

@CHAPTER = ANGOLA

The Bush and Reagan administrations have been quick to criticize human rights violations by the Angolan government. Among the abuses protested have been the intolerance of dissent, the use of land mines against civilians, and the holding of political detainees and prisoners. These serious abuses deserved the strong condemnation that they have received. However, both administrations have neglected serious violations by the U.S.-backed rebels seeking to overthrow the Angolan government, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola ("UNITA").

@PAGE = This refusal to criticize rebel abuses stems from the Bush administration's unwavering support of UNITA and its leader, Jonas Savimbi. For 14 years UNITA has been seeking to topple Angola's post-independence government in a war that to date has resulted in the deaths of over 100,000 people, most of them civilians. The U.S. policy of funding UNITA, first initiated by President Reagan in late 1985, has if anything been solidified under President Bush. Even before President Bush took office, he wrote to Savimbi assuring him that "all appropriate and effective assistance" would continue. Then, in 1989, to compensate for the loss of South African military and economic assistance to UNITA, the Bush administration increased the level of U.S. covert aid for Savimbi to close to \$50 million.<\$F Although termed "covert," U.S. assistance is widely characterized as an "open secret." Savimbi himself made a public statement in June that Congress had renewed his aid, and was also quoted in *Jeune Afrique* magazine as saying that he had received \$35 million in funding from the Central Intelligence Agency. Characterizing the aid as "covert," however, helps minimize Congressional and public scrutiny.>

UNITA, a loser in the three-way struggle for power that followed the announcement that Portugal was pulling out of its colonies in 1975, has continued since then to wage a guerrilla war against the ruling *Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola* ("MPLA"), with aid to UNITA coming principally from South Africa.<\$F One of South Africa's interests in supporting Savimbi's forces was to limit the effectiveness of the South West African People's Organization ("SWAPO"), which conducted its guerrilla war against South Africa's occupation of Namibia from bases in Angola.> With the repeal of the Clark Amendment in 1985,<\$F During and after the war for Angolan independence, the United States provided covert funds for the military activities of two of the three nationalist groups, the *Frente Nacional de Libertacao de Angola* ("FNLA") and UNITA. All military assistance was cut off by Congressional action in 1976 in an amendment proposed by former Senator Dick Clark.> the Reagan administration renewed its covert support of UNITA, providing between \$15 million and \$30 million a year in arms, medicine and food. The main justification for the aid was the continuing presence of an estimated 30,000 Cuban troops which had first been summoned to help the Marxist MPLA repel a South African invading force in 1975.

In addition to aiding UNITA and refusing to recognize the MPLA government -- which is recognized by virtually all U.S. allies -- the United States has consistently blocked Angolan applications for loans from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Explaining U.S. policy to a Congressional panel in September, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Warren Clark, Jr. said that the Bush administration would continue "appropriate and effective assistance to UNITA until national reconciliation is achieved," and that the purpose of the policy was to "impress upon the MPLA that it had no alternative but to negotiate."

In part in response to this pressure, Angola agreed to send the Cuban troops home as part of the U.S.-brokered New York accords leading to Namibia's

independence and South Africa's withdrawal of support for UNITA. The phased withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola began soon after the accords and is reportedly ahead of schedule. The MPLA also continued to allow increasing numbers of Western journalists into the country and to repudiate its previous strictly Marxist economic policies.

On June 22, 1989, Angolan President Jose Eduardo dos Santos met publicly with Savimbi at Gbadolite, Zaire, at a summit brokered by the Zairean president, Mobutu Sese Seko, and attended by 18 African heads of state. At Gbadolite, Savimbi and Dos Santos shook hands to signify their mutual desire to end the civil war and begin the critical task of national reconciliation. In their public declaration of the Gbadolite agreement, the Angolans agreed to national integration, a cessation of all hostilities and a cease-fire beginning midnight, June 24, 1989. According to later declarations by a core group of eight of the African leaders present at Gbadolite, Savimbi and Dos Santos also agreed to an unpublished accord, which included ending all foreign interference in the internal affairs of Angola, integration of UNITA into the institutions of the People's Republic of Angola, and the acceptance of Savimbi's temporary and voluntary retirement.

Within days of the accord, Savimbi denied that he had accepted any such terms, and on June 26, two days after Gbadolite, six nurses on their way to give polio vaccinations to rural children were killed when their truck hit a land mine. One of the survivors, who was severely injured, contended that the mine had been newly planted by UNITA, since the group had traveled on that same road several times before that week. On July 7, according to the Angolan government, UNITA soldiers killed 18 civilians and set fire to three trucks in the province of Huige. On August 8, as peace talks began for the third time in Zaire, Angolan Foreign Minister Pedro de Castro Van Dunem said that UNITA had repeatedly violated the cease-fire. Then, on August 18, the MPLA launched a major offensive against the UNITA center at Mavinga in southern Angola. Intermittent fighting continued at year's end.

Most observers agree that Savimbi's forces were the first to break the cease-fire, and that until August, the MPLA had taken a purely defensive stance. After Gbadolite, Savimbi boycotted two further "peace" summits -- in Harare, Zimbabwe and Kinshasa, Zaire.

The Bush administration has made efforts to persuade Savimbi to return to the negotiating table. President Bush wrote to Savimbi asking him to go to the September 18 meeting in Kinshasa in which Mobutu wanted the UNITA leader to sign a cease-fire accord as a first step toward a political settlement, and Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Herman Cohen made a special trip to Africa in a vain attempt to persuade Savimbi to participate. In October, President Bush met with Savimbi at the White House and apparently successfully persuaded him to return to the bargaining table. However, critics charge that the Bush administration has also helped to sabotage the negotiations by supporting Savimbi's interpretation of the Gbadolite accords and by refraining from any public criticism of UNITA's conduct since the June cease-fire declaration. Suspicions of the Bush administration's lack of commitment to the cease-fire were further supported by reports of the crash, in late November inside Angola, of a Central Intelligence Agency plane carrying weapons to UNITA's headquarters in Jamba.

In continuing to aid Savimbi, the Bush administration appears willing to support and condone a disturbing level of abuse on the part of UNITA forces. For example, the administration has refused to condemn UNITA's actions in response to widely disseminated reports of brutal attacks by UNITA soldiers on unarmed peasants. In one such onslaught, carefully documented by, among others, New

*York Times* reporter Kenneth Noble, UNITA soldiers killed 15 peasants in an attack in late September on Samba Caju, in Angola's central highlands. Townspeople, roused from their sleep by soldiers singing and banging machetes against the sides of their trucks, were mowed down as they attempted to flee. Esperance Antonio Camoes said that her husband Antonio was shot in the back: "He fell on the ground, and they started hitting him with machetes." Maria Domingo Couveia lost her mother and a blind brother: "My mother ran out of the house, and my brother was holding onto her, and they shot and killed them both."

The State Department's response was to deny that the incident had occurred and to assert that "all appropriate assistance [to UNITA] would continue." A spokesman said that the State Department had no evidence to substantiate the claims against UNITA, and added: "We have raised the allegations with UNITA, which has emphatically denied them."

Also in September, a medical delegation sponsored by the United Church of Christ's Commission for Racial Justice witnessed the shelling by UNITA of the central Angolan city of Huambo in which the casualties included a couple asleep in bed. According to members of the delegation, the area shelled could not have been mistaken for a military target. A delegation member, Dr. Adewale Troutman, further reported finding "[i]n every hospital we visited<-%> <%>.<-%> <%>.<-%> <%>.<-%> <%> children, women and men who had been shot by UNITA or lost legs from UNITA land mines just in the last two months [since the cease-fire agreement]."

In March, Fred Bridgland, a conservative British journalist who wrote an admiring biography of Savimbi and had until then been a staunch UNITA supporter, stated that Savimbi had committed several human rights abuses. Bridgland alleged that Savimbi was holding former Washington UNITA representative Tito Chingunji against his will at UNITA headquarters in Jamba. He also claimed that Savimbi was responsible for the death of Chingunji's parents and former UNITA Chief of Staff Jose Alberto Chendovava.

Amnesty International confirmed that Chingunji was held briefly for expressing opposition to some of UNITA's policies and may have been ill-treated while in custody. Other defectors surmised that Chingunji, who was later seen alive and not imprisoned at Jamba, may have been intimidated into silence. According to the conservative *National Review* of September 29, 1989, Bridgland "is now being subjected to crude UNITA threats of physical violence."

Also in March, several former UNITA supporters seeking asylum in Lisbon and the United Kingdom accused Savimbi of ordering the beating and the burning of "witches." One student, Aremelindo Kanjugu, said the victims were former political rivals of the UNITA leader. Among the victims were Joao Kitangue, his wife and three children, who were burned to death on September 7, 1983, and Aurora Katalaio and two children, who were also killed in 1983. Katalaio was the wife of Mateus Katalaio, UNITA's former interior minister, who was killed in 1982.

On British television, two UNITA defectors, Dinho Chingunji (Tito Chingunji's nephew) and Sousa Jamba, also accused UNITA of gross abuses. Dinho alleged that his grandparents Jonatao, 69, and Violeta, 60, were clubbed with rifle butts, kicked and then run over by a truck, on Savimbi's orders.

One of the tactics of both armies has been to strew land mines across the countryside, thus destroying agriculture and forcing thousands of Angolan peasants to flee their homes. Thousands of Angolan civilians have been killed by land mines, indiscriminate attacks and starvation. When short of rations, both government and UNITA soldiers have stolen from the fields of peasants. And UNITA has deliberately encircled and strangled villages, causing near

starvation of civilian residents.

The single exception in 1989 to the U.S. silence on UNITA abuses was the State Department's country report on Angola, drafted by the Reagan administration and published in February 1989, which noted reports of abuses by both MPLA and UNITA forces. However, the country report was careful to qualify all charges, noting, for example, that "limited information is available on the administrative structure and practices within UNITA-held areas" and that reports of abuses generally "could neither be confirmed or denied." While we are aware of the difficulties of gathering reliable information from Angola, we would have hoped that UNITA's principle source of funds would have known enough of its client organization's "administrative structure and practices," particularly its human rights practices, to avoid obscuring accountability with statements of this sort.

The Bush administration's deep involvement with UNITA makes its refusal to condemn UNITA excesses extremely disturbing. As UNITA's main funder, the United States has the clout to pressure the rebel group to curb abuses. Only clear condemnation of UNITA abuses, tied to a willingness to limit aid on human rights grounds, will make that end come about.