BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF SAM NUJOMA

SAM NUJOMA is the president of the South West Africa Peoples' Organization (SWAPO). SWAPO is the liberation movement leading the struggle of the Namibian people to achieve independence from South Africa's illegal rule and occupation.

Nujoma has been SWAPO's president for 28 years, playing a key role in developing the movement's internal strategy and heading the diplomatic missions which have argued Namibia's cause internationally. The eldest son of an Ovambo peasant farmer, his evolution into an active member of the struggle for Namibian independence began when he was in his early twenties. He became active as a response to his daily experiences of repression at the hands of the South African government. While working for South African railways in Windhoek, he began organizing fellow workers against the migratory contract labor system.

In 1959 Nujoma, already a full time organizer, was arrested on several occasions. In 1960 following a strike he helped organize to protest the forced removal of Blacks from the capital, Nujoma was arrested again and ordered into internal exile in a remote country district. He escaped from Namibia, making his way to Tanzania where Julius Nyerere urged him to take the Namibian cause to the United Nations. In New York Nujoma presented eloquent testimony on the situation of the Namibian people before the United Nations. This helped to bring SWAPO international recognition and to focus international attention on South Africa's occupation of this neighboring country.

In 1966 Nujoma attempted to return to Namibia. He was arrested at the airport, thrown in prison and deported on the following day. His deportation forced him to leave his family in Namibia, and it was 18 years before they were able to join him in exile. His sons are active members of SWAPO. Family members have been victimized for Nujoma's political activism.

SWAPO was formed in 1960, emerging out of an earlier political movement of students and migrant workers. It is the only Namibian organization that draws support from the entire country. SWAPO supports a cease fire between itself and the South African army as the first step in the implementation of 1978 United Nations Security Council Resolution 435, which provides for free and democratic elections in Namibia under United Nations supervision. A wide range of church, civic and human rights organizations, and even the South African army, agree that SWAPO would win the majority of votes in a free election.

Mr. Nujoma was born on May 12, 1929, is married to Mrs. Kovambo Theopoline Nujoma and is the father of four children. He was elected President of SWAPO for the first time in April 1960, and having supervised the creation of the guerrilla wing of the movement, the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), he is also its Commander in Chief.

April 1988
Tutu challenges Pretoria on troops in Namibia

From Michael Hornsby, Katutura, Namibia

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, more than half of Namibia’s 1.19 million population lives, has been the scene of 22 years of desultory but murderous bush warfare between the South African security forces and the guerrillas of the South West Africa People’s Organization.

On Saturday, Archbishop Tutu, who arrived in his cream-colored Rolls Royce in Katutura in the back of the township, held a service at Oshakati Cathedral, where more than 1,000 ululating blacks, to coincide with last Friday’s service held in Windhoek by President Botha, who afterwards announced that he was giving strengthened powers to the South African administrator-general here.

“My neighbour in Cape Town came here and made it,” the archbishop said. He called the politician a “cock and rhino”.

Afterwards, he accused Pretoria of “corking a snook at the world” by its continued occupation of Namibia.

While the bishops celebrated communion with their congregation, military vehicles rumbled constantly up and down the nearby road, and the 20 miles to the southeast, which bristles with radar installations.

The South African military presence in the area is far in excess of what would be needed merely to contain the modest military threat posed by Swapo.

Pretoria uses Oshakati and Okahandja as the main staging-posts for operation inside southern Angola in support of the Namibian guerrillas there, which are pursuing a movement for ethnic equality among the Namibian population.

Most of Namibia’s 78,000 whites want the authorities to preserve, but the multi-racial Namibian government is seeking to abolish them in an attempt to win wider support among the Namibian population.

Churches are holding their annual synod in Windhoek this week to mark the tenth anniversary of the passage of the United Nations Security Council’s Resolution 435, calling for independence for Namibia.
Botha poll plan for Namibia

David Beresford

South Africa's President, Mr P.W. Botha, yesterday signalled his growing impatience with the logjam which is continuing to obstruct his attempts to fashion an "internal" solution to Namibia's constitutional impasse.

He flew to Windhoek with his senior cabinet ministers to reassess the political situation in the mandated territory and said that local parties would have to find agreement on the constitutional question "within months, not years."

He warned: "If people do not want to help themselves, then others will have to help them."

Mr Botha announced that he was giving his personal representative in Namibia, the Administrator General, new powers over local government, as well as the press. The administrator — at present Mr Louis Pienaar — would be able to call racially-based elections in the territory and veto attempts to abolish existing authorities, or to diminish their administrative powers.

He would also be given authority to take what Mr Botha described as "appropriate" steps against local media which promoted "subversion" and "terrorism."

He warned local political leaders that "fitting and effective" action had to be taken against organisations which used violence to promote their political objectives — a remark which was presumed to be aimed at Swapo.

The parties to the attempted internal settlement remain deeply divided over the issue of "ethnicity" and the protection of "group rights."

Separate draft constitutions were handed to President Botha by the majority of the transitional cabinet and by the local National Party, supported by the Rehoboth Free Democratic Party.

The President told a news conference later that he had briefly looked at the proposals and it appeared some progress had been made, but that some areas remained vague and others required better formulation. He said it was "of the utmost importance" that the transitional government should broaden its political base.

Mr Botha said that the timetable for Cuban troop withdrawals from Angola remained decisive to attempts to negotiate the territory's independence.

"Even the Government in Luanda accepts agreement on a Cuban withdrawal will have to be linked to implementation of (UN) Resolution 435," he said.

The UN also had to relinquish its bias towards Swapo as the "sole and authentic" representative of the people in the territory.

Mozambique's official media accused South Africa yesterday of carrying out a car bomb attack which critically injured a prominent anti-apartheid campaigner.

Professor Albie Sachs, a leading white member of the African National Congress, had an arm severed when a bomb wrecked his car on Thursday.

Established by The American Committee on Africa, 1966 • Contributions are tax-deductible