MINI-GUIDE TO ANGOLA

The U.S.’s undeclared war against The Angolan People
. . . . The Cost of Peace
Even when pressed by the demands of inner truth, men do not easily assume the task of opposing their government's policy, especially in time of war. . . . Some of us who have already begun to break the silence of the night have found that the calling to speak is often a vocation of agony, but we must speak. We must speak with all the humility that is appropriate to our limited vision, but we must speak. 

Martin Luther King, Jr.
Angola's History

Portuguese explorers first landed near the Congo River in 1483. They encountered the Kongo Kingdom, (now northern Angola, southern Congo and western Zaire), and were welcomed by merchants eager to expand trade routes beyond their shores. Mani Kongo, Ruler of the Kingdom, formed an alliance with the Europeans and began a profitable trade in slaves that pushed southward into what is now Angola. During the next 450 years the Portuguese never were able to halt recurring uprisings against their colonial rule. Portugal's complete control over Angola was not finally established until the second decade of the 20th century.

In February 1961, a demonstration in Luanda, organized by the MPLA and peasant uprisings in northern Angola in March, were the turning points in Angola's struggle for freedom. The brutality of the police response attracted worldwide attention. After that event, many Angolans turned to armed struggle as a means of achieving self-determination. Nationalist movements emerged within Angola; the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) under Holden Roberto; the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) led by Dr. Agostinho Neto; and later the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) under Jonas Savimbi.

In 1973, China became involved in the conflict as a supplier to the FNLA. The United States also began covert aid to the FNLA in July of 1974. Shortly thereafter, the Soviet Union began sending arms shipments to the MPLA. The stage for greater conflict was set on January 15, 1975, when the three contending liberation movements signed the Alvor Accord calling for Portuguese-supervised elections to be followed by independence on November 11, 1975.

Population: 9.2 Million

The Turning Point

The MPLA government and the UNITA forces signed a peace accord in June of 1991 in Estoril, Portugal. The accord calls for free and fair elections by the end of 1992 and the integration of the two armed forces. UNITA, also agreed to recognize the Angolan government until the general elections. The U.N. verification mission in Angola, which monitored the Cuban pullout has been assigned the task of ensuring that the elections are peaceful. Ten days after the signing, the U.S. House of Representatives voted to continue covert aid to UNITA. The $20 million dollar aid package will give UNITA the assistance it needs to develop its political infrastructure.

Before the Estoril Accord, Angola was entrenched in a civil war that was killing and maiming its people, traumatizing its children, and destroying its economy. Angolan

President dos Santos attempted to stop the destruction in late 1990 by announcing new government policies that included free and open elections in a multi-party system. At the same time they began building coalitions with church and civic leaders with an eye toward scheduled elections. The MPLA also moved to privatize certain sectors of the economy.

Economy

In 1975, the MPLA government embraced socialist economic principles. The Angolan constitution and MPLA government policies have always preserved a mixed economy with state, co-operative, and private sectors.

Major exports: Oil (89%), Diamonds (5%), Coffee (5%). The U.S. is Angola's largest oil customer.
DEOLINDA RODRIGUES. She was a pioneer in working for Women’s rights within the MPLA. Deolinda attended school in New Jersey under the auspices of the Methodist church. She returned to the Congo where she became a leading MPLA activist. She was captured by the UPANLFA on the Northern Angolan front while on a mission. Along with four other founders of OMA (Lucrecia Paim, Irene Cohen, Engracia dos Santos and Teresa Alfonso) she was murdered in the notorious Kinkuzu camp in Zaire.

MARIA RUTH NETO. National Coordinator of the Organization of Angolan Women (OMA). She was instrumental in securing the participation of women at all levels of the MPLA. In December 1990, she was elected to the central committee of the MPLA, along with Maria Mambo Cafete.

AGOSTINHO NETO. Son of a Methodist pastor, he was born on September 17, 1922 in the village of Bengo. He was one of the first Africans to complete secondary education. In 1947, he went to Portugal on a Methodist scholarship to study medicine. He became involved in the student movement and was arrested. A sensitive and perceptive poet, his writings and views led to his expulsion from the university and further imprisonment. He completed his medical degree in 1958, returned to Luanda and continued his work for liberation. On June 8th, 1960, he was arrested and flogged in front of his family. When Angola gained independence in 1975, Agostinho Neto became the first President.

JOSE EDUARDO DOS SANTOS. Dos Santos has been involved in Angola’s independence struggle since high school. In 1961, at 19, he went to the Congo where he helped found the youth section of the MPLA. In 1963, he earned an oil engineering degree in Baku, USSR. In November of 1975, he became the country’s first Foreign Minister. He was elected President of Angola on September 20, 1979 following the death of Dr. Neto.

History of U.S. Involvement...An Undeclared War

On January 26th, 1975, in an attempt to strengthen the FNLA’s position, the CIA sent $300,000 to Holden Roberto and encouraged the FNLA to attack the MPLA. In response, the Soviet Union increased arms shipments to the MPLA, and Soviet and Cuban advisors were sent to Angola.

During 1975, the CIA spent $31.1 million in support of the FNLA and UNITA. The CIA also recruited mercenary forces, including Americans and two Zairian battalions to fight in Angola. It persuaded a receptive South Africa to invade Angola with an armored column in an unsuccessful attempt to evict the MPLA from Luanda, and prevent Agostinho Neto from accepting the reins of government from the departing Portuguese. Attacked in the north by the FNLA and from the south by the South African and UNITA forces, the besieged MPLA solicited support from Cuba, which began to land troops in Angola in October, 1975.

Since Independence, Angola and Mozambique have been beset by internal fighting and external attacks from South Africa. Hardly a week has been passed in peace. P17 Children on the Front Line, Unicef, 1988.

In January 1976, the U.S. Congress learned that it had been systematically deceived by the CIA about the nature and extent of U.S. activities in Angola. Congress passed the Clark Amendment, named for Senator Dick Clark of Iowa, which prohibited future funding of the CIA's covert action in Angola. The Clark Amendment was repealed in 1985 because of pressure from the Reagan Administration. The United States and South Africa are the only countries that refuse to recognize the Angolan government or to establish diplomatic relations. Angolan President dos Santos challenged the U.S. involvement when he questioned, "...if the administration of the United States of America is really interested in a negotiated solution and in democracy, or if it only wants to bring UNITA to power by means of force." In 1991, Congress was prodded by President Bush and by Savimbi's effective public relations machine in the U.S. to continue to provide financial and material support to UNITA's war effort.

HISTORY OF U.S. INVOLVEMENT
Genocide . . . the Cost of Peace

The U.S. government played a central role in the genocidal war against the Angolan people. In Angola, war-related deaths between 1980 and 1988 exceeded 500,000. Women and children have been the primary victims of the war. Over 331,000 infants and young children have been killed. Since 1985, U.S. direct financial support to UNITA for weapons — including both landmines and sophisticated Stinger missiles — has ranged between $60 and $100 million dollars a year. In December of 1989, there was evidence of direct U.S. involvement when a CIA C-130 plane carrying arms to UNITA through Zaire crashed in Angola, killing four Americans. In 1991, Congress allocated $60 million dollars of military aid to UNITA. This allocation continued the "contra like" strategy of arming forces to destabilize governments through state-sponsored terrorism until those governments change their political and economic direction.

Savimbi and UNITA . . . Agents of Genocide

Jonas Savimbi was born in 1934 in Munhango, along the Benguela railroad line in eastern Angola. He was there when the Angolan liberation struggle began in 1961. At that time he was affiliated with the FNLA.

Savimbi is a chameleon. He has repeatedly changed his politics to follow financial support. In 1962, Savimbi solicited aid from Americans by promising to push communism out of Africa. In 1964, UNITA forces attacked the MPLA and FNLA camps in exchange for Portuguese military and material support. Later Savimbi also denounced Holden Roberto for "tribal favoritism" and broke with the FNLA on the grounds that it was deeply infiltrated by the CIA. "... the notorious agents of imperialism." In the early 1970s, when UNITA was courting Chinese support, UNITA's official newsletter, Kwacha-Angola, was filled with Maoist ideology.

U.S. and South African aid in the mid-1970s made Savimbi conciliatory toward the West and he adopted the rhetoric of "free-enterprise capitalism." However, as late as 1984, he declared UNITA a "socialist movement" in the Portuguese press.

Quality of Life Indicators

- 50% of Angola's Annual budget went for the war effort
- 1991 — 2 million Angolans denied basic healthcare
- 1990 — 5 million Angolans vulnerable to hunger
- 1988 War property damage cost 20 billion U.S. dollars

Access to safe water: 21% of Population
Life expectancy: 41 Years
Income per person: $480

Allegations of human-rights abuses within UNITA are persistent and come from knowledgeable sources. Savimbi biographer and ex-supporter, Fred Bridgland, has recently acknowledged severe human rights violations by Savimbi. Savimbi's former interpreter, Sousa Jamba, and Dinhu Chingunji, the son of UNITA's first Chief of Staff, allege that over the years Savimbi has gruesomely eliminated many of his rivals.

The man who could provide conclusive evidence, Brigadier Tito Chingunji, formerly UNITA's representative in Washington and the one who helped get Savimbi into the White House, reportedly has been tortured and is being held prisoner in Jamba. "The Mystique of Savimbi" by Radek Sikorski, in The National Review, August 18, 1989
UNITA’s Partnership with South Africa

UNITA and the apartheid regime in South Africa have maintained a mutually beneficial alliance for many years. South Africa acknowledges that it has provided “...military, humanitarian, and moral support” to UNITA. South African troops have frequently posed as UNITA forces. South Africa’s numerous invasions into Angola, ostensibly staged to attack SWAPO bases were usually designed to assist UNITA. Savimbi’s relationship with Pretoria was vividly illustrated in 1984 when he was the only Black leader to participate in the inauguration of PW Botha. UNITA fulfills one of South Africa’s primary foreign policy objectives: the destabilization of Angola and other Frontline States.

With South African help, UNITA has crippled Angola’s infrastructure by bombing its only oil refinery, vandalizing its agricultural research station, and sabotaging the trans-Angola Benguela railroad. South African President de Klerk claims South Africa is no longer involved in the internal affairs of Angola. However, in early 1991 an Angolan official complained that right-wing South Africans, with the approval of their white minority government, were continuing to provide UNITA with weapons. The Weekly Mail of South Africa estimated that the South African Air Force had flown 90 tons of military supplies to UNITA between March 8-17. In May 1991, South Africans were reported to be aiding UNITA in its attack on Luena in Moxico Province. UNITA shelled Luena for 36 days, using South African made G-5 and B-12 long range artillery. Four hundred civilians were killed. Doctors treated 80 people for respiratory difficulties caused by toxic substances contained in the B-12 canon shells.

"South Africa’s Secret Agent"

"I can say that I can see the Executive President of South Africa as my friend. If it shocks you or not, it is my impression. I consider him my friend."
—Jonas Savimbi, CBS ‘60 Minutes,’ 1/26/86

Zaire’s Mobutu . . . Middleman for the Undeclared War

Mobutu Sese Seko, Zaire’s self-appointed President-for-Life is reputedly the world’s third richest man, estimated to have $5 billion. Zaire is the world’s ninth poorest country. Mobutu is a key ally and conduit of U.S. interests in Central and Southern Africa. He came to power in 1965, and is linked to the 1961 CIA-backed assassination of Patrice Lumumba, the first and only democratically elected Prime Minister of Zaire, then known as the Belgian Congo. The CIA has used Zaire to funnel money, stinger anti-aircraft missiles and other military hardware to the U.S. and South African backed UNITA rebels through Zaire to assist in the attempt to overthrow the Angolan government. The Angolan Foreign Minister reported in late 1990 that U.S. military personnel entered Angola through Zaire and have been seen working with UNITA rebels inside Angolan territory. Independent reports indicate that the U.S. rebuilt Zaire’s Kamina airbase in Southern Shaba Province near the Angolan border to be used as a shipment depot for military supplies going to UNITA forces inside Angola.

The Little Ones Suffer . . . Children as Victims

The “undeclared” war against the people of Angola has taken its heaviest toll on the lives of children. Every four minutes, a small Angolan or Mozambican child dies. A 1989 United Nations study, “The Economic Cost of Frontline Resistance to Apartheid,” revealed that in Angola, nearly 331,000 children died between 1980 and 1988. The largest number of children’s deaths (under the age of five) were caused by a combination of malnutrition, diarrhea, untreated diseases, lack of immunization and health care services, and contaminated water. These are all correctable conditions, but are overwhelming because of the effects of the war.

As peace talks progressed, UNITA intensified the war, creating a crushing drain on financial resources needed to purchase essential pharmaceuticals and medical supplies, and provide health care for its children. Angola must now rely on the international donor community to help meet needs.
Angolan Women

Angolan women have played an integral part in the political and armed struggle to liberate their country from Portuguese colonization. Through the perils of war, Angolan women have remained the primary agriculturalists and nurturers of the family unit. In addition, women have created community-based organizations that have significantly improved literacy, basic health, and living conditions in the rural areas. And addressed equality issues between men and women. The Organization of Angolan Women (OMA) is one of the most long standing women’s organizations in Angola. It was started in December of 1961, by women members of the MPLA to bring “…together all women in the national liberation struggle.”

Angolan and Cuban woman in Luanda. Photo AP

1985 Women illiteracy 67%
1990 Maternal Mortality Rate 600 per 100,000

Destabilization in the Region . . . Road to Recolonization

SOUTH AFRICA is bordered by independent African nations that were colonized by European nations. In order to dominate these nations, South Africa has used both economic and military pressures. South Africa has continuously armed and trained insurgent groups to undermine the developing economies of their neighbors. This regional destabilization effort is intended to prevent Frontline States from assisting the South African liberation efforts, maintain economic dominance, and pave the road for Western recolonization.

By most accounts, South Africa continues to work at destabilizing its neighbors and in an equally sinister fashion it has been found subverting democratic efforts in Southern Africa. For example, in late June 1991, a former SADF propaganda officer, Nico Basson, exposed South Africa’s “master-plan” to manipulate the outcome of the Angolan elections. In July 1991, the South African press began to reveal covert government funding to Inkatha. The amount of funding admitted to so far is in excess of one million dollars, but analysts think it may reach into the hundreds of millions. We now know that much of the township violence must be laid at the government’s door.

In Mozambique the Mozambican National Resistance (Renamo) continues to get funds from South Africa. Captured MNR terrorists or those who have turned themselves in continue to tell how the South African military parachutes food and equipment to Renamo. Renamo’s attacks have severely damaged the country’s infrastructure and ability to respond to the population’s needs. The Renamo terrorists are responsible for over 1,000,000 deaths, 500,000 of them were war related child deaths. The carnage and terror has led 4.6 million Mozambicans homeless and 300,000 orphaned children. In May 1991, South African Press reports revealed evidence that the SADF was still training Renamo forces in facilities near Johannesburg.

Namibia achieved independence from South Africa in March of 1990, after a protracted and bloody guerrilla war. However, Namibia is still ensnared in a maze of economic dependency. South Africa stripped Namibia of infrastructural materials and drained the national treasury before it departed. South Africa’s adamant refusal to turn over Namibia’s only deep water port, Walvis Bay, to the new SWAPO government demonstrates the economic chokehold they continue to have. Recent revelations indicate that the South African government poured millions of dollars into trying to shape the outcome of the first Namibian election. The operation included selective assassination, the infiltration of U.N. peace keeping forces, espionage, radio jamming, a massive disinformation campaign, psychological warfare research, smear campaigns, and cash donations to SWAPO’s opposition.

SADCC, the Southern Africa Development and Coordinating Conference, has played a significant role in resisting South African aggression and organizing the region to move toward self-sufficiency. SADCC’s goals are to reduce the regions dependency on South Africa, forge genuine regional ties, mobilize regional resources to meet the needs and interests of the region, and implement strategies which economically liberate the region.

We, mothers, have shed tears upon seeing the lives of our children, young people less than 25 years old, our husbands and our friends destroyed by the most horrifying human conditions. So many young people under 30 years of age have been mutilated, have lost one or two limbs, condemned for the rest of their lives without the ability to live like the rest of the young people of the world. . . . A country so large and with so much potential has almost been entirely destroyed. It is not possible to go into the countryside or to the fields. It is not possible to travel on the roads at will. When people do go to the fields, many times one or two will remain there, victims of land mines. . . . We say no to the foreign interference in our country’s affairs. Let us resolve our own problems. We want peace and not war.
—Message from the Day of the Angolan Women 3/2/81

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1961 December of 1961, by women members of the MPLA to bring “… together all women in the national liberation struggle.”

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First President of Angola, (R) Agostinho Neto; Deputy President of Mozambique, Marcelinos dos Santos (C), and assassinated leader of the PAIGC in Guinea-Bissau, Amilcar Cabral; pose for pictures during the break of a 1960’s conference on developing strategy to free their countries from Portuguese colonization. Photo ANGOP