QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD FOLLOWING THE ANGOLANS' PRESENTATION AT THE CHICAGO ANGOLA SUPPORT CONFERENCE - MAY 29, 1976

Eugenia dos Santos: I wish to join with the others in thanking you for coming here and showing your solidarity with us. The friendship we have encountered here in a country this large and with such a pluralistic society, is very gratifying for us. When we come in and hear African music we feel the spirit of oneness. This gives us new spirit and we are sure that the struggle is going to continue.

Maria Candida Lopes: I am very happy to be here in America. I speak in French so that all of you will know that I am Angolan not Portuguese. I want everybody to know that we are very happy to be here and it was a great surprise for us to find a community like this one here. I don't know what more I can say but it is a great honor for us to be here and we hope someday you will be able to be in Angola with us.

Ambassador Miguel Neto: You ask me what are the means of destabilization employed by the United States against Angola, and what is the danger of imperialism as seen by the MPLA. I think these two questions are more or less the same. As you know in our struggle we have chosen a long time ago the option of socialism. And choosing this way meant that the imperialists, capitalists, are absolutely against us. This is sure. Today we have some victories, some very strong and profound victories, yet the imperialist forces don't stop even now.

Some measures which the U.S. has taken against Angola are the economic boycott in which the United States pressed the Portuguese to destroy our economy. They infiltrated our country with mercenaries to provoke the balkanization of our country. They boycotted the delivery of the two Boeing airplanes which we had bought a year before but this problem has been resolved. The most recent maneuver to provoke the destabilization is the U.S. threat of using the veto against our entry into the United Nations. Another question is the building of socialism by the MPLA in our country which we see as a good way for our people. As for the nationalization of some companies, it was the Portuguese and other foreign companies that forced us to take these measures because in principle we had not planned to nationalize. But we were obliged to take this measure and we continue to take this measure. Many companies have been nationalized. We also have made our administration socialist. Another point which is more important is that our socialism is the continuation of the building of people's power, what we call "poder popular." This is exactly the base of our socialism in Angola. It is our belief that in our state and our society the people have been the most exploited sector, thus our people are the source of our socialism. It is necessary to read our Constitution to understand some of this.

QUESTION: What is the role of Angola in Namibia, Zimbabwe and other parts of Southern Africa?
ANSWER: The people's struggle in Namibia and Zimbabwe and South Africa have been together with us in our struggle for liberation. Now we are an independent country. And they are in the same position we were in before. But because of our changed position as an independent country and of our international proletarian duty we will continue to struggle with our comrades in Zimbabwe, Namibia, South Africa, Palestine, Sahara and all places where people are struggling for liberation. Our slogan "A Luta Continua" (The Struggle Continues) means that we are now and continue to be on the side of the people who are continuing to struggle and especially here with you in the United States of America.

QUESTION: What do you think is the significance of Kissinger's trip to Africa?

ANSWER: We have no doubt that above all we are MPLA and Angolan. We have our option and it is absolutely contrary to that of Mr. Kissinger. We think that the purpose of Kissinger's visit in Africa is to play games with the Africans and to prevent the struggle of the people engaged in the process of their liberation. After the reverses of American policy and particularly the reversal caused by the Angolan struggle this is a diplomatic trip. With the victory in Angola, the struggle in southern Africa entered a new stage, and the liberation of the rest of southern Africa is made a closer possibility. Kissinger thought that maybe he could slow things down in talking with his friends Smith and Vorster and some of the Africans who have the face of being pro-liberation but are really on the side of Kissinger and the others. We have no doubt about Kissinger's intentions and he has not fooled the people of Africa, especially those involved in the liberation of Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

QUESTION: What kind of aid could people in this country render to the people in Angola?

ANSWER: This is a question of internationalism. There are many aspects and many measures in which you can help, not only in health and medicine but also in the mobilization of people in this country to better understand the problems of Angola. I think this is the priority. Public opinion in your country is not well-informed on the problem of Angola. There are still people here who think UNITA and FNLA represent the true Angolans, especially because the U.S. government has publicized these movements through their contact with them. But even have clearly shown who is MPLA and who is FNLA and UNITA.

There is also the question of technical assistance to Angola. Right now it is a little difficult to receive technical assistance because we have just come out of a very heavy war and we need first to organize our country in order to proceed. Then we will be able to receive people of good will who want to come and aid Angola. Actually, it may be quite soon because there are people now designated to study this problem.

QUESTION: What is your priority in development? Agriculture or Industry?

ANSWER: The two are very important at the same time. As you know, Angola is primarily an agricultural country with the majority of the population primarily engaged in farming. In order to build the country on
something solid we think it is important first of all to organize agri-culture, and after that what follows is the development of heavy indus-try, in order to form our country a strong economic base.

QUESTION: What is thenational media network in Angola?

ANSWER: While we have an important network of radio and television in the country, it is still at a rudimentary level. We want to extend it to every corner of the country since we realize the necessity of reaching the people throughout the country. This is something we are working on now.

QUESTION: What is the program to combat racism?

ANSWER: This is an important question. As you know the population of Angola is made up of people of many colors. The colonial system used this fact to divide the people by intensifying this aspect. They went even further by using tribalism to divide the people. But now that question is settled. In our political orientation we think there is neither black nor white nor mestico. Dividing the people by race was also against our political line. But the more important question is the question of class origin, for it is this that can motivate the people on the question of racism. For example, racism was used for certain classes. While most of our people are black, at the beginning of our struggle, there were also some whites who were very much with us in the fight. At first our people thought that the real enemy was the whites because people identified the whites, that is the Portuguese, with colonialism. But after a while we found that there were black people within our organization who turned out to be traitors. This demonstrated that the enemy wasn't just whites. But now there is no problem in this respect; people are clear about this question. We have mobilized the people based on the unity of all the people of Angola.

QUESTION: What is the PRA going to do about the Gulf Oil Company?

ANSWER: You know at a certain period they left the country in such a way that almost brought the collapse of the Angolan economy. We were obliged to close down the operation since we did not have enough Angolans technically trained to run this kind of machinery. But now Gulf has returned to work, paid its taxes and the royalties they owed our country, and we are in the process of drawing up a new Angolan contract with them, a contract that will make the product not simply Gulf Oil or for the United States but one that will allow the Angolan people to participate in the production and receive the benefits from the exploitation of Angolan oil.

QUESTION: A very important question is one of international solidarity. The imperialists have put out very strong propaganda against the international solidarity that has been extended to Angola during the war, especially against our comrades from Cuba and the Soviet Union. While there were many other comrades the imperialist focused on Cuba and the Soviet Union. But as you know the comrades from Cuba and the Soviet Union came to Angola when we were already a sovereign state. At this time it was up to the Angolan people to do what they wanted to do. In addition we were in a very difficult position, and it was necessary to ask our friends to help us. This was done in the spirit of internationalism and cooperation and respect for international law. Now they say the Cubans are beginning to leave but I don't know about that, it may
QUESTION: What is your position on the People's Republic of China?

ANSWER: It is certainly a regrettable question in terms of our relations with China. You know very well the history of China, which has certainly been an exemplary country in the question of national liberation. And they aided us for some time. But after a while, they stopped; I don't know why, perhaps it was an internal question in China. Right now we are at an impasse. Maybe with time we will have better relations, and we are making every effort for this, but it will take time.

Assunção Vahekeni, Secretary of State for Social Affairs of the PEA: These are questions regarding the social programs of Angola. We have social problems at various levels. As the comrades have told you, many of our social institutions were destroyed in the war. The entire infrastructure in our country was very badly damaged. And many departments were destroyed when the Portuguese left because they took with them much of the social organization of the country: in education, health and other services. Comrade Miguel Neto has spoken of the destruction of most of the infrastructure, including the destruction of many hospitals. In addition, the boycott was also important in helping to destroy what had previously existed. Thus, we are facing very grave social problems. Those who stayed in the cities during the wars continued to live in very dismal and difficult conditions. The majority of the people could not go to the cities and they remained in the rural areas under very difficult conditions. We have mentioned that many families were broken up or destroyed. Now a large percentage of our children are orphans and many of our women are without husbands. Also we now have many people who have been handicapped by the war. One of our biggest problems is that of social assistance. Many of the people are still hiding in the forest where they took refuge from the war zones. The people need not only food and clothing, but also places to live because they have been and are now without permanent places of habitation. Another problem is that during the struggle many people fled their native territories so that now we have the problem of people wanting to return but we have no means of transporting them and they have no way to get back to their original home areas. Many bridges have been destroyed leaving many villages completely without any means of communication.

One of the biggest problems we face is lack of personnel. We have a great lack of doctors and teachers. And the boycott has created serious financial problems, especially in the area of establishing orphanages and services to take care of the large number of widows who have been left without anything at this time. There is also the problem of Angolans who fled Angola not only during the first phase of the war but also during the second phase and are now living in neighboring countries. The problem is to try and get them back into Angola and provide them with facilities to help in national reconstruction. While it appears that it might be a rather easy problem to solve it is difficult especially because of the situation in our country right now. In order to attract these people to come back to Angola we have to be able to provide them with certain conditions of livelihood and at this stage it is very difficult for us to give that kind of guarantee.
Eugenia dos Santos: My special assignment is in regards to infants. There are many children without parents. I can not give you the exact number but let me say they are many of them. At the present time we have an orphanage that is taking care of many of these children. When any of us comrades enter into this institution, the children come running and call us father and mother. This is very understandable. I would like an arrangement whereby, as in other countries, there can be a system of adoption whereby families can take two or three children. Thus they would be raised in a family atmosphere. This kind of thing is not a part of our heritage, a part of our experience. There are only five or six of us who are working in this field now. Normally we could take care of this, but when the colonists left they took everything with them or destroyed everything so there are not even the essentials, which we would normally have for the children.

QUESTION: What is the educational situation?

ANSWER: Education in Angola is free and compulsory. As all of you comrades understand, during the long colonial period there was great restriction on us in the amount of education we could get. There were very free schools and only those people who were in agreement with the whole colonial policy had any opportunity at all for getting an education. Therefore a large majority of our people are illiterate. As a result one of our first policies was to encourage all people and provide facilities so that all could get an education free. This is not easy at this time mainly because of the lack of teachers. You can understand the problems we face once we adopt a national policy of free education. We are then obligated to provide that kind of education despite our economic limitations therefore we need as much assistance as possible to provide this kind of education.
Back in the Congress this week it would be very hard to determine what were the most important things. I'm going on a law suit with several others, some of whom are present here, to stop the granting of a license for General Electric to sell 2 nuclear reactor plants worth $2 billion which will give South Africa, if those licenses are granted, the capability of making the nuclear bomb—there has been very little publicity about this. What has been the news in Washington is that one Congressman has a mistress on the payroll.

We do have a consideration before us. So much has been made of the Secretary of State's trip to Africa, the second Secretary of State of this country to officially visit that continent. It appears that many people have been profoundly impressed by the apparent product of that trip. We have called for a new policy in Africa. It has been asserted that there will be a new Administration position. However, be certain this has not come to the Congress in the form of any specific policy or legislative proposal, and there is growing unrest among those who hail that trip as an indication that there should be an African policy or a new African policy. That is a very important distinction, because before the trip to Africa there were two schools of thought on the Hill, one that there was no African policy, a point to which I have taken very specific exception throughout the years. Of course there was an African policy—it may not have been articulated, but what clearer evidence do we need than our conduct on that continent for the last 200 years, what clearer evidence do we need having turned away from the struggle for liberation, which we could have brought to an even more successful and early conclusion years ago, had we at least not have given massive assistance to the colonial powers that maintained, and in some respects, still maintain their grip on that continent. I have completely disagreed with the notion that the U.S. does not have an African policy—it does have one—it is a bad policy, it is a negative policy, it is an anti-people policy, it is an anti-liberation policy, it is an inhuman policy, it is a corrupt policy, it is a policy that is a disgrace to every American who values the liberation struggle and its implications here and everywhere throughout the world. So I come with some feeling to a conference in which we now attempt to examine the possible ways in which we may support this newest wonderful nation whose representatives have been so generous to even join us at this conference.

The first question that has been urged upon me is, of course, the question of recognition. Why can't now, after all the mistakes of the past, we extend the formal hand of recognition to a new country in the family of nations? Well we want a timetable as to when that mighty Cuban Army will withdraw its troops from another country, a condition so absurd—a condition never before raised as a condition to recognition in the annals of American foreign affairs. And even though that timetable is well-known and published and is made a part of the news stories from abroad, we still hang back. It is fairly clear to me that this Administration will probably not be inclined to extend this recognition until a new administration is on office. I say that not to discourage, but to emphasize that we must make this an issue ourselves; that this failure, that this discourtesy at an international level must be
pressed, and its fullest ramifications made clear.

Now there are some other things that must be done, and the most important in my judgement, besides analyzing the question surrounding this new independent nation, is how we may develop other support conferences around the country. I would like to very briefly outline some methods, but it is preeminent to consider how we must multiply our numbers. After all I think the real test of the effectiveness of this conference will be how many more will follow in its wake across the U.S. Here are my recommendations. Many of the representatives here are from formerly anti-war groups, church groups, that we begin to find where there is similar support in other cities and begin to put together another conference so that there will be a constellation of Angola support conferences. Secondly, I believe the Congressional Black Caucus can play a very important role in collaborating with this particular conference if it is going to be the lead point from which others are developed to work with other groups, in an effort to have support conferences across the country. Thirdly, I believe that the presidential candidates should be forced to speak to this one subject that they have all avoided.

Furthermore I want to make this announcement: I'm going to nominate a Black Democrat for the presidency at the Democratic National Convention in New York in July; and that nominee will have at the top of his agenda the whole question of bringing America's policy towards Africa into new prominence. That of course is the main problem that we've had--foreign policy is considered difficult--if not abstract, if not either of those two, unrelated to what many people consider to be the business that brings them in struggle for survival in the U.S. We will have a nominee who will articulate many of the points in African policy that other candidates will not articulate.

So out of these several possibilities, I think that we could begin to do what really must be done, namely that we must move the understanding of this struggle, which is classic, to understand the history of what America did in Angola, what we ought to have done, but what we may yet do for this. the newest of the African nations in a larger consideration than just Angola. It is my contention that until we alter drastically this political process, we have no more hope of making the total kind of transformation of our American foreign policy which is inhumane and racist into that which it ought to be, than we have of transforming our domestic policy into that which is no longer inhumane and racist, to that which it ought to be. And so I see a connection here, between the struggle for support in Angola, and the struggle for black people and all working class people in this country.

JENNIFER DAVIS:

I want to underscore something which Congressman Conyers said which I think is critical. The two views of U.S. policy towards Africa. The one that there never was a policy, and the second, his analysis of what that policy is. The former is the most dangerous myth that we have to deal with--the idea that there didn't use to be an African policy, or that Africa was very neglected. As long as that kind of myth-making is allowed to continue, we don't recognize the seriousness of the enemies that we face and the enemies that the young independent countries in Africa face. Since the Second World War, at least, there has always been a very clear policy on Africa and anyone who had watched has seen what that policy is it is a consistent policy for support for colonial rule or white apartheid rule in South Africa and a consistent policy of opposition to liberation movements.
I want to read a little bit from the testimony on the Angola hearings in February that Senator Clark held at which a more honest gentleman than usual testified, Robert Ellsworth, Deputy Secretary of Defense, talking about the U.S. view on what had happened in Angola and why they were concerned. He used largely the arguments about the Soviet Union and Cuba, but he came out very clearly on why they were really concerned. What he said was: "We are deeply concerned over the potential impact of sustained Soviet and/or Cuban presence would have on security and stability in Southern Africa. We continue to work to promote peaceful solutions to the issue of majority rule in Rhodesia, self determination in Namibia, and ending apartheid in South Africa; but a Soviet presence in Angola could serve to support insurgents in these 3 countries, following the Soviet policy of aiding wars of liberation." And there is the fundamental issue; the U.S. is fundamentally opposed to wars of liberation, it is fundamentally opposed to insurgencies.

Therefore, we must not bluff ourselves that there is now going to be a new stage because Kissinger has gone to Southern Africa. In fact, he came back with a kind of smokescreen which anyone who looked a bit closely can see exploded the minute he came back. He came back to the U.S. on Friday, and on Monday it was clear that the U.S. was going to oppose and veto the recognition of Angola in the United Nations, on Tuesday we heard that they were going to supply nuclear reactors, and on Wednesday we found out that they were going to invite the South African Navy to take part in the 200 year independence birthday celebrations. And there the picture is clear, in order to strengthen, in fact, the ties Southern Africa--there is a lot of rhetoric about support for independence or self-determination in Namibia, black majority rule in Rhodesia, but always on their terms, and the terms are no liberation movements, no armed struggle, in other words, no building of a strong independence liberation movement, so that when we talk about support for Angola, support for liberation struggle in the whole of Southern Africa, I think that the point the Congressman Conyers made is very critical. That is if we want to support those things, we have to recognize that we are fundamentally opposed to the system that exists here now, and we can't think that it is going to be easy, or that we are going to get a lot of support from the "nice people" in the Administration.

TED LOCKWOOD:

When I questioned the Angolan desk officer this morning about the Angolan recognition issue to make sure that I knew the very latest position, he said "We are moving toward a harder policy." And that it has not been clearly spelled out that what Kissinger means is not a substantial withdrawal of Cuban troops, he means all Cuban troops out. I said, "Do you mean to say that we are going to make a deal with them so that we will withdraw the American troops from Cuba?" He said, "Oh, well..." It really means that Kissinger is dangling aid packages to make it work." That is the other part of the thing is that not only working out some sort of dialogue, relaxation of tensions in order to supposedly jolly along the South Africans, you dangle aid packages right and left in front of the other parties--the Black States.

ROBERT VAN LIEROP:

I agree with the great sense of urgency that has been expressed here about the lack of U.S. recognition for the PRA, and I think that it is very important for all of us to leave here with a renewed commitment, and a renewed sense of urgency, in working in our respective communities to mobilize mass support for U.S. recognition of the PRA. However, I think that it is very, very dangerous for us to make our primary objective U.S. recognition of Angola, for our primary objective must take cognizance of the fact that the Angolan revolution entered a new and different
stage and that recognition by the U.S. government will eventually mean that we and the Angolan people must intensify vigilance more than ever because of past efforts by the U.S. government to destabilize progressive governments throughout the third world. And the reasons why the U.S. government would attempt to destabilize the revolutionary government in Angola are the very same reasons why the U.S. government has not yet recognized the PRA. And very briefly, in our work in our communities, we need to emphasize and stress some of these reasons.

Now let's examine them and make some comparisons: for example in Angola today, the PRA is building hospitals, while in this country the city of New York has just announced that it is going to close a minimum of 33 hospitals, and other cities have announced they are doing the same. Therefore, the city of New York is closing more hospitals than presently exists in all of Angola. In addition the Federal Government has said that it is not going to fund day-care centers, while in the PRA, the people are mobilizing for the emancipation of women and for the construction of more day-care centers so that all people in Angola, men, women, and young people can participate actively in the revolution. In the PRA today, new schools are being built where for the first time all Angolan children will learn how to read and write, how to add and subtract, while in the U.S. the President has announced, and he said it was a slip of the tongue, that he wants the Supreme Court to reconsider the Brown vs. The Board of Education decision. Today, the PRA, the government, the people, are prosecuting mercenaries, while in the U.S. here in Chicago, Hanrahan, and in other parts of this country, people like Hanrahan are free to commit their crimes against all of us.

In the PRA a massive effort is underway to increase agricultural production so that all people in the country can be adequately fed, clothed and housed for the first time, while in this country the Department of Agriculture pays massive subsidies to make sure that higher prices are maintained and competition is restricted. In the PRA a real distribution of the wealth is being attempted by the people today, while in this country, real differences in real income are being accentuated by inflation and other policies by federal, state, and local government. Therefore, when you return to your communities to begin to do this work on Angola, it is very important that all of us point out that we must ask the question of ourselves and the people we are working with, (when we are talking about Angola and the U.S.) "Which is the country of the future? Which is the country which is at least trying to build a socio-economic system which is the socio-economic system of the future, and which is the country which is attempting to hold back the wheels of progress?" Reaction is always afraid of the wave of the future. And I think that this is one of the most important things that we must take from this conference back to our communities in explaining why we must support the Angolan revolution.
REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE AND APPEAL FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Baring unforeseen developments the Angola News Summary will not be published during July and August. The News Summary began last November as a response to an extreme situation of military and political struggle in Angola, brought on in large measure by the actions of the US government. The Angola News Summary was put out every week up until mid March; but as the MPLA achieved military victory and political advances, the Angola News Summary was published less than once a week.

Our decision not to publish the Angola News Summary during the summer months does not mean we feel solidarity work with the People’s republic of Angola is any less important than it was six or eight months ago. On the contrary what the US government has not been able to achieve by military means will now be sought on the diplomatic and economic fronts -- witness the veto by the United States of the People’s Republic of Angola’s admission to the United Nations this past week.

Our solidarity with the Angolan people will continue in the coming year in a variety of forms, from participating in national support campaigns, the campaign for recognition in the United Nations and by the United States, and the medical aid committee. One concrete task we hope will be a slide tape presentation on Angola put together over the summer to be ready for use by community and work groups, schools, colleges, and general education in the fall.

Unfortunately however, any future plans that we have or might like to have depend on money. At this moment the Committee’s finances are down to practically nothing, and this issue alone of the Angola News Summary has cost us almost $400 to put out. Unless we receive a substantial influx of contributions, the work of the Committee will have to be drastically curtailed and perhaps even terminated. So please help if you can by sending what you can afford.

A Luta Continua A Vitoria e Certa MPLA Solidarity Committee

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APPEAL FOR MEDICAL SUPPORT TO ANGOLA

The Medical Aid to Angola Workshop at the Chicago Angola Support Conference has set a goal of raising $11,000 by November 11, 1976, for hospital equipment, supplies, and medicines (see ANS June 3). The MPLA Solidarity Committee fully supports this goal and has committed the $200 already raised by the Committee for material support to this project. We urge you to support this goal as well, in whatever ways that you can.

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NAME ____________________________ contribution for Committee work ____________________________
ADDRESS ____________________________ Medical Aid ____________________________

Both ____________________________