

Angola Weekly News Summary

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ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY (OAU) SUMMIT ON ANGOLA

"It is not the OAU who will solve the Angolan problem, it will be the Angolan people," said Luis Almeida, Director of Information of the People's Republic of Angola, following the break-up of the extraordinary meeting of the Organization of African Unity after it failed to recognize his government as the sole representative of the Angolan people.

The OAU, which consists of 46 independent African states (excluding South Africa and Zimbabwe) merely requested the nine-nation executive board to "follow the problem closely."

Mozambique's President Samora Machel opened the meeting with a strong speech supporting the People's Republic of Angola and urged that the 46 OAU member states "provide all necessary support to the Popular Movement in order to drive out the invaders." Machel condemned "those traitors who had opened the door to South Africa" and called the FNLA and UNITA "puppet forces that paved the way for the South African aggressors."

Machel's speech was followed by that of Senegalese President Leopold Sengor, who said that MPLA, FNLA and UNITA should reconcile their differences. "To recognize any one of the three factions would be to think like Europeans," concluded Sengor.

The two speakers represented a division that remained throughout the meeting. Twenty-two countries, led by Nigeria, supported the position of recognition of the MPLA-led People's Republic of Angola, while 22 countries supported the "reconciliation" position. Ethiopia and Uganda took no "official" position. Finally, in the early hours of January 13th, it became apparent that no compromise could be reached, and the meeting was adjourned.

Preceding the OAU meeting, the U.S. had launched a diplomatic campaign against open recognition of the People's Republic of Angola and in support of its position of a government of national unity. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, William E. Schaufele, visited five African countries: Cameroon, Gabon, Zaire, Ivory Coast and Senegal. These countries were all committed to opposing recognition of the People's Republic.

Also, just prior to the meeting the State Department announced a new "carrot and stick" policy of giving or not giving aid to countries depending upon how they vote in the U.N. and other international forums. Already, the U.S. has postponed development aid to Tanzania because of its votes in the U.N., and Tanzania's position on Angola may well put

it out of the aid picture this year. Last year Tanzania received significant aid from the U.S. Nigeria has also been mentioned as a possible target, but a large amount of U.S. oil comes from Nigeria.

Before last week's OAU meeting there had been considerable speculation in the "establishment" press that the OAU might decide to seat representatives from the People's Republic of Angola, thereby recognizing the MPLA-led government as the legitimate representative of the Angolan people. When this did not happen, these same Western press reporters were able to claim a victory for the Western-backed groups and for South Africa and the United States. This interpretation leaves out very important elements in the complex dynamics of the OAU summit. The fact that 22 African countries stood firmly for recognition of the MPLA Government, despite tremendous pressures from the United States Government, is significant; also important is that support for the MPLA Government was seen by these countries as more important than a united African position, which, under the circumstances, would have been superficial and compromising to the interests of the Angolan people.

In Luanda, Lucio Lara, a leading member of the MPLA, said that the OAU conference did not change MPLA's position of no negotiations with FNLA and UNITA. "We are at war with South Africa and Zaire," said Lara, and only with them would the People's Republic of Angola negotiate.

AFRICAN COUNTRIES SUPPORTING THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA: Algeria, Benin, Burundi, Cape Verde Islands, Chad, Congo-Brazzaville, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea-Conakry, Libya, Malagasy, Mali, Mauritania, Comoro Islands, Mozambique, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tanzania, Niger.

AFRICAN COUNTRIES REMAINING OFFICIALLY NEUTRAL: Ethiopia, Uganda

AFRICAN COUNTRIES OPPOSING THE RECOGNITION OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA: Cameroon, Central African Republic, Mauritius, Egypt, Gabon, Gambia, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Morocco, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Togo, Upper Volta, Zaire, Zambia, Tunisia, Botswana.

ON THE ANGOLAN FRONT

The armed forces for the People's Republic of Angola have liberated the northern ports of Ambriz and Ambrizete and have pushed back National Front and foreign mercenary forces to Sao Salvador, 37 miles from the Zaire border. Ambriz was the military headquarters of the FNLA.

Since taking Uige, the FNLA headquarters, the MPLA has continued to push north and is not expected to stop until it reaches the border with Zaire. According to an article by Henry Kamm (Jan. 15 NYTimes) the leadership of the FNLA felt that it "had almost no hope of stemming the advance of the MPLA" and "that their best chance was to evacu-

ate soldiers and the civilian population and to reorganize for the kind of guerrilla warfare the National Front carried out against Portugal."

Africa News reported that Jane Bergerol, B.B.C. correspondent, has been traveling through the newly liberated areas in north-west Angola with Prime Minister Lopo De Nascimento of the MPLA. "Bergerol says the major complaint of people she met was the lack of food, after the FNLA army passed through, feeding off the land and killing livestock. Villagers also wanted transportation to take them to homes they fled during heavy fighting in the area. Another request the Prime Minister heard was for weapons to defend themselves should the FNLA try to return."

On the southern front, South African and Western-backed forces of UNITA are falling back on the central towns of Huambo and Benguela in the face of an offensive by the MPLA. This retreat is being made despite constant reinforcements from South Africa.

FNLA THREATENS TERRORISM

FNLA, frustrated by MPLA's rapid military advances, is now threatening to use international terrorist tactics, the Jan. 15 NY Times reported. Paulo Tuba, a member of FNLA's political bureau and one of 12 members of the front who are linked in a 24-member "revolutionary council" with UNITA, said that the first strikes would occur right in Luanda. "We are prepared to plastic movies, markets, and public places.... In a war of liberation people have to die," he said. Referring to MPLA's supporters, Mr. Tuba declared, "Congo-Brazzaville and Guinea and others have embassies abroad. They have airlines. The Russians have embassies in Africa. We can find money to pay foreign commandos to attack them."

according to Tuba

These threats reflect FNLA's current desperation and are aimed at putting pressure on FNLA's Western backers to increase their support.

CONGRESSMAN DIGGS, AN INVITED OBSERVER TO THE OAU, SPEAKS OUT
(excerpted from the Washington Post, 1/12/76)

"Congressman Charles C. Diggs Jr. (D-Mich.) called American intervention in Angola 'the biggest blunder in the history of its relations with Africa' today and said it would have forced the resignation of Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger were it not for 'the awesome reverence' he enjoys...."

"Once again African specialists were circumvented by the secretary's imperious attitude and proclivity toward viewing conflicts in terms of exercises in East-West one-upmanship."

"You simply cannot equate Soviet military support with South African aggression," he said. "The Soviet Union has supported virtually every African liberation group forced to resort to violence when all negotiations for independence failed....In contrast, South Africa remains the bastion of white supremacist domination on the African continent."

AMERICAN ACADEMIC, JOHN MARCUM, SPEAKS ON ANGOLA

Excerpts from NBC's Meet the Press, Jan. 4, 1976, with John Marcum, African scholar and professor of Political Science at the University of California, Santa Cruz. He is the past president of the African Studies Association and has testified before Congressional Committees on African Affairs. We include selected portions of Marcum's responses as representative of a significant line of argument against US intervention within the continuing debate on US policy toward Angola.

Panel: Dr. Marcum, what's really at stake in Angola? Why are so many people so agitated about it?

Dr. Marcum: I think at this point prestige is at stake. The United States, the Soviet Union, a number of other countries, have intervened and, having done so, their problem, I think, for the most part, is how to get out and save prestige. . . .

Panel: Roscoe Drummond, writing recently in the Christian Science Monitor, said the real issue is not whether the United States has a significant stake in Angola, but whether the United States has a stake in trying to prevent Soviet colonization of the African continent. Is that the real issue?

Dr. Marcum: I rather question whether this is really a Soviet colonization. I think the tendency is to impose upon Angola and other African issues a kind of cold war, or big power question and not to examine the thing on its own merit. It is very questionable whether the Soviet could colonize Angola if they wanted to

Panel: Are you saying that the U.S. Senate was right to vote to cut off American aid to the two movements we have been backing in Angola and that the administration was wrong in seeking to continue this aid?

Dr. Marcum: Yes, I think the congressional action was really correct in this case, that we had nothing to gain by intervening, and indeed, one of the results of this is to raise the whole issue of government credibility once again because of the way in which the aid was given; it was covert; we were told there shouldn't be a public discussion about it, and it has raised a lot of those problems that were left behind by the Vietnam experience.

Panel: What about the possibility of the establishment of a Russian Naval Base in Angola?

Dr. Marcum: The Popular Movement has said that it would not permit such establishment, but even if they did those bases would scarcely give the Soviets an enormous advantage. That is, if they wished to cut off oil shipments, they could do that from Somalia or other places better situated and, if they did cut off oil shipments, I would presume they would be committing what would be close to an act of war anyway, so it doesn't really seem to me that it is that important.

Mr. Schweid: Why is South African intervention such a cardinal sin?

Dr. Marcum: South African intervention is -- in African terms again, look at this question as an African problem, not just a global problem. South African intervention is a cardinal sin in that African countries feel threatened by a country whose racial system is an anathema to them. Nigeria's recognition of the Popular Movement government was occasioned primarily because of South African intervention. South Africa is in Africa. There are a whole series of issues such as South West Africa, Rhodesia, that are inter-related, and those are coming up.

Panel: Is Henry Kissinger an imperialist in your view?

Dr. Marcum: I don't know that Mr. Kissinger is an imperialist. I think he is someone who hasn't paid much attention to African problems. He has been apparently preoccupied with a number of other issues and what I fear is that this kind of situation that we face now has been allowed to develop without attention given to it early enough and we have confronted then a situation where we are involved, others are involved, and it is very hard to find a way out. It is a preoccupation with global issues, with big power confrontation, and a kind of perhaps a disdain for things as mundane as Africa, until we get in deeply, to find a way out.

Panel: Many comparisons have been made between our intervention in Angola and the situation, the quagmire we found ourselves in in South Vietnam and Indochina. Have we intervened, in your estimation, on the right side, given the military difference between the two opposing factions?

Dr. Marcum: I suspect we intervened on the side that is not going to win. The coalition that is fighting against the Popular Movement has not been able to do very well. In fact, it really isn't a coalition government because its two parts are fighting between themselves. It is a kind of no-win policy, if you will

Mr. Dash: So the matter is just not a Soviet-backed group supported by the United States and South Africa, fighting against the Soviet-backed troops.

Dr. Marcum: The fact that the two movements opposing the Popular Movement have allowed themselves to become aligned with South Africa has done them, their own cause, inestimable harm in the long run. And the United States has found itself caught up in this because, whereas we have proclaimed that Soviet and Cuban intervention is wrong -- and I am not saying we shouldn't urge that everybody keep out -- we have been unwilling to say anything about South Africa.. The State Department said on the first of December that it had noticed in the press that there were allegations of South African troops in the country, but that it had not been in communication with and did not intend to be in consultation with South Africa on that matter. . . .

I think what is difficult for us here in this situation is that our government hasn't really made a very clear statement about why we are in there, what really is at stake. On the one hand it is said that we don't care whether the Popular Movement rules or not. On the other hand we are in there doing everything we can to make sure they don't and I would find it, as a citizen, very confusing if I just sat down and read our government statements about why we are doing it at all.

ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA

The MPLA Solidarity Committee announced this week two new projects to build support for the MPLA: a petition for a people's recognition of the People's Republic of Angola, led by the MPLA, and a campaign to raise \$10,000 for the MPLA Solidarity Fund. Copies of the petition form are available from the Committee, 825 West End Ave., Apt. 14F, New York, 10025.

An Ad Hoc Co-alition Against U.S. Intervention in Angola, convened by ACCOA at December and January meetings, with representatives from such groups as the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Clergy and Laity Concerned, has called for a demonstration in Washington, Monday, January 19, when Congress reconvenes.

The American Committee on Africa (ACOA) co-ordinated a quarter page advertisement in the New York Times, Sunday, January 18, urging readers to tell their Congressional representatives to stop all funds for U.S. actions in Angola. The ad, sponsored by numerous trade union, academic, black community, and other progressive groups and individuals, also denounces the government's myth that "the men and women of the MPLA are Soviet puppets". ACCOA urges reproduction of the ad in other papers. Copies are available from ACCOA 305 E. 46th St. NYC 10017.

During the week of Jan. 12, a newly formed Southern Africa Committee at Dartmouth College sponsored a week of events focusing primarily on Angola. The Boston MPLA Solidarity Committee held a rally and teach in on Angola on January 17th.

1024 Hill St. Ann Arbor Mich. 48104

The Michigan Free Press, a progressive weekly published from Ann Arbor, has produced a tabloid poster in its latest edition similar to the button of the MPLA Solidarity Committee. The poster reads "Solidarity with the Angolan People: MPLA" with the movement's insignia & colors

The American Committee on Africa (305 E. 46th St. NYC 10017) has a supply of the Nation magazine which contains several excellent articles on Angola. Rates are 50¢ per copy. Bulk orders over 10 are 35¢ per copy and over 50 are 25¢ per copy.

per month

It costs us almost \$2 to send you the Angolan Weekly News Summary each week. Many of our subscribers can not afford that much. An increasing number of prisoners have asked to receive our news summary. They can not pay at all. Please send us as much money as you can. Only your continued financial support allows us to keep producing these Weekly News Summaries.

Interview with MPLA President Agostinho Neto

by Rene Lefort, Le Monde

from Le Monde
Jan. 3, 1976
reprinted in
The Guardian
Jan. 14, 1976

What is your evaluation of the current situation?

We are faced with a major problem which stems directly from foreign aggression. We have abandoned some positions because of enemy forces, especially those from South Africa, have forced us to retreat, which has meant the loss of ports such as Lobito, Benguela and Novo Redondo, in particular. But we have made the forces from Zaire draw back, and we think we have so weakened them that we don't have to fear a significant offensive from them.

On top of all this, we are now also subject to economic aggression. The United States and other imperialist countries are beginning to organize a boycott against us. Some of our foreign bank accounts have been frozen. Planes we have paid for haven't been delivered to us. U.S. oil firms, like Gulf Oil, for example, are beginning to sabotage our oil economy.

We'll have to adopt additional stringent measures whenever we notice the threat of sabotage to any sector of our political or economic life. Our country is still disorganized, and signs of indiscipline are appearing. So measures will have to be taken to make sure that misguided elements can't interfere with our daily lives.

If I were to sum up my impressions after a month of independence, I could say I am satisfied. Independence has changed living conditions in our country and whatever problems we face are precisely those brought on by this transition. We need time to grasp that we are fully independent and wholly responsible for our national life.

The People's Republic has decided to set up a United Anti-Imperialist Front on its territory. But is this front really homogenous?

There are always exploiters on one side and exploited on the other. Peasants and workers have always been the exploited ones and they have the potential to push the revolution to its conclusion, whereas the petit bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie, who were relatively well treated by the colonizer, will tend to hold up the revolutionary process. But this initial resistance ought not to make us forget that we are all victims of foreign

aggression. So long as South Africans, Zairians, and Portuguese mercenaries are engaged in aggression against us, we should do everything to close ranks and avoid disputes between classes with conflicting interests. This is the right approach to take, for if we

emphasize the class struggle we'll quite obviously weaken the anti-imperialist front. And that could mean losing control of the country. Besides, what would be the point of such a class struggle under South Africa's heel? So we must chase the aggressors out before settling our political, economic and cultural problems.

What do you think of your foes' tactics?

When the spokesmen of the UNITA and FNLA puppet groups talk of a government of national union, they do so for two reasons. First, as a tactical move designed to win the sympathies of countries which are perhaps unaware of their links with racist South Africa and expansionist Zaire. Secondly, because they know that, strategically, the struggle will be won by the people, hence by the MPLA.

As for us, we don't want to negotiate with UNITA and the FNLA, or with any of the aggressors. Let them allow our country and our people to become organized. There can be no agreement with the representatives of imperialism in our country.

As regards the conference the Organization of African Unity is planning to hold in Addis Ababa, I think it will be useful for our struggle, for Angola, and for all of Africa if it examines the question of foreign aggression in our country. If it concerns itself with other problems, it will collapse. Besides, we are sure of being recognized by most of the African countries, so we'll have a backing which will enable us to reach our goal.

Mr. Kissinger considers that the presence of the Soviet Union in Angola is upsetting world equilibrium.

Let's get one basic point clear. All throughout the struggle against Portuguese colonialism and all the time we were subject to exploitation, oppression and the worst brutalities, Kissinger had absolutely nothing to say. Even at that time, the Soviet Union was helping us by sending supplies of arms for our liberation struggle—and for this we are very grateful. It is when we have become independent and free and beginning to build our state, that the U.S. State Department becomes worried by the fact that we have Soviet arms. Just because the Soviet Union supplies us with weapons, it doesn't mean that we have become a satellite. We've never been one. We've never asked Moscow for advice on how to set up our state. All the major decisions in our country are taken by our movement, our government and our people. Once again the U.S. State Department is operating as international imperialism's chief agent.

The South Africans want to control Angola. It's something they have been wanting for a long time. They have always maintained that their defense perimeter runs from Angola to Mozambique. They want to take over our country entirely so as to be able to ensure their dominance in all of southern Africa. Zambia, Zimbabwe, and perhaps Mozambique would then come under Pretoria's rule. One cannot therefore put the world's liberating forces, which are engaged in working for the genuine liberation of people—these forces are represented here by the socialist countries, including the Soviet Union, Cuba and progressive African countries—on the same footing

as forces which want to control our country and take it over.

What do you think of the proposals to "put an end to foreign interference" in Angola?

We are a sovereign state and we seek help from anybody we please to defend our territorial integrity, our economy and the reconstruction of our land. No country has the right to accuse us on that score. When the United States speaks of putting an end to foreign interference, what it wants is nothing more than the expulsion of the socialist forces, precisely those which are helping us to avoid becoming a new American colony.

Aren't you afraid that the people in the area may become casualties of an escalation between great powers as has happened in other parts of the world?

An escalation of the war in Angola is possible. The interest Americans show in Angola could theoretically lead to an extension of the war beyond the frontiers of our country but I don't think that it is very probable. The balance of forces in the world is such today that we can rule out the thought of a local conflict touching off a larger war. It's true our people may suffer even more. But we are ready for that to win our total liberation and independence. Our allies are ready to back us until we reach this goal. And don't forget there are other instances of the pressure of world opinion forcing the United States to withdraw its forces and leave its proteges in the lurch, as did happen in Saigon, for example. We also hope South Africa's troops will withdraw and with them its puppets, FNLA and UNITA.

Statement by Tanzanian President, Julius Nyerere

from the Washington Post
Jan. 12, 1976

NYERERE:

"The conflict is not a fight between Communists and anti-Communists. It is a fight for real independence, and against racialist South Africa."

A war is being fought in Angola. But it is not a war for, or against, communism. It is a continuation of the war for Angolan freedom which has been going on since 1961.

Until 1974 the Angolans were fighting against Portuguese colonialism. In this struggle the nationalist movements received military and other material aid from the Soviet Union and other Communist countries. The United States of America gave no support to the independence movements. On the contrary, it supported the Salazar and Caetano governments in their attempts to suppress the liberation struggle.

Portugal lost its colonial wars. On November 11, 1975, the last Portuguese troops were withdrawn from Angola, the independence of the new Angolan state was declared and has been internationally recognized.

The Angolan war continues because those who supported Portugal have sought out and found others to act in their interests. Some of these others are Angolans who are confused, some are Angolans who are traitors to the reality of independence, and some are Angolan supporters of racialism—both black and white.

The MPLA was the movement which bore the brunt of the anti-colonial struggle. UNITA did a little fighting sometimes, although at others it fought against MPLA. The FNLA existed in exile; it did little more.

The MPLA could not fight against the Portuguese with bows and arrows.

Western countries refused to give them arms. The Russians and their allies did give them arms.

Why countries gave arms to the MPLA is a matter which they know, and others can only conjecture. What is certain is that the arms were obtained, and used, for the independence of Angola. They were used by nationalists, for nationalist purposes. And now, despite the Portuguese withdrawal, arms are still needed for that purpose.

For independent Angola has been invaded by South Africa. And its government is also now being attacked with American money, American arms, and by Americans and other Western mercenaries.

It is easy to see why the apartheid regime of South Africa has intervened militarily in Angola. Nor is there any doubt about the fact. South Africa has admitted "defending its interests" in Angola. Its troops have been captured by MPLA forces—sometimes hundreds of miles from the Namibian border.

South Africa wants a client state in Angola now that it has no Portuguese ally in that country. It wants it so as to strengthen its hold on Namibia—for South Africa itself has no border with Angola. And it wants it so as to weaken Africa's united opposition to its internal racialism and exploitation.

What is not so understandable is why America should want to intervene on the side of South Africa, against free Africa and the mass of the Angolan people. If the Americans are in-

tervening to prevent the Soviet Union from getting military bases on the South Atlantic, and to prevent an African country from becoming a colony or puppet of the U.S.S.R., then they are not thinking—just being arrogant. For that policy is self-defeating, as well as being dangerous for America and the world.

The MPLA took arms from the Soviet Union and the other Communist countries in order to get Angolan independence. Angola is now independent, and the MPLA government is already recognized by some 20 African states. It is fighting South African aggression. It therefore needs military support from its friends, to consolidate the formal independence. To the extent that it also has to fight against American aggression it will need very much more support.

The MPLA has a debt of friendship to the U.S.S.R. and others, just as FRELIMO has one to China and other countries. No one would suggest that independent Mozambique is a puppet of China; indeed, on the Angolan question China and Mozambique do not hold identical views. Under the constitution recently adopted by the MPLA, that government is committed to the policy of non-alignment in the superpower competition—which means no foreign bases. But if the MPLA government is forced to rely upon one of the superpowers for its very existence, it will be forced, willy-nilly, into its embrace. If that is what the Russians' move meant, they will be succeeding thanks

to the United States of America.

Was Vietnam not enough for America to learn from? How many more people have to die before reason can prevail?

Suppose America were to say to Angola—"If you want to be colonized by Russia, that is your own business." Everyone knows how resounding would be the Angolan "no" and Africa's "no further." The Angolans have shown that they are willing to fight for their independence if they have to, and they will find allies where they can in order to do so.

Africa cannot generalize about foreign presence in Angola. We would like there to be none at all. But Angola is now being attacked by South Africa. Africa must welcome continued support from those who help Angola's government to fight South African aggression.

At present the conflict in Angola is not a fight between Communists and anti-Communists. It is a fight for real independence, and against racialist South Africa.

The last few months have probably aroused too much suspicion for America now to be welcomed by the Angolans as supporters in this conflict; American government intervention has been too great. But it is still within America's power to get out of Angola, to save itself from another Vietnam, and to prevent the nationalist Angolan struggle from being converted into an international ideological conflict.