

FREEDOM RISING
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Contras...in Africa?

It is midnight. The C-141 marked "Santa Lucia Airways" taxis to a stop on the newly lengthened runway of the jungle airbase. Nearby a ground crew is loading crates into a light blue airplane for the hop across the border. The crew leader says in English, "Thanks to your government, our war against the Marxist regime in our country is going very well." From the plane comes the reply, "Yeah, well, let's get this over with. If we get caught here, there will be hell to pay in the States."

Costa Rica? Honduras? No--Kamina air base in southern Congo/Zaire. Here millions of dollars in US arms are being transshipped into Angola in support of UNITA, the South African-backed contra army which has been trying for 12 years to overthrow the government of Angola.

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Dear friends,

We are writing to organizations in the Central America solidarity movement to begin a dialogue about the need for the Central America and Southern Africa movements to work together. We also want to let you know about a major event at UC Berkeley on November 6, featuring John Stockwell, former head of the CIA's Angola Task Force, and Serge Mukendi, a leader of the people's struggle in Congo/Zaire.

In the wake of Iran/Contragate much has been revealed about the extent of the CIA's "secret team" and its operations in Central America and the Middle East. But the story of the Africa connection remains to be told....

* Angola: the Price of Freedom Has Been 12 Years of War *

The people of Angola, led by the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), won their freedom from Portugal in 1975. Since then, the US and its partner South Africa have never accepted Angola's right to be free and to chart their own, socialist, path. The South African military has continually invaded from the illegally occupied country of Namibia. South African forces are fighting with and commanding UNITA troops, much as the US did with South Vietnamese troops in Vietnam.

The parallels between US strategy in Nicaragua and Angola are striking. In Nicaragua, a 'contra' army composed of thousands of Somocista National Guardsmen and press-ganged peasants, specializes in executing villagers and destroying the economy. In Angola, UNITA, a tribally-based force, has been built up to terrorize the population, sabotage the economy and contend with the Angolan government for international legitimacy. In old-fashioned colonial style, the US is playing Africans off against each other, letting them do the fighting and dying to protect Western interests.

At first US support for UNITA was a covert operation. Pushed by anti-intervention feeling in the US after Vietnam, Congress passed the Clark Amendment in 1976 outlawing aid to UNITA. But in a parallel operation to the violations of the Boland Amendment in Central America, the CIA and the secret team ignored the Clark restrictions. Sworn Congressional testimony has revealed that CIA Director Casey got Saudi Arabia to give millions of dollars to UNITA. Casey personally visited South Africa to arrange transport of arms to UNITA. Oliver North admits to fighting in two wars: Vietnam and Angola. In August 1985 Congress legalized CIA military aid to UNITA, and at least \$30 million in arms has been shipped. There are several bills pending before Congress for even more aid to UNITA, and for sanctions against Angola.

Zaire's Kamina Base plays the same role for UNITA that Ilopingo airfield in El Salvador has for the contras. Zaire is in the heart of Africa. Its repressive dictatorship is a US launching pad for aggression against any neighboring country. Though Zaire's copper, cobalt and diamonds make it potentially one of Africa's richest countries, its domination by the US and the corrupt President Mobutu have made its people among the poorest.

Though the struggle against Mobutu (who changed the country's name from Congo to Zaire) receives almost no attention in the US press, it has been ongoing since Mobutu overthrew Patrice Lumumba in 1960. The Workers and Peasants Party (P.O.P) has played a leading role in exposing Zaire's collusion with UNITA. Last December, its popular army clashed with UNITA, and the P.O.P. declared, "We will not permit the Congo to be the 'Honduras' of Africa. We will not permit 'contras' on our soil." This is a good time to learn the truth about this key African country.

* Mozambique: a luta continua *

Mozambique, led by the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO), also won its war for freedom from Portugal in 1975. But it is still fighting for its right to live in peace and develop in the interests of its people. The first president of Mozambique, Samora Machel, was assassinated in a plane crash over South African territory. The MNR or RENAMO (Mozambican National Resistance) was created by white settler Rhodesia's intelligence agents and has since been taken over by South Africa. The mutilation and murder of 424 people in the coastal town of Homoine in July is typical of these bandits.

Although the US does not yet officially support the MNR, the right wing, including Senate Minority Leader Bob Dole, is pressing hard to support them like UNITA and the contras.

The US efforts to cripple the Nicaraguan revolution through contra aid and an embargo are also aimed at setting back the struggle for justice and peace in all of Central America. US and South African attempts to attack and undermine the Frontline States of Angola and Mozambique serve to weaken support for the movement to overturn apartheid in South Africa itself.

* No Contra Aid! *

The anti-intervention movement has gained a lot of momentum from the Contragate revelations that the US government broke the law and ignored public opinion by sending aid to the contra terrorists in Nicaragua. We have a chance to broaden our scope, to build a movement that says NO CONTRA AID from Nicaragua to Angola and Mozambique.

All the solidarity movements will be strengthened if we unite our efforts, for our cause is really the same: to halt US support of repressive regimes and pseudo- "freedom fighters," so that oppressed nations have a chance to peacefully and democratically determine their own direction. This is the time to demand that the US GET OUT OF NICARAGUA, OUT OF ANGOLA, and STAY OUT OF MOZAMBIQUE!

Sincerely yours,

George Lippman

George Lippman
for Freedom Rising

P.S. We will be calling you soon to follow up on this letter, and to ask for your endorsement and participation in the Nov. 6 program. In the meantime, here is information on some of the right-wing bills pending in Congress:

1. Dole Bill - S1228 - calls for US sanctions against Angola
2. House Intelligence Committee in closed session has voted additional \$27 million for UNITA. Debates on House and Senate floors expected soon.
3. DeConcini Amendment - nonbinding, sense of the Senate vote passed 94-0 to condemn human rights abuses in Angola, while making no mention of UNITA; calls on President to consider restricting US business relations with Angola. Significant because it gathered support even from liberals like Kennedy and Cranston.