless destruction of Angola's infrastructure and mass murder of innocent civilians. A series of invasions were launched; each time with intensified ferocity: Operation Protea, Operation mokescreen, Operation Askari, Operation Modular, the list appears endless as forces of counter-revolution unleashed terror against the PRA until the recent mighty battle of Cuito Cuanavale. These brutal aggressions were said to be aimed at SWAPO bases in Angola and sometimes to the ANC's military wing MK.