

THE WASHINGTON OFFICE ON AFRICA

110 MARYLAND AVENUE, N.E., SUITE 112

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20002

PHONE (202) 546-7961

FAX (202) 546-1545

E-MAIL WOA@IGC.APC.ORG

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Dear Friend:

Last month I attended an emergency meeting on Angola convened in Geneva by the World Council of Churches.

In preparing for this meeting I was asked to deliver brief remarks on U.S. policy toward Angola. I spoke with several congressional staff and members of the U.S. Department of State and the U. S. Agency for International Development. As I listened to them, I could not escape an awful feeling of *dejà vu*, as if I were reliving conversations held in 1992 with past executive and legislative branch staff. Despite all the changes, several contextual points remain almost unchanged:

- 1) **An irrational hostility toward the Angolan government**--During the Reagan/Bush years the hostility stemmed from Cold War politics. Today's officials still seem trapped in leftover Cold Warriorism.
- 2) **Misplaced trust in Jonas Savimbi**-- From 1986 to 1992 Unita, the rebel group in Angola, received military support from the U.S. Unita leader Jonas Savimbi, was touted by Reagan as a "freedom fighter." In the past five years, however, revelations about Unita's undemocratic leadership and military excesses have mounted up. For most, Unita's return to war following their 1992 election loss was the final straw in toppling Savimbi from his pedestal. Even U.S. policymakers no longer laud Savimbi, but still they *continue* to assert that Savimbi can be trusted.
- 3) **Lack of political will**--Many analysts characterize Clinton administration policy toward Africa as "benign neglect." Of course this approach affects all Africa policy, not just Angola. Perhaps the most telling statement was from a State Department official who said to me: "*After all, no one would really notice if Angola just disappeared tomorrow.*"

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Many of the Angolan participants of the emergency meeting, mainly church leaders from Luanda and Huambo, were very skeptical of the prospects for peace. They and the Angolan citizens they serve are the ones who invested the precious commodities of faith and hope in the 1992 process. Their hopes were bitterly crushed; it will take decades to address the physical and psychological scars caused by this most recent round of war. And yet Angolans are again asked to invest in this current peace process. There is no alternative.

The least the international community can do is not let them down again. Many factors are different now than in 1992, most notably the revived fortunes of Angola's government army and the UN's mandate to be present in greater strength (see the Washington Notes on Africa *ANALYSIS*, enclosed). Yet if there is a delay, or failure to implement the agreement, the tendency will be to blame both parties equally. **Unfortunately, such a threat may endanger the peace process itself, giving leverage precisely to those most willing to return to war.**

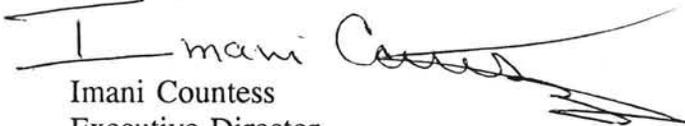
It is critical that the continued presence of the UN mission, and its political will to act to move the peace process forward, gain support from international public opinion. Despite the general indifference of the media, there are groups at work. We too can add to their efforts. In addition to the international church involvement, a high-profile Dutch campaign is raising funds for mine-clearance in Angola. European anti-apartheid groups, which in 1992 were still primarily focused on the struggle in South Africa, have made Angola a major priority this year and are lobbying their governments for stronger stands at the UN. One step we are taking here is redistributing the Angola Peace Monitor (recent issue enclosed) via our email distribution list. If you have access to email and aren't on our list please note your address on the enclosed form and return it to us.

Last month, we hired a new Associate Director for Legislative Affairs, Vicki Ferguson. Her full-time attention to the legislative process and outreach activities will enable us to share our views on Angola, as on other issues, with a wider constituency. **But we need your support now to continue this work.**

Please make a contribution today to ensure our ability to have an impact. Give as generously as you can.

As always, best wishes, and thank you in advance for your contribution.

Sincerely,


Imani Countess
Executive Director

Enclosures: Angola Peace Monitor, WNA *ANALYSIS*

P.S. I also enclose a special offer from the Mozambique Solidarity Office for *Apartheid's Contras*, the latest book by our Associate Director for Education, William Minter. It is essential background reading on the devastation apartheid and the Cold War brought to both Angola and Mozambique.

Angola Peace Monitor

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Angolan government releases prisoners

The International Committee of the Red Cross has reported that the Angolan government has released UNITA prisoners under the terms of the Lusaka Protocol. (See *ACTSA Briefing Paper: Prospects for Peace and Democracy in Angola, A Summary and Analysis of the Lusaka Protocol signed on 20 November 1994**)

On 23 May 98 prisoners were released, with a further 110 being released on 24 May.

Government envoys meet with UNITA

According to reports from the official Angolan news agency, ANGOP, two Angolan government ministers travelled on 25 May to Bailundo in the central Huambo province.

Faustino Muteka, minister without portfolio, and his deputy Higino Carneiro took with them a message for UNITA leader Dr Savimbi. They held talks with UNITA on "outstanding military matters" regarding the implementation of the Lusaka Protocol, and issues raised during the meeting in Lusaka on 6 May between President dos Santos and Dr Savimbi. Also discussed were some "political ideas" on the next meeting between the President and Dr Savimbi.

Telephone links President to Savimbi

Following the meeting between President dos Santos and Dr Savimbi on 6 May in Lusaka, a direct telephone link has been established between the two.

According to ANGOP, Savimbi used the service to contact the President on 17 May to inform him of the pending visit to South Africa, and on 20 May to inform him of the outcome of that visit.

Further troop deployment

The first contingent of infantry troops deployed in Angola under UNAVEM III arrived on 31 May. According to a report from Associated Press, 380 Uruguayan infantrymen have arrived.

This follows the arrival in Luanda on 26 May of 87 Portuguese soldiers specialising in communications. Their task is to maintain communications links between Luanda and the six UNAVEM general staffs.

The Brazilian Ambassador to Angola said on 29 May that 1,200 troops from Brazil would arrive shortly in Angola.

Bridges re-opened

The overland convoy to the sixth special meeting of the Joint Commission, held in Lobito on 18 May co-incided with the official re-opening of the newly rebuilt Canjala bridge in Kwanza Sul province.

The bridge was inaugurated by Brito Junior, Minister of Public Works and Town Planning, and the UN Secretary-General's Special-Representative in Angola, Alioune Blondin Beye.

The Lucala bridge, 270km east of Luanda, has also been rebuilt, giving access to the provinces of Malanje, Lunda Norte and Lunda Sul, Moxico and Uige. This was inaugurated on 28 April.

Joint Commission to meet

The next meeting of the Joint Commission is planned to take place on 2 June in Negage, in Uige province.

Humanitarian situation

The United Nations has reported that the humanitarian situation in Angola is improving.

The latest report on Humanitarian Assistance in Angola, from the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs*, covering the period 15 - 21 May states in summary that:

"As overland access continues to increase, efforts to ensure the free circulation of persons and goods multiply. On 17 May 1995, under the initiative of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Angola, Alioune Blondin Beye, representatives of the Government and

UNITA, as well as other members of the Joint Commission, UN and NGO staff travelled from Luanda to Lobito in Benguela province. Comprised of over 100 people, this convoy was the first to make this trip since 1992.

Also on 17 May, WHO Representative in Angola, Professor Emmanuel Eben-Moussi, gave journalists an update on the developments surrounding the expansion of the virus Ebola that is assailing populations in Kikwit, Republic of Zaire. WHO-Angola invited UNICEF to support the Ministry of Health in epidemiological surveillance as a means of ensuring that concrete preventive measures are implemented at local level."

In its previous report, covering the period 8-14 May, the UN Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Unit in Luanda (UCAH) stated in its summary that:

"On 8 May 1995 the first World Food Programme road convoy from Luanda to N'Dalatando since 1992 took place, transporting some 357 Metric Tonnes of food aid that World Vision will distribute. Access to new areas continues to increase through road reconnaissance missions like the one conducted on 14 May by UN agencies,

UNAVEM and NGOs from Kuito in Bie province to Huambo by road. Meanwhile, UCAH/CMAO continues through its mine awareness activities to sensitize populations, particularly IDPs (Internally Displaced People) returning to their areas of origin that the mere declaration of roads as mine-free does not imply that the surrounding areas are also mine-free.

Nevertheless, as the possible repatriation of Angolan refugees rises on the priority list of humanitarian activities, UNHCR has started preparations to reopen offices at entry points in Uige, Zaire and Cabinda provinces. This week UNHCR sent domestic items, household goods and seeds and tools for populations in Saurimo, Luau, Cazombo, and Lumbala N'Guimbo."

** Indicates that the full text of the document referred to is available from ACTSA.*

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