

A
Political History
of the **Civil War**
in **Angola**

**1974-
1990**

W. Martin James III

With a new introduction by the author

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Introduction to the Paperback Edition—2011

When *A Political History of the Civil War in Angola, 1974-1990* was submitted to the publisher in 1990, the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola – UNITA) was on the verge of victory, or at least being in a position to negotiate from strength, against the governing Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola – MPLA).

Under pressure from the United States, the Soviet Union, and Portugal, the two warring factions agreed to the Bicesse Accords on May 31, 1991. The accords called for an immediate ceasefire, cantonment of both armies, creation of a new national army, and free, fair elections in September 1992. The United Nations (UN) was charged with the voter registration and conducting the elections. Problems arose immediately. The MPLA electorate was based mostly in Luanda (Angola's capital), making its voter registration easy. However, UNITA's supporters were mostly rural dwellers. The civil war had destroyed most roads, landmines had been planted extensively, and the United Nations allocated only \$200 million and 400 monitors and civilian police in a nation the size of California and Texas combined. By contrast in Namibia, in 1989, the UN had sent 1,700 monitors at a cost of \$373 million.

UNITA complained that its voters were not being registered. Despite complaints from the United States, the UN, churches, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the other political parties, the MPLA unilaterally ended the registration process on August 10, 1992. Eleven candidates ran for president, but the two most important were UNITA's Jonas Savimbi and José Eduardo dos Santos of the MPLA. The parliamentary elections were easily won by the MPLA, but in the presidential race dos Santo won 49.6 percent of the vote with Savimbi at 40.1 percent. The government-controlled media began announcing an MPLA victory soon after polls closed. UNITA and other parties complained about lack of transparency and fraud. The elections were "generally free and

fair,” however, fraud occurred in the tabulation process. Ten political parties, but not UNITA, issued a declaration “denouncing” the election on October 2. Under electoral law victory could be achieved only by winning 50 percent plus one. Thus, a run-off election between the two top candidates was mandated. Despite misgivings, UNITA negotiators returned to Luanda to conduct negotiations for the run-off contest.

On October 31, 1992, the MPLA conducted a pogrom against the UNITA leadership and supporters in Luanda and surrounding areas. According to church sources, over 20,000 people were killed over the weekend. In an incident described as the “Halloween Massacre,” UNITA’s vice-president, chief negotiator, and party secretary were killed. The government termed the weekend events as an attempted coup d’état by UNITA. Most accounts support the government version of events. Under the terms of the Bicesse Accords, UNITA was allowed 600 soldiers in Luanda to protect the party’s leadership. It seems strange that one of the best guerrilla armies would attempt a military coup, in the stronghold of the MPLA, with only 600 lightly armed troops.

Regardless of the truth, the events led to a resumption of the civil war. In the cantonment camps, UNITA maintained military discipline, while the MPLA troops were unpaid, underfed, ill-equipped, and unmotivated. As a result, UNITA emerged from the camps combat ready. UNITA forces quickly captured five provincial capitals and laid siege to others. As the recognized government of Angola, the MPLA could purchase weapons to revamp the army and, in some instances, hire mercenaries to fight on behalf of the government. UNITA was forced to “buy” on the black market, resulting in rip-offs, time delays, and shoddy materiel. By July 1994, government forces had recaptured important cities and were placing enormous military pressure on UNITA.

The rebels sought to enter into a ceasefire with the government. Again, under pressure from the UN, the United States, and Portugal, the MPLA agreed to a ceasefire that called for the cantonment of the UNITA army. Also, the rebels would take their place as the loyal political opposition in Luanda, and would surrender occupied areas. The agreement, titled the Lusaka Protocol, was signed on November 20, 1994. Ominously, UNITA’s leader, Savimbi, did not sign the document. The ceasefire held. UNITA did send some representatives to the capital city, but the rebels were reluctant to surrender many of the areas under their control—particularly the areas near Andulo and Bailundo.

On March 13, 1996, UNITA celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of the formation of the party. As a guest, the author attended events in

Bailundo and had the opportunity to interview several guerrilla generals: including António Dembo, Altino “Bock” Sapalalo, and Arlindo Chinda “Ben Ben” Pena. To a man they believed UNITA could have militarily won the civil war in 1990. The rebels would have seized the countryside and laid siege to provincial capitals, forcing the government to capitulate. Luanda would slowly be encircled, preventing supplies from arriving by air or by sea. The rebel generals believed the United States had forced UNITA to accept the Bicesse Accords, allowing the MPLA to remain in power.

While fulfilling most of the Lusaka Protocol, the rebels were hesitant and slow to return towns and municipalities. Finally, in December 1998, at the MPLA IV Party Congress, President dos Santos was quoted as saying, “The only way to attain definitive peace today is to isolate Dr. Savimbi and his warmongering wing domestically, and internationally, as well as to neutralize him politically and militarily.” UNITA viewed the statement as a declaration of war. In January 1999, the government ordered the UN to leave the country, thus opening the way for a return to hostilities. The rebels started rapidly but soon government forces captured long-held UNITA areas, such Bailundo and Andulo in October 1999, and Jamba the next month. Savimbi announced in June 2001 that the rebels would return to guerrilla warfare.

The MPLA government employed a controversial, yet successful tactic. Government forces emptied the countryside of peasants forcing them to relocate to the provincial capitals. The MPLA government ignored the humanitarian crisis, forcing international NGOs to attempt to alleviate the deteriorating conditions in the country. The “scorched earth policy” meant that the rural areas were drained of people who could supply food, rest, and recruits for the insurgents. The remaining populace was either UNITA troops or supporters, thus becoming fair game for government soldiers. Reportedly, Israeli Special Forces and U.S. satellite photos allowed the government to pinpoint Savimbi’s position. On February 22, 2002, Jonas Savimbi was killed in a battle with government troops. General Dembo died either of starvation or wounds, and General Gato emerged near starvation. The rebels sued for peace, and in April 2002 both sides signed the Luena Memorandum of Understanding. The Angolan government had accomplished what few governments had been able to do: defeat a well-organized, disciplined, and trained insurgency. In doing so, the MPLA created a humanitarian crisis and had overthrown the governments of Zaire and Congo-Brazzaville. Since April 2002, Angola has experienced peace.

However, it has been a “negative peace.” Negative peace is a term coined by Angolan dissident Rafael Marques in 2003. It refers to the “absence of conflict ... but it is peace without justice, peace without opportunity, peace without democracy. This is not a peace that promises much to the Angolan people.” Angola has remained a one-party state, as witnessed by the 2008 elections, in which the MPLA won 191 of the 220 seats. If the election of 1992 was tarnished, then the election of 2008 was more so. European Union (EU) observers reported irregularities. One EU observer said, “I personally saw representatives of the ruling party standing not just in the polling station, but in front of the booths where people were voting.”

Despite massive oil and diamond revenues, Angola remains an impoverished nation. According to the UN Human Development Index, Angola is still near the bottom in every category: average life expectancy is 47 years, the infant mortality rate is 130 per 1,000 births, and one-third of adults are illiterate. Elites live like royalty while two-thirds of the population continues to live on less than \$2 per day. The cases of polio, cholera, and AIDS continue to increase as more and more NGOs leave Angola, but the government is slow to respond. Further, a continuing low-level insurgency remains active in Cabinda province. The same oil and diamond wealth makes Western governments hesitant to press the MPLA to reform.

The effects of the civil war linger: landmines remain planted in agricultural fields, and civilians remain physically and emotionally maimed. Internally displaced citizens, lack of employment for former UNITA troops, and destroyed infrastructure (including schools, hospitals, and the transportation system) continue to plague Angola. However, the MPLA government has not addressed the reform issue. Instead, the government muzzles the press, threatens opponents, and refuses to be transparent on budget issues.

Until the MPLA hands political power to an opposition party through a free and fair election Angola will remain just another African country where the policy of “one man, one vote, once” remains. One must question whether things might have been different under a UNITA-led government after the 1992 elections. Could conditions be worse?

W. Martin James III
Henderson State University
November 2010

Introduction

This book is the third in the East-South Relations Series published by the Institute for Soviet and East European Studies at the Graduate School of International Studies of the University of Miami. It focuses upon the political history of the UNITA struggle in Angola.

In 1976, in an appearance before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, two noted scholars discussed UNITA's fate following the Angolan civil war. One believed UNITA was "past history now," the other argued that UNITA remained a "formidable force." I helped prepare the latter testimony for the committee, and the intervening years have proven the validity of the statement.¹

The Angolan civil war was the product of personal jealousy, contrasting ideologies, and ethnic animosities. Fifteen years later, despite the glimmer of peace, the causative elements remain unchanged. Angola and its people continue to suffer from strife and discord.

The three major Angolan insurgencies were all genuine national liberation movements. Events conspired to prevent a government of national unity from being formed in 1974/75. One of those liberation movements, União Nacional Para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA), continued to struggle for the promise of "free, open elections." This is the story of that movement.

The civil war in Angola involves the United States, U.S.S.R., China, South Africa, Cuba, Zaire, Zambia and Namibia to name but a few. Like the insurgencies in Afghanistan, Cambodia and Nicaragua, the UNITA insurgents are beneficiaries of the U.S. Reagan Doctrine policy. By July 1, 1991, the last of the Cuban combat troops will have been withdrawn from Angola. Their departure is further evidence of the success of the Reagan Doctrine.

In the 1990s, with the dynamic changes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, Moscow is in some ways reverting to form.

Mikhail Gorbachev, with his policies of “glasnost” and “perestroika,” his statements regarding a peaceful solution to regional conflicts, and his “new thinking,” is compared with actual Soviet policy toward Angola.

Despite his rhetoric, the Soviet Union between 1987 and 1990 supplied the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola-Partido do Trabalho (MPLA-PT) over \$3 billion worth of military equipment. The biggest MPLA-PT/Cuban offensives have occurred during Gorbachev’s tenure. In 1990, Soviet advisers at the brigade level directed a MPLA-PT offensive against Mavinga, the gateway to Jamba.

U.S. policy is also examined. The UNITA insurgency has seen the entire gamut of U.S. foreign policy: from the Vietnam Syndrome to the Reagan Doctrine. UNITA has been able to attract broad bipartisan support. The late Congressman Claude Pepper was instrumental in focusing his colleagues’ attention on the political legitimacy of UNITA’s struggle.

While a partial solution to the Angolan civil war has been negotiated, it will still take the influence of the United States and Soviet Union to guarantee a government of national reconciliation. It is vital that the U.S.S.R. and the United States honor their agreements to justly settle regional conflicts.

My own thoughts form the conclusion of this book. However, my strategy would require compromise in a part of the world that knows not the meaning of the word. It would require trust where trust is constantly violated, and it would mean submission for the common good where defiance is a remnant of the colonial past.

This book is the product of several years of research. It includes interviews both in the United States and southern Africa, with South African government officials, South African Defense Force officers, South West Africa Territorial Force members, UNITA and MPLA-PT officials, and members and staffs of the U.S. Department of Defense, Department of State, and the U.S. Congress.

I would like to thank John Marcum, Scott Thompson, and Colin Legum for their comments on the manuscript, and Peter Vanneman for his insights on Gorbachev’s foreign policy. A special thanks to Irving Louis Horowitz at Transaction Publishers and Jiri Valenta at the Institute for Soviet and East European Studies for their patience and constructive suggestions. Finally, this book would never have been written without

the love and support provided by Susan Janelle James: wife, mother, and best friend. Not only is she a good typist, but also the world's foremost expert on deciphering Martinese. It is to her that I dedicate this work.

In a sense, this endeavor was fifteen years in the making, beginning in 1975 when a young graduate student approached a professor who needed a researcher to focus on an unknown west African nation named Angola. While many deserve credit, the author takes full responsibility for what follows.

Note

1. Statement of Peter Vanneman and W. Martin James, "Soviet Interests in Southern Africa," before U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *U.S. Policy Toward Africa*. Hearings before the Subcommittee on African Affairs, 94th Congress, 2d Session, March 5, 8, 15, 19, May 12, 13, 21, 26, and 27, 1976, pp. 32-35.



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The UNITA Insurgency in Angola: A Framework for Analysis

The specter of internal political violence is a global phenomenon with far-reaching implications for every major political actor. Insurgencies are ongoing in Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Cambodia, Philippines, and Angola to name but a few.

The potential problems and/or prospects posed by these insurgencies need to be defined, comprehended, and resolved, if necessary. But how do we study insurgencies? Upon what criteria do we base our judgment?

In order to predict events, the analyst must be able to systematically study the strengths and weaknesses of the insurgents and government. One writer has developed a comprehensive framework for the study of insurgency.¹

Terminology

Insurgency can be defined as “a struggle between a non-ruling group and the ruling authorities in which the former consciously employs political resources (organizational skills, propaganda, and/or demonstrations) and instruments of violence to establish legitimacy for some aspect of the political system it considers illegitimate.”²

An insurgency against the political system is a political legitimacy crisis. The analyst must determine, therefore, what are the motives behind the insurgency. O’Neill defined six types of insurgent movements: secessionist, revolutionary, restorational, reactionary, conservative, and reformist.

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Types of Insurgency

Secessionist insurgents “reject the existing political community of which they are formally a part; they seek to withdraw from it and constitute a new autonomous political community.” The Eritrean insurgency in Ethiopia is a secessionist insurgency. Revolutionary insurgents “seek to impose a new regime based on egalitarian values and centrally controlled structures designed to mobilize the people and radically transform the social structure within an existing political community,” that is, UNITA in Angola. Like the Mujaheddin in Afghanistan, restorational movements, “also seek to displace the regime; the values and structures they champion are identified with a recent political order.” “The values are ascriptive and elitist, while the structures are oligarchical ones that have little or no provisions for mass participation in politics.” Reactionary insurgents seek change “by reconstituting a past political order . . . a golden age of the distant past in which religious values and authoritarian structures were predominant.” The Moslem Brotherhood in Egypt is an example. Conservative insurgencies “seek to maintain the existing regime in the face of pressures on authorities to change it.” The Protestant organizations in northern Ireland is another example. Finally, reformist insurgents like the Kurds in Iraq, attempt to “obtain more political, social and economic benefits without necessarily rejecting the political community, regime or authorities.”

The UNITA insurgency could be labelled secessionist or reformist. UNITA’s power base is located in southern Angola. Consequently, secession is always a possibility. Likewise, UNITA supporters have suffered politically, and economically because of MPLA-PT policies; the insurgency could settle for a redistribution of political and economic benefits within the existing political structure. However, UNITA words and actions indicate the movement to be revolutionary. The insurgency seeks to transform the political/economic structures of the nation either through military conquest or a negotiated settlement.

Major Analytical Variables

O’Neill described six variables for the study of insurgencies. They were: environment, organization, popular support, cohesion of the insurgency, external support, government response to the insurgency.³ This author has formulated another variable—the peace process.

Environment

The first major analytical variable is environment. Environment encompasses such factors as “terrain, climate, roads, communications network, ethnicity, religion and culture, size of the country, and number of people.”

Terrain can provide a favorable or hostile environment for an insurgency. If the terrain is suitable for guerrilla warfare—rugged mountains, jungles and forests—an insurgency can grow and expand. Favorable terrain is especially important to a Maoist insurgency, which grows by stages and is dependent upon successful guerrilla operations.

Climate can also aid or hinder an insurgency and government response to that insurgency. Weather can hamper both sides’ activities, leading to predictable periods of violence or calm.

For a better chance of insurgent success, the transportation/communication system should be rudimentary. A good system will allow rapid troop dispersal and quick flow of intelligence data. Poor communication and transportation favors the insurgent, especially the Maoist insurgent.

Language, ethnic, and religious differences can also help or deter a revolutionary movement. These factors, of course, often block nation-building attempts, even where there is no insurgency. A guerrilla organization which achieves victory on the basis of ethnicity, religion, or language must take remedial steps to incorporate other segments of the population in the power structure, or be forced to assume the role of government against a new insurgency.

Organization and Popular Support

Superior organization allows insurgents to compensate for material superiority of their opponents. Weak organization can result in an irreversible defeat. Insurgents often develop “parallel hierarchies” to compete with government institutions in terms of political, economic and social satisfaction of the populace. At the same time, the diversification of the military wing, that is, logistics, guerrilla, terrorist, and conventional force—allows not only growth, but provides further channels for expressive protest.

For many insurgencies, popular support is crucial to eventual success. Popular support is especially vital to any group which employs the

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Maoist strategy of guerrilla warfare. Widespread support of the local population is crucial, as the insurgents steadily try to erode the government's socioeconomic base.

An insurgency utilizes five methods to gain support and recruits: esoteric appeals, exoteric appeals, terrorism, provocation of government counterterrorism, and demonstrations of potency.

Esoteric appeals are directly aimed at the intelligentsia. They "seek to clarify the situation by placing it in an ideological or theoretical context that orders and interprets political complexities." Leftist revolutionaries found an attractive philosophy in Lenin's writings on the exploitation by capitalism of the Third World. Lenin's theory provided an all-encompassing explanation of the political-economic underdevelopment of their nation. Conversely, more modern anti-Soviet national liberation struggles in Angola, Mozambique, Afghanistan, and Nicaragua blame Soviet and Cuban imperialism for the present situation.

Exoteric appeals focus on the concrete grievances of both the general population and the intelligentsia. These grievances range from employment discrimination to land reform, from imperialism to tribalism.

Terrorism is used when esoteric and/or exoteric grievances prove inadequate. Also, terrorism can be employed to demonstrate government weakness and insurgent strength. If used correctly, terrorism can be linked with the insurgency against targets which oppress or subjugate the population. Used incorrectly, however, terrorism can alienate potential domestic and international support.

The next step in achieving popular support is provoking the government into acts of counterterrorism. Such tactics, if used indiscriminately, can distance the local population from the central authority toward the insurgents.

Demonstrations of potency are displayed in two ways: meeting the needs of the people and military initiative. If an insurgency is to succeed, it must meet the basic needs of the population, while demonstrating government inability to provide those services. Food, shelter, health, and education are some sectors in which the insurgents can expose government neglect.

Military initiative is proof that the insurgency has the momentum and will to succeed. Victories boost insurgent morale while dimming government hopes for a quick victory. Initiative is shown via kidnapping, assassination, ambushes, or conventional attacks. A combination of these tactics is needed to maintain continuous victories. By never

allowing the central government the opportunity to regroup, the insurgency gains support and stature, while forcing the enemy into mistakes.

The dramatic gesture keeps the insurgency before the local population, and reminds international supporters that the movement is active. Media coverage of insurgencies allows adept groups to maintain the semblance of continuous victories. While real military initiative is a must, stage-managed victories can also be useful.

Cohesion of the Insurgency

Cohesion is important, but not vital, to the ultimate success of an insurgency. The revolutionaries in Algeria and Angola were both rent with schisms, yet they rule their respective nations today. Still, for an insurgency to have direction, discipline, and a united strategy, some level of cohesion is necessary. Ideology may lead to schisms or provide a rallying point. Danger exists for the insurgency if ideological beliefs are not handled delicately. The safest way to maintain a cohesive organization is for the command structure to include both political and military leaders. A unified command can weigh each decision militarily and politically, and resolve the problem according to the needs of the insurgency as a whole.

Charismatic attraction involves leaders who can recruit members based upon dynamic personality, oratorical skills, and by example. Also, charismatic attraction is important in societies where individual leadership is expected and valued. A problem exists, however, when the charismatic leader departs the scene, leaving the insurgency reliant upon second-tier leadership.

External Support

External support is broken down into four components: moral, political, material, and sanctuary. Moral support is least costly to the donor. It involves public acknowledgement that the insurgency is just and admirable. Political support goes one step further. Here the donor acknowledges and supports the insurgency in public and international forums. Material support involves risk for the donor. Assistance composed of food, weapons, medicines, or training are provided. Such supplies allow the insurgents to increase the scope of their actions. Finally, sanctuary is important. In neighboring countries the insurgents

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can have “safe bases” where arms caches, training, operations, or even an exiled government is established.

External support is dependent upon the insurgency making advances or keeping its name before the international audience. One way this is achieved is via the dramatic gesture. Military success, or at least, the illusion of success, is also important. Strength in organization, cohesion, and popular support will usually attract external support as well.

Government Response to the Insurgency

The fifth variable, and perhaps most important, is the government’s response to an insurgency. If the central government is weak and vacillates, the other factors—external support, cohesion, organization, environment, and popular support—may bring victory within grasp. However, a strong government response may render the other variables inconsequential.

A counterinsurgency operation must successfully defeat each of the forms of violence employed by the insurgents: propaganda-organizational activity, terrorism, guerrilla warfare, and mobile-conventional warfare.

The central government must combat each of these forms of violence with an appropriate response. Counterinsurgency tactics must be planned, coordinated, and conducted via a central administrative control center. Confusion or inaction only plays into the insurgents’ hands. Unfortunately, government inability in these and other areas is often the cause of the insurgency in the first place.

The Peace Process

Finally, the last variable is the peace process. After years of civil war, the insurgency or the government or both, will decide to embark upon a negotiated solution. The civil war may damage the economic infrastructure, deplete the male population, and retard progress to such an extent that both government and insurgency are cast as villains.

At this point both parties may agree to a negotiated solution. The peace process may take place over a period of years interspersed with a return to belligerency as government and insurgents seek maximum gain at minimum cost. External political forces may be able to play an important role, but support for a cessation of hostilities must come from the two internal actors.

The UNITA Insurgency in Angola

UNITA is one of three liberation groups which battled Portugal's colonial rule in Angola. When the Portuguese African empire fell and liberation was secured in 1974, the three groups—the Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola (FNLA), the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA), and UNITA—agreed, based on the terms of the Alvor Agreement, to a tripartite government for the fledgling nation. The liberation groups massed in Luanda, the capital, but personality, ideological, and ethnic conflicts quickly arose. The MPLA, with Soviet and Cuban assistance, drove FNLA and UNITA from the capital and declared the People's Republic of Angola on November 11, 1975. UNITA, with South African, Chinese, and American support, and FNLA, with American and Zairian assistance, launched a brief but bitter civil war. The MPLA, allied with twelve thousand Cuban troops and \$200 million worth of Soviet military equipment, quickly decimated FNLA and drove UNITA back into the bush to continue its low-intensity guerrilla war. Since 1976, UNITA has grown in strength, and threatens the continued rule of the MPLA-PT.

Insurgent Strategies

Insurgent groups utilize sophisticated strategies to obtain their political ends. Three general strategies have been developed: the Leninist, Maoist, and Cuban.

The Leninist strategy involves "a small, tightly knit, disciplined, and highly organized conspiratorial group that has obtained support from major discontented social groups."⁴ For the most part, insurgent activity takes place in urban areas where political and economic power is concentrated. The Leninist approach assumes that the government is on the threshold of collapse and that it will do so when confronted by low-level terrorism and subversion of the police and military.

Political organization and cohesion are the most important variables to a Leninist insurgency. A select few activists control the movement; there is no intention to mobilize the general population. Environment, external support, popular support and government response play less influential roles.

The Maoist strategy ascribes great importance to popular support, organization and environment. Moreover, it involves a series of stages

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which are all dependent on the success of the previous step. These stages are political organization-terrorism, guerrilla warfare and mobile-conventional warfare.

In the organizational stage, cells are created to build political-propaganda groups who will win popular support. Teams of guerrillas will also be deployed to intimidate select individuals.

During the first stage, insurgents stress exoteric and esoteric appeals. Parallel hierarchies are also begun to provide social services and mutual assistance programs.

Guerrilla warfare is the second stage of the Maoist strategy. Small bands operate in rural areas where the terrain is rugged and government control weak. The Maoist insurgent follows the famous dictum of “enemy advances, we retreat; enemy entrenched, we harass; enemy exhausted, we attack; enemy retreating, we pursue.”⁵ As the guerrillas succeed in isolating the people from the government, the parallel hierarchies play an increasingly valuable role in insurgent strategy. The insurgents stress their own ideology to supplant the legitimacy of the existing regime.

The final stage of a Maoist-type insurgency is civil war. Guerrilla forces are regularized and regime forces are confronted in mobile conventional warfare. At this point, the strategy is to defeat the regime.

Popular support, environment, and organization are important to a Maoist insurgency; cohesion, government response, and external support less so.

The Cuban strategy is an alternative to the Maoist model. Che Guevara, the theoretical tactician, argued that (1) popular forces can win a war against the army; (2) it is not necessary to wait until all the conditions for making revolution exist—the insurrection can create them; (3) in underdeveloped Latin America, the countryside is the basic area for fighting. Guevara differs from Mao in that the Cuban believed the insurgents could create the necessary conditions for a revolution. Mao advocated the primacy of the party; the Cuban strategy highlights the military role.

The Maoist Strategy

UNITA adopted Mao Zedong’s guerrilla techniques. UNITA President Jonas Savimbi and many of his commanders received guerrilla training in China during the 1960s. Upon entering Angola, Savimbi set

about instituting the first phase of the Maoist strategy . . . the “mobilization of popular support.”⁶

By the 1974 coup in Portugal, UNITA had a small army, yet was highly successful in garnering local support. Portugal’s counterinsurgency efforts had been only modestly successful, thus allowing UNITA opportunity to implement its political program.⁷ UNITA had good cause to welcome the scheduled 1975 elections.

Since the civil war ended in 1976, UNITA has continued to apply the Maoist strategy in the Angolan context. UNITA entered the final stage—confronting the enemy in mobile-conventional warfare in 1985.

The Framework for Analysis

Using the seven variables, the UNITA insurgency has been analyzed, attempting to measure the potential for success. The environmental conditions of Angola are important. The terrain of Angola is diverse and well-suited to a guerrilla organization employing the Maoist strategy. Perhaps the biggest factor in the Angola equation is the ethnic background of the Angolan People. MPLA-PT in Angola believed “the stress upon the communitarian heritage of African society is naive.”⁸ UNITA, on the other hand, nurtured and cultivated ethnic traditions and culture.

The third chapter is a historical summary of the struggle of the three liberation movements through the civil war. While this study keys on only one movement, the political complexity of Angola is difficult to judge without some knowledge of the other movements. Also, it is the internationalization of the civil war which, to a great extent, explains the current situation in Angola.

To many, MPLA-PT’s victory in Angola was endemic of Third World revolutions supported by non-Western powers.⁹ Seemingly, every revolution was Leninist and propped up by China or the Soviet Union against corrupt, inefficient regimes supported by the Western alliance. By the 1980s this trend had reversed. Globally, several wars of anticommunist revolution, under the Reagan Doctrine umbrella, were being waged against Leninist oriented regimes. UNITA was one of the most successful of these “new” liberation movements.

Organization and popular support will focus upon the structure of UNITA. How many soldiers, laborers, and sympathetic supporters can it claim? Is UNITA solely a military force, or has it evolved an economic

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and political organization? A parallel hierarchy is necessary to show supporters that the insurgency can provide basic goods and services which the government has failed to deliver. Has UNITA created such a state within a state? Militarily, the insurgency must grow and diversify while maintaining theoretical loyalty to a particular guerrilla strategy.

Popular support is vital to UNITA's immediate security and chances for long-term success. Equally important is the charismatic appeal of Jonas Savimbi. Savimbi controls UNITA, and questions arise as to whether the organization could survive his loss. His absence could cost UNITA its vitality and durability. Richard Harwood of the *Washington Post* noted about Savimbi, "He has that quality so valued in Hollywood and American politics: charisma. He has a real army and followers with enormous dedication."¹⁰ Undoubtedly, Angolans view Savimbi as a great chief. One villager said, "We believe God and Savimbi will give us independence."¹¹ Fritz Sitte, an Austrian journalist who travelled with UNITA in 1973 wrote, "Savimbi represents a healthy mixture between the traditional African chieftain figure . . . and a European, educated and intellectual."¹²

In addition, UNITA, while ethically diverse, maintains a dutiful respect for ethnic customs. Another *Washington Post* writer, Leon Dash, who travelled with UNITA in 1977 wrote, "The UNITA guerrillas understand the importance of oral tradition. They use it and follow tribal customs while proselytizing among the many ethnic groups of Angola"¹³

Colonial revolutions are not new to the Third World or Africa nor is external support for those insurgencies. External support for UNITA has been a salvation as well as a bane. Most of UNITA's external support originated from the Republic of South Africa. This alliance with South Africa stripped UNITA of much of its revolutionary credentials but, in all likelihood, prevented UNITA from being destroyed. UNITA no longer receives aid from South Africa, yet the RSA-UNITA relationship bears close scrutiny. In the helter-skelter world of southern African politics nothing is permanent.

MPLA-PT's response to the UNITA insurgency will be scrutinized. A strong government response can often neutralize favorable variables for the insurgent. In Angola's case, however, MPLA-PT has vacillated in its response to the rebellion. South Africa, Soviet Union, and Cuba all had their own motives for supporting one or the other of Angola's factions.¹⁴

Finally, the peace process has begun with mixed results. The internationalization of the civil war has ebbed, but the internal components are making slow, if any, progress.

This book analyzes UNITA's chances and prospects. By fully understanding weaknesses and strengths of UNITA, scholars and government officials will be better able to judge and evaluate whether the United States should continue to insist that Cuban troops finish the withdrawal from Angola, whether the United States should grant diplomatic recognition to MPLA-PT's rule, whether Jonas Savimbi poses a hindrance to an Angolan settlement, and whether the MPLA-PT represents the hopes and aspirations of the Angolan people and thus has the right to rule the nation alone.

Notes

1. All definitions are taken from Bard E. O'Neill, William R. Heaton, and Donald J. Alberts, eds., *Insurgency in the Modern World* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1980):1-2.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 5-26.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27.
5. Mao Zedong, "A Single Spark Can Start a Prairie Fire," *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, Vol. 1 (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1967), p. 124.
6. On Mao's strategy, Mao Zedong, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, trans. Samuel T. Griffith (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1961).
7. On the application of Maoist strategy in the Portuguese colonies, Thomas H. Henriksen, "People's War in Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea Bissau," *Journal of Modern African Studies* (September 1976):377-401.
8. Crawford Young, *Ideology and Development in Africa* (London: Yale University Press, 1982), 3.
9. V. Solodovnikov, "A New Phase of Struggle in Africa," *International Affairs* (Moscow) (May 1976):119-21.
10. Richard Harwood, "UNITA's Shoestring Enterprise," *Washington Post*, July 25, 1981, p. 26.
11. Leon Dash, "A Long March in Angola," *Washington Post*, August 11, 1977, p. 24.
12. Private letter to author dated 4 February 1986.
13. Leon Dash, "Politics Taught by Fable," *Washington Post*, August 11, 1977, pp. 1, 24.
14. Peter Vanneman and W. Martin James, *Soviet Foreign Policy in Southern Africa* (Pretoria: Transvaal Printers, 1982). On all three, Mark M. Lowenthal, "Foreign Assistance in the Angolan Civil War: Chronology of Reported Events, 1957-1976," *Congressional Research Service of the Library of Congress*, 8 June 1976, 1-34.



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The Angolan Environment

Angola derives its name from the Kimbundu term “Ngola.” The “Ngola” was the ruler of the Mbundu people. Supposedly the Ngola was distinguishable from the commoners in the village by the two doors and two windows in his hut. Commoners lived in windowless, one-door dwellings. On November 29, 1671, a Portuguese force attacked the Mbundu fortress at Pungu A Ndongo. They sacked the city, took many slaves and extinguished the influence of the Mbundu in the area. The area of Ndongo became known as Angola after the Ngola whose kingdom was destroyed.¹

Geographically, Angola lies on the southwest coast of Africa surrounded by Namibia to the south, Zambia to the east, Zaire to the northeast, while the Congo and Zaire enclose the Enclave of Cabinda. To the west is the Atlantic Ocean which provides Angola with 1,025 miles of coastline. Its area is 481,351 square miles, including Cabinda.

Angola contains a variegated landscape, but essentially it can be broken into four component parts: the coastal plain, northern forests, desert-steppe of the south and the central savanna plateau.

The coastal plain was the site of the original European settlements. It did not support a large population until development of the ports of Luanda and Lobito.

The coastal plain remains important because it handles the bulk of imports and exports. The climate of the coast is conducive to disease, and it took the Portuguese until the 1930s to totally eradicate typhoid fever in Luanda and Benguela.

Along the coast the rainfall ranges from a scant 2 inches annually at Mocamedes to 25.4 inches at Cabinda. The land will sustain some agriculture like sugar cane, cotton, corn and coffee grown as money

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crops, though extensive irrigation is used. Fishing is also very good along the coast with tuna, sardines and mackerel being the most important commercially.

TABLE 2.1
Selected Name-Place Changes^a

Former Name	New Name
Ambrizete	Nzeto
Carmona	Uige
Kassinga	Kassinga
Henrique de Carvalho	Saurimo
Joao De Almeida	Chibia
Luso	Luena
Malanj	Malange
Nova Lisboa	Huambo
Novo Redondo	Ngunza
Vila Vila Vila Pereira d'Éca	Ngiva
Portugalia	Luachimo
Sá Da Bandeira	Lubango
Sao Salvador do Congo	Mbanza Kongo
Serpa Pinto	Menongue
Silva Porto	Bié
Teixeira de Silva	Bailundo
Teixeira de Sousa	Luau

^aNames were changed after independence to emphasize the break with Portugal.

Luanda is the administrative center of Angola, while Lobito is the terminal point of the Benguela Railroad. Mocamedes, Cabinda, Ambrizete, Ambriz, Novo Redondo, Porto Alexandre and Baia dos Tigres all offer natural anchorages but are undeveloped.

The forest regions of northern Angola are the site of the ancient kingdoms. Rainfall averages over 60 inches a year, but the region is capable of supporting agriculture, and the dense forests supply ample game for tribal hunters. Under the Portuguese, the north became the center for the great coffee plantations. Coffee became Angola's largest export commodity until the development of petroleum resources. In the north, the population depends on manioc as the food staple. The region is not as robust as the plateau, and several tropical diseases are prevalent.

Coffee is the major money crop, but others include palm oil, cotton, kapok, gums, and wax. The rain forests of Cabinda produce commercial wood for export including mahogany, tola and tacula. Cattle raising is minimized by the tsetse fly and most agriculture is subsistence farming.

Southern Angola is comprised of the desert-steppe. It is sparsely populated and the inhabitants are mostly nomadic cattle herders. Rivers of this region flow on a seasonal basis and rainfall is low. The Portuguese called this territory the Terras do Fim Mundo, "Land at the End of the World." The lack of a consistent rainfall has retarded economic growth in the region.

The central savanna plateau consists of three-fifths of the territory of Angola. Because of its altitude it receives sufficient rain for farming. Rivers are permanent and soil is excellent for farming. The altitude also minimizes the effect of the tsetse fly on cattle raising. For these reasons a majority of the Angolan population lives on the plateau, and the Portuguese made this area a target for colonization. The presence of abundant minerals also made the region attractive.

Among the important cash crops of the region are sisal, corn, peanuts and coffee. These crops are raised on farms which lie along the rail systems which traverse the central plateau. The Benguela, Luanda, and Mocamedes railroads all serve this important area.

Transportation Network

The rivers of western Angola flow to the Atlantic Coast and are important for three reasons. First, they provide the population of the coastal cities with a permanent water supply for farming, industry, and human consumption. Second, they are a source of hydroelectric power. Third, they provide a transportation system to the interior, though it is rudimentary.

Rivers in the eastern regions of Angola are too seasonal to be of any real value. The only important river in southwestern Angola is the Cunene River, where a major hydroelectric complex has been constructed. It is believed the dam will provide irrigation for 13 million hectares of land in Angola and Namibia.

Railway

The railway network has served as a means of moving goods to and from national and transnational hinterlands to the ports. All lines run in

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an east-west direction, rather than north-south. They were constructed in this manner because all economic activity was directed for the benefit of Portugal not Angola.² Thus, the majority of track runs to the coast instead of linking various points of the economic infrastructure in Angola.

The Benguela Railroad is the principal Angolan rail system. Many communities in southern Angola border the line, and it is the main source of their livelihood. It was also important to Zaire, which shipped Shaba copper to Lobito and to Zambia, which relied on the line to export copper and import needed supplies and goods. Between 1967 and 1974, the international freight traffic carried by the railway from Zambia and Zaire rose by 82 percent to 929,641 tons per annum. Total freight traffic, international and domestic, carried on the railway to the port of Lobito rose to 1,336,236 tons, and traffic carried in the opposite direction, from Lobito, rose to 1,047,011 tons.

TABLE 2.2
Railway Freight Traffic
(⁰000 tons)

	1973	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985 ^a
Benguela	2,567	401	259	186	202	262
International Traffic: ^b	1,640	11	7	—	—	—
Mocamedes RR	6,409	265	251	143	171	196
Luanda-Malange	301	118	102	71	84	63

^a1985 most recent reliable figures

^bBenguela International traffic

The Benguela Railroad is 90 percent owned by Tanks Consolidated Investments, Ltd., and 10 percent by the Angolan state. Its construction began in 1903, and by 1912 it reached from Huambo to Lobito. By 1928 it reached the Zaire border, and in 1931 it was linked to the central African railway system and the copper belt, totaling 928 miles.

The civil war halted access for both Zaire and Zambia, and the lingering UNITA insurgency has made utilization of the Benguela sporadic, at best, since 1975. In 1988, the Angolan government admitted that 90 percent of the Benguela traffic had been cut by rebel attacks.

The Caminho de Ferro de Amboim, a privately owned venture, was closed in 1974. Ninety-six percent of the goods carried by the Mocamedes line consisted of iron ore from the Kassinga mines.

Because of the problems in operating the Benguela Railroad the Angolan government scrapped plans in 1980 to assume controlling interest (51 percent shareholding) in the rail system. For example, in 1979, the Companhia do Caminho do Ferro de Benguela (CFB) carried only thirty thousand tons of domestic freight and small quantities of Zairian manganese. The Bank of Angola has provided monthly loans to keep the rail system afloat despite its huge debts caused by loss of international freight. There is much interest in revitalizing the Angolan rail network. Angola has signed several contracts to begin rehabilitation, but clauses in the agreements state that the climate of hostility must first end.³

Ports

The main ports are Mocamedes (Namibe) which handled 6.3 million tons of cargo in 1973, Cabinda (7.5 million), Luanda (2.3 million), and Lobito (2.5 million).⁴ The high tonnage handled by Mocamedes and

TABLE 2.3
Freight Traffic at Main Ports
(^{000 tons})^a

	1973	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985 ^b
Luanda	2,324	797	798	695	693	761	942
Lobito	2,545	555	536	526	396	448	522
Namibe	6,379	101	192	161	120	152	171

^aLoaded and unloaded

^b1985 most recent reliable figures

Cabinda are reflective of the rise in iron ore and petroleum, respectively. In 1972, the merchant marine consisted of 38 vessels with 17,806 dwt displacement. In 1986, the national shipping company, Angonave, possessed seven cargo ships with a total capacity of 81,700 tons. By 1985, Namibe (Mocamedes) was handling little traffic (171,257 tons) because of the closure of the Kassinga mines. Also, Lobito traffic declined because of reduced shipments of copper from Zambia and Zaire. In 1985, Lobito handled only 522,000 tons of cargo. Luanda's

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port handled 942,118 tons of cargo in 1985, but this was well below the pre-independence level of 2.3 million tons in 1973.

Surface Routes

In 1974, there were 44,939 miles of roads of which 5,201 were asphalted. By 1983, road mileage totaled 48,000 miles of which 5,400 were asphalted. During the civil war, most of the roads and bridges were destroyed. At the end of 1973, there were 183,031 vehicles registered. Many of these, however, were later exported to Portugal, disabled, or destroyed by the Portuguese as they left Angola. For example, of the 28,000 heavy trucks in the country before the civil war only 6,000 remained operational by the end of the war. By 1989, Angola had 167,000 vehicles.

Since independence, the mileage and asphalt figures have remained roughly stable. The number of bridges has varied according to guerrilla objectives and government efforts to rebuild important bridges.

Air Transport

Local and international air service is provided by Air Transportation of Angola (TAAG). Its fleet of 22 aircraft consists of Boeing 707s and 737s, Hercules C-130 transport planes, Fokker Friendships, and Soviet Antonovs and Yaks. In 1989, the Angolan government decided to upgrade the air service by purchasing new aircraft.⁵

The Economy

Potentially, Angola could become an African economic colossus. The country has fertile soil, abundant minerals, ample energy supplies, good ports, and transportation system. Events have conspired to prevent Angola from achieving its promise. The disruption caused by the departure of the Portuguese, the ravages of the civil war, and the growing strength of the UNITA insurgency have all combined to retard Angola's economic progress.⁶

Agriculture

The Angolan government estimated 85 percent of the population live in rural areas and are engaged in agricultural production. The wide range