



Reform Yes, Surrender No; There is a way to save SA; Eie Skole, Eie Woongebiede, Keep South Africa White; Progress Demands Stability, etc. etc. etc. The telephone poles are almost bending under the weight of election posters and slogans. The slogans we see on these poles and the issues being debated in the all white elections have very little to do with how whites are to be governed. They have everything to do with how to handle black political aspirations. Pressure from black South Africans, for universal franchise in a unitary state is clearly quite intense. The turmoil in our country over the last 40 years, rising to a crescendo since 1976, is the physical manifestation of the blocking of those aspirations. What we are seeing in these elections are the various white political parties offering various solutions to the pressure from black South Africans. I don't want to comment on any of the ~~various~~ ^{various} solutions offered by these parties except one, the solutions being proposed by the ruling Nationalist Party - who will inevitably sweep to victory again in this election.

The solution being offered by the Nats is best summed up in their slogan, Reform Yes, Surrender No. I am sure the other speakers will talk more about reform. Let me just say that reform, in the South African context, has come to mean the process by which the Nats attempt to satisfy black political aspirations while still holding the reigns of power themselves. They have no reform proposals left. The path down the last ten years is littered with burned out, rotting, constitutional hulks. The Nats have less up their sleeves, reform wise, now than they have had in ~~the last ten years~~ ^{the last} years. There are no reforms. So what have we left in the Reform Yes, Surrender No, couplet. Surrender No! No Surrender!! This is the Nationalist Party's solution to our country's problems. No surrender....it's a battle cry heard down the ages that seldom leads to happy endings. The main content of their election platform is 'Security' - we are fortunate to already know what they mean by this: States of Emergency, bannings, detentions, restriction orders, press curbs, troops in the townships and the National Security Management System. In short they are offering to fight this

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one out - to meet black political aspirations with no compromise and armed force.

For the last 30 years the National Party has been building a garrison out of the white community. The military has come to play a central role in public and private life in South Africa. It's in the white schools, it's in the Black schools, it's assisting in forced removals, it's manning roadblocks, and it's in the townships. The shadowy National Security Management System is a whole parallel system of military government - its here that many of the important decisions about our country are being taken, not even in the white parliament. The military is in the media, it has become a symbol in advertising. It is in our homes and in our heads. They take us when we are this high, march us around the schoolyard and teach us lessons about the enemy. They take us when we are barely into our teens, up to the mountains, in the veld and leadership schools and in between the excitement of survival and commando training they teach us to hate and fear a nameless enemy. They conscript us into an army and send us into black residential areas and into Namibia where we become the hated and feared enemy of the local population.

The sort of final solution that the Nats are offering us is to make war on black opposition, to crush their organisations. Now politicians seldom fight wars themselves. The politicians make their grand pronouncements and announce their final solutions from the comfort of their boardrooms and the security of their fat salaries. It is conscripts that get sent into the townships and Namibia. It is the whole nation that carries the cost. Not just the financial cost, not just the psychological cost, but also the cost in lives. Not just 'lives', those things we refer to as 'precious' so often that we forget their meaning. Think of someone you know. Think of a child. Think of a physical body and a personality - and then think of it crushed and broken. This is what we loose in war. We loose life.

And now in this election time we are loosing something else. We are loosing reason. We are loosing objectivity. The government is beating the drum, and the clamour is rising to hysteria. They are telling us in so many different ways that the massed forces of terror and destruction are gathered on the horizon.



South Africa, the last bastion of Christian National Civilisation in Africa is threatened from within and without. In this environment we lose an important insight. The white community ceases to understand who the enemy is and why they are fighting. If we strip away the hysterical rhetoric it's clear that the communist bogeyman is...a worker who wants a living wage and the right to live with his or her family. It is a child who doesn't want crude propaganda shoved down his or her throat in lieu of education. It's the white boy who doesn't want to go to the SADF and joins the ECC instead. The enemy is a nation that wants the basic right to elect its own government in a unitary state..... But what about the young person who slipped across the border and returned months later with an AK47, handgrenades and limpit mines. Isn't this the real bogey man - reason enough to re-elect the National Party to power. We have to look at this question courageously. We cannot afford to join the stampede rightwards just because the National Party has enough funds to define right and wrong, good and evil in the consciousness of white South Africa. That ^{PAC or} ANC soldier who threw a handgrenade into the parade of Kitsconstables yesterday is what? Is he a terrorist or a hero. Both these terms are subjective. The answer depends on where you are coming from. In war, your boys are always heroes and the enemy are always terrorists. We know that there was celebrating in Soweto last night - not by a band of cannibals, eaters of human flesh, doing a bizarre and eerie dance around a fire - but by normal people who were saying 'good for you our children, you pulled one over on the terrorists.' It was so much easier for young American draftees in Vietnam to kill gooks and commie scum than it was for them to kill a young Vietnamese person with a family and a history and a life and hope and aspirations. We must not lose our objectivity. We must keep ourselves immune from the effect of the drumbeat.

There seem to be many first casualties in war - in our country innocence is already lost, the truth is harder and harder to find. In amongst all of the casualties and all of the tragedies we are living through at this time, there is one I feel very deeply and personally. I am referring to the young white men who don't want to go to the SADF and the families and friends who love and support

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them. In the same way as I have argued that the ANC soldier is not necessarily a terrorist, so too is the white conscript not necessarily a terrorist. His options are very narrow. Service in the SADF for a total of 4 years, 6 years in prison or a life in exile - unless he is a universal religious pacifist, a very narrow definition, in which case he is able to do 6 years alternative service in a government department. I was a student just after Rhodesia became Zimbabwe and I had a lot of contact with the young men and women who had been through what we are starting to go through now. They were full to bursting ^{with} hatred, bitterness, confusion and alienation. They had been lied to by a government that chose the same solution as this one has. Many of them had genuinely believed that what they had been doing, was protecting black and white Rhodesians from a common enemy. The main enemy, Robert Mugabe, swept to victory with overwhelming popular support. The young white Rhodesians who traipsed downwards to the last bastion didn't have a chance, they were misled, lied to by a government that put its own rule and white minority interests above a whole generation of their own children.

We are lucky in South Africa. We have a foot in the door that the nats are ^{and movements like it} aching to close - that foot is the End Conscription Campaign. We are an organisation or campaign that has grown from conscripts unhappiness with the role they are being called on to play. Like the 5FF we are a broad coalition of groups, with often quite different political programmes, who come together on a particular basis of agreement, in our case this agreement is opposition to the system of compulsory military service in the South African Defence Force. As a campaign we have been extremely successful. We have grown, in three short years, from an initial three regional branches to 9 regional branches, 52 member organisation and 5 campus branches. I believe that the ECC is an important stumbling block in the path of this governments war mongering. We are conscripts, or the parents and friends of conscripts, and we want the right to choose. At this time we are increasingly coming under the hammer of state repression and smear tactics. There is a new Aida Parker newsletter out, again exclusively focused on ECC and again filled with information.

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that could only have come from the Security Police - mail that didn't arrive, documents that the SPs siezed, We've had 71 people detained and many more searched for during this state of emergency, they are trying to charge us under the fundraising act, ~~the Citizen is moving into gear with highly unsympathetic front page coverage on the ECC~~, the PFP is under attack for their links with us, Magnus is giving tirades against the ECC at election forums in the Eastern Cape. The smear attack is, more than anything, an attempt to criminalise us and portray us as deviant - pimply faced moffies was one of the less serious allegations against us by the mysterious and very exciteable Veterans For Victory group. We believe this is all part of softening up the public for further action against the ECC. We have come through a lot in the last ten months and despite everything we have grown and been strengthened in and by these conditions. We are poised at the moment for a big national campaign around these elections However the state could probably still crush us under a mass of restrictive laws, siezure of funds, bannings, detentions etc. But they will learn too late that ECC didn't create opposition to conscription, we merely reflected and verbalised it. Opposition to conscription was created by this government and its path of military rather than political solutions to the pressure from black South Africans for genuine political rights. This opposition will continue to grow - with or without the formal structures of the ECC - as it becomes increasingly obvious that war is no solution for this government.

In closing I think we need to ask ourselves about ourselves. Why did we come here today, what are we achieving, why are there so few of us. There are so many reasons to despair and yet our country has never been in greater need of individuals with courage and commitment. We have to go beyond ourselves, we have to demand of ourselves more than we have previously believed we are capabel of. our country can no longer accept excuses like I am too old, I am too young, I am too silly, i am too weak, I am too powerless to contribute anything useful. This is all hands on deck stakes. We need every single person in this hall to work for peace and justice. There is so much work, some of it back breaking and tedious, much of it liberating and uplifting. We have to pack these halls. We have to be out there competing for the definitions

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of what is right and what is wrong. We have to join and build organisations that will survive this repression. This is the real national service required our country requires of us. This is our 'patriotic duty'. To take the words right of their election poster and out of their mouths - if I dare - Werk Saam, Wen Saam.

Thank You.

The Borain Talk.

Two problems exist in it. The first is a failure to identify ambiguities in the role of the Unita movement and the Angolan situation generally. The problem is that our media is liable for searching and unfriendly criticism, so it has to be very cogently argued and must be based on a full knowledge of the facts in order to demonstrate the reasons for a partisan resolution of ambiguities. The second problem is that his address does not clearly describe the development of the situation. I do not think that my own interpretation is correct but perhaps I should give it because it is very coherent and may give some guidance towards a clearer description.

The central ambiguity is the role of the Unita movement. If Unita were never anything but a pro-colonial bandit movement then it is hard to see how they could have evolved as they have, with a sizeable army willing to suffer heavy casualties. (It is significant that Unita is willing to fight set-piece battles against strong opposition, in contrast to the MNR's tendency to melt into the bush under pressure.)

Unita was formed in 1964 by Savimbi after he left the FNLA following differences with FNLA leader Holden Roberto. These differences arose largely because Roberto was not seen by Savimbi as a true patriot, but as a puppet of the Zairean government (which indeed seems to have been the case). Unita then grew rapidly, and by the late 1960s was the largest guerrilla movement operating entirely inside Angola. (The MPLA was relatively weak, having been crushed in the cities by the Portuguese and in the north-eastern countryside by the FNLA.) Unita saboteurs operated widely throughout the interior, although staying out of the north, which was largely FNLA territory, and the coast, which was commanded by the Portuguese and where the people largely supported FNLA. It will be noted from this that the political situation was entirely up for grabs with no one political movement dominating.

Undoubtedly in the early 1970s Unita was collaborating with the Portuguese. Without wishing to defend this action it should be seen in its context. Unita followed the FNLA black-consciousness line which was strongly anti-Communist and thus saw the MPLA as being no less of an imperialist force as the Portuguese. (Obviously such philosophies were cynically exploited by Unita and FNLA leadership, but the philosophies remain understandable and are echoed today by our own black-consciousness movements.) Moreover Unita's collaboration with the Portuguese strengthened Unita's position in the south-east (and incidentally strengthened SWAPO's position, probably, since Unita was not unwilling to support its tribal comrades at the time and PLAN infiltration into Owamboland largely increased at this time). Hence despite the apparent clarity of the situation there are important ambiguities.

It is interesting to note that after the FNLA abrogated the Alvor agreement (under which the three movements would form a transitional government until elections would be held) and began massacring MPLA forces with Zairean support, Unita's response was (in mid-1975) to seek alliance with the MPLA. This is manifestly an about-turn in Unita policy, but is consistent with Savimbi's desire to be part of the Angolan government. An FNLA victory would have spelled disaster for Savimbi because Roberto disliked him. In any case Unita's CIA and South African backers threatened to cut off support if he joined the MPLA, but it is interesting to speculate on what could have happened had the alliance been consummated, given the MPLA's worker support and Unita's peasant backing. Soon after this Unita threw in its lot with the South Africans and destroyed its credibility for good with the MPLA, although this doesn't seem to have done him any harm among his south-eastern constituency (probably because they are ignorant and illiterate and Unita commissars could convince them, as is happening now, that the South African aid was negligible). Following this defeat Unita fell into the hands of South Africa; it began fighting against PLAN instead of helping it, cooperating with the largely ex-FNLA 32 Battalion, and generally acting in South African interests.

This does not mean against the interests of Unita or its constituents. South Africans have offered medical and agricultural aid to Unita which made it extremely popular among the peasantry. (This is an important factor to the unpopularity of the MPLA, which for a long time ignored the peasantry, when by the mid-1980s it woke up to its blunder, it was too late, since guerrilla raids were able to destroy clinics and agricultural stations and thus keep the MPLA unpopular while promising the peasants the earth if they took power. The MPLA's political incompetence linked to its military position in the provinces (itself a product of a terrible lack of communications, ever since the Portuguese destroyed them after the war began) puts it in a very difficult position which Unita and South Africans exploit, and many commentators believe that a government of national unity would be a favourable move and the only thing to satisfactorily stop the collapse of infrastructure. However, this would require a stopping of South African aid (and the independence of Namibia) and it is unclear whether MPLA would be politically efficient enough (or disciplined enough) to accept Unita personnel into government if the MPLA won military success. (The alternative would probably be continued Unita banditry, as in Mozambique for another decade.)

I trust that this shows that the view of Unita as simply a South African stooge to be instantly obliterated is not necessarily correct. Rightly or wrongly, Unita is the political voice of the largest single tribal group in Angola, and in such an undeveloped country tribal considerations are extremely important despite ideological problems (as the MPLA have discovered).

The progress of South African/Unita fighting against the MPLA has in the last over twelve years and may be divided into a number of phases (for convenience rather than out of real significance).

The first phase was obviously the war phase of 1975-6. During those months South Africa attempted to install Unita and the FNLA as a government in Angola. This ideal was doomed from the start because both movements were at each other and the latter movement was virtually worthless as a fighting force. Furthermore the SADF had not yet deployed the huge logistic and transport force in Namibia which was later to support its invasions of Angola, and in any case the SADF was not well equipped to fight such a war. (The system of conscription had been in force for only seven years, ARMSCOR had only been in force for a similar period of time, and thus re-equipment of the SADF had not really begun.) As a result of these facts the SADF relied heavily on Unita but the MPLA could receive weapons supplies from the USSR which outgunned South African equipment and troops from Cuba. This made Unita unable to operate while the South Africans could not function effectively because their communications were so poor. South Africa might have redressed the balance with its Mirage fighters but these had too short a range to operate over northern Angola from Namibian bases. Therefore the South Africans were unable to operate and forced to withdraw.

The second phase can be seen as the raiding phase between 1977 and 1980. During this time the MPLA was very weak, with considerable factionalism and at least one attempted coup (the Nitista insurrection of 1978) and consequent repression (trade unions were suppressed). This helps to explain why Unita survived in the south-east with South African assistance. 32 Battalion operated extensively in Angola and was the only regular SADF unit to do so as far as is known, probably because they resembled Unita troops. This was also a transitional time for the South African government (between Vorster and P. W. Botha) which helps to explain why a consistent line of aggression against Angola was not taken, and why there were ambiguous offerings of independence for Angola. In the mean time the SADF launched two major raids into Angola; one in 1977 a two-pronged offensive involving a bombing raid followed by a paratroop raid on what was believed to be a military base at Kassinga (it was, of course, a refugee camp) and an armoured attack on a PLAN base not far from the Namibian border; another in 1980 (Operation Sceptic: the former being Operation

The effects of these raids were to tie down Angolan troops in the central south facing Owamboland, which enabled Unita to score more successes in the south-east. However they did not seriously inconvenience PLAN, which was growing in strength and prestige all the time. What they did was to restore the SADF's confidence in its ability to win battles, which had been shaken by the defeat of 1976. This also restored the confidence of the public and the government in the SADF and gave ~~Prime Minister Botha~~ Prime Minister Botha the chance to install his crony, Chief of the SADF General Malan, as Defence Minister in 1980. This gave the military much-increased political power and prestige.

The effects of this may be seen in the occupation phase of 1981-1985. In 1981 the SADF launched Operation Protea, involving at least a brigade of troops, to occupy a 100-km deep strip of Angolan territory. The reason for this was that the huge SADF buildup in Namibia 1975-1980 had not stopped PLAN, and the SADF realised that a further buildup would damage the South African economy and tie down troops which would be needed guarding the Mozambican border. The South-West African Territory Force had been established in 1979, but it was weak, and for it to contain PLAN, PLAN would have to be weakened. The solution was to occupy southern Angola, create a free-fire zone north of the Namibian border by forcibly removing the inhabitants, and force PLAN bases further to the north to cut communications with Owamboland. This succeeded fairly well in a technical sense. At the same time it enormously assisted Unita, which now had a secure western flank where the SADF was operating and could sometimes undertake joint operations with 32 Battalion and with South African special forces which were used to sabotage Angolan communications. Because the Angolan armed forces could not be sure that the SADF had truly stopped (there was another raid the following year, Operation Daisy, in which both sides suffered relatively heavy losses when an SAAF helicopter was shot down and a FAPLA column was ambushed) the occupation tied down many Angolan troops. The SAAF solved its range problem to some extent by establishing a jet-capable airstrip at N'giva in southern Angola. Still, PLAN continued harassment. With the run-down of SADF forces in Namibia there were not enough troops to seal off the occupied zone completely. Therefore in 1983 Operation Askari was launched, with over 5 000 troops and vast numbers of ~~supplies~~ pieces of equipment, an operation to occupy Angola to a depth of about 300 kilometres. This completely smashed PLAN's and FAPLA's logistic base in Angola, forcing those forces far to the north, and causing immense casualties to both. Unita took advantage of this once again and pressed north into Moxico province north of its traditional stronghold of Cuando Cubango. The Angolans were rendered virtually helpless, losing much material.

However, by 1984 South African political policy had suddenly been reversed with the appearance of the tricameral parliamentary system which strove to co-opt elements of the majority which had previously been perceived by the SA government as the enemy. This challenged the simplistic 'total onslaught' theories of the military by suggesting that negotiation was possible with people who had been enemies. At the same time the SA government knew that it was desperately vulnerable and needed allies to support it in order to strengthen the resolve of the white population. As a result of these pressures and encouragements, Chester Crocker's initiative aimed at neutralising Angola was allowed to proceed and the Lusaka Agreement was signed in early 1984 to get the South Africans to withdraw from Angola if Angola stopped supporting SWAPO. This, like the Nkomati Accord in Mozambique, should have presented South Africa as a peacemaker. However, the SADF violated the agreement from the start by refusing to withdraw by the time allowed; six months after the agreement they were still occupying N'Giva and only by 1985 had they fully withdrawn. The reason was probably to keep FAPLA tied down until the rainy season, a time when they could not attack Unita, and thus give Unita time to prepare to defend its gains made during Operation Askari.

This began a new phase, which I would call the mercenary phase. The SADF managed to contain PLAN infiltration, together with SWATF, but it had stopped and might rise if Unita were ever to be defeated. Thus the SADF was ready to save Unita if it were threatened; roles had been reversed. It was the SADF which was obliged to intervene in Unita's interest instead of Unita being made use of by the SADF. Initially this could be done at a scant cost; at Mavinga in 1985 the SAAF bombed an Angolan column threatening the town, and the column retreated after suffering heavy losses. However, by 1987 the Angolans had grown far stronger. The Unita forces had shown they were defeated in 1985 that they were no match for FAPLA, although heavy US missiles had slightly redressed that balance. Thus in August the SADF moved into Angola with at least 3 000 troops and the heaviest assortment of vehicles ever seen in Southern Africa. In September they stopped the SADF offensive, which suffered heavy losses and withdrew. This would have marked the end of it, but the October rains came late and the SADF-Unita forces failed to breach the FAPLA line defending the strategic town of Cuito Cuanavale. The SADF failed to do this and suffered heavy losses before the rains returned and serious military activity ceased.

The point about this new phase is that it has 'upped the ante' very much. On both sides the fighting is vastly heavier; South Africa lost four times the losses that it ever suffered before in an Angolan battle, and this was largely because it used Unita troops and Namibians for the most dangerous tasks. (If reports are true, the SWATF lost in that one battle the same proportion of soldiers to its population, as the US Army lost in the Vietnam War.) There have been air battles, whereas previously Angolan aircraft fled when attacked. South Africa has lost an Impala shot down, a reconnaissance aircraft (probably a Bosbok) shot down, a Mirage damaged and crash-landed, possibly another Mirage. Most importantly, Unita has fallen totally under South African control, because without an SADF presence Unita cannot operate in the dry season. What effect this will have on Unita troops' morale is uncertain, but cannot be positive given the heavy Unita losses. However, that South Africa has taken up this role it cannot relinquish it. If it falls PLAN will have a clear field to make life impossible for the SWAPO. Then heavier SADF forces will have to be committed, which will be very difficult given the needs of the townships, the restless countryside and ever-increasing guerrilla infiltration from Botswana and Mozambique. The SADF must help Unita win a decisive victory which will put Unita in the hands of the Angolan government and ensure a South African presence in Luanda to keep PLAN out of Angola altogether. The SADF may decide otherwise, but any decision seems likely to weaken its position in Namibia, and given current problems (eg. the evident continued popularity of the ANC, despite government denials, evinced by the Govan Mbeki affair) it cannot afford to lose Unita. At the same time if it delays a Democrat unsympathetic to the Cold War interpretation of the Angolan situation might be elected, gaining office in February 1989, and given the Democratic hegemony in Congress US aid to the SADF might be cut off. Thus it seems extremely probable that when the current season ends in about January 1988 a resumption of the SADF/FAPLA conflict around the town of Cuito Cuanavale will be expected. FAPLA is probably preparing for this. It seems eminently likely that a lot of heroes will be returning in plastic bags and buried with no display of the body this coming autumn.

95.14
GARY
INTRO

congrats from Dal office
A - I am not an expert - spent the last 2 days pulling as much info as I can together

BACKGROUND

Angola has land mass of 1 246 700 km². Bigger than SA. Oil producing province in North separated from rest of Angola by Zaire's outlet to the sea. The land is underpopulated with only 7 000 000 inhabitants, mostly living in tribal villages and small farms. Prior to the mid 70s Angola had been under colonial rule for 500 years. Most colonial powers had scant regard for the territories they occupied aside from the financial gain they could bleed from it. Portuguese colonialism was by quite a long way more vicious, cruel, and exploitative than any of the other powers - large part of income generated by forced labour right up into this half of this century.

RESISTANCE TO PORTUGUESE COLONIALISM

Principal Angolan liberation movement was the MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola). Formed in 1956 and launched an armed struggle in 1961. The rival movement was the Union of the Peoples of Angola (UPA) established in 1958. later reconstituted as the FNLA. Breakaway faction from FNLA in 1966 was UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola). It has been widely reported that Holden Roberto was on the CIA payroll from 1962. NB for us to ascertain whether UNITA was ever a Nationalist movement that fought for the liberation of the Angolan people from Portuguese colonialism. Many UNITA supporters may have been sincere, UNITA itself could not have been a genuine movement. There is clear evidence from at least 1972 onwards that SAVIMBI was actually an agent of the Portuguese in Angola. His troops were under orders not to engage the Portuguese, and their military operations were directed against the MPLA.

In a letter to the Portuguese commander in chief in September 1972, Savimbi congratulates the Portuguese for recent successes. He talks of plans to "weaken our common enemy, the MPLA, with hard blows and to undermine its authority abroad, so that the world would wonder if it even existed". In his letter Savimbi insists that he is not interested in alliances with the MPLA. "We have actively participated

in the weakening of the MPLA regions of the east", he states. He offers to assist the Portuguese forces, and proposes joint UNITA-Portuguese military action against MPLA bases. He also asks the Portuguese for ammunition, pointing out that UNITA armed actions are only directed at the MPLA and never at the Portuguese. A month later Savimbi wrote back to a Portuguese military commander thanking him for the ammunition. "I am ready to follow your instructions".

In the early 70s the Salazar dictatorship in Portugal was under intense domestic pressure. They were fighting wars against Frelimo in Mozambique and armed liberation was in progress in Guinea Bissau and the MPLA was making gains in Angola. The dictatorship collapsed under this burden with the Military Officers coup of April 1974.

INDEPENDENCE AND THE SADF INVASION

FNLA and UNITA immediately made peace with the new Portuguese govt. The MPLA followed suit when the P finally recognised the right of the colonies to independence. A date for independence was set for Nov. 11 1975. Elections were scheduled, but it was clear to everyone, not least the P, that the country was in such a state of chaos that elections were going to be impossible. Power would be transferred to whoever was effectively in power. The American CIA immediately launched a major covert supply and training operation to the FNLA, whose troops entered the country backed by Zairean army units. They launched an attack on MPLA supporters in the capital by shelling the shantytowns. UNITA took steps to consolidate itself in its tribal base in the central provinces around Huambo. MPLA expelled FNLA from Luanda and consolidated its positions in the South and East. US and SA interests coincide. V Close BOSS CIA link during this period.

Pretoria establishes links with FNLA and UNITA. Move 1000 troops to Ruacana and UNITA declares war on the MPLA on 21st August. SADF armoured column attacks Ngiva, and Zaire invades in support of FNLA in the North. At this stage MPLA controls 11 of the 16 provincial capitals as well as Luanda. ^{SA} ~~SA~~ begins in earnest in October. ^{MPLA} ~~MPLA~~ ^{last 10} to send troops to areas which he ^{mediate} ~~mediate~~ ^{does}

N - 6000 Zairean, FNLA & P mercs and an SADF artillery battery strike at Luanda.

COAST - SADF armoured column and troops and 1000 UNITA's.

CENTRE - another force eventually meet at Lobito. Benguela falls after a spirited defence. Set off along railroad.

N column meanwhile is 20km outside Luanda which is under SADF artillery

JMCs check it out. Should have been out by ^{March} end of 1984. Intro of Cuban linkage, talk to UNITA etc. UNITA failed to re-establish itself in central provinces and was deployed Northwards along Zambian border. Fapla retains initiative. Savimbi hoped that he could extend Northwards, link up with the remnants of the FNLA and establish a base in Zaire. Quite a sophisticated use of military, diplomatic and political defeated this aim. They improved their rels with Zaire especially through the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference and their joint project to restore the Benguela railway line which is of great economic importance to Angola, Zaire and Zambia. Policy of clemency and aid to captured or surrendered military and civilians from UNITA and FNLA. This has had an NB effect on UNITAs ranks with the defection of key personell who have exposed growing factionalism, leadership struggles and tribal sectarianism and discrimination in their ranks.

The clemency policy has created division in UNITAs ranks and Savimbi and his supporters have responded by violently repressing all internal dissent and liquidating certain members.

In a strong position

August 85 Fapla moves to capture Jamba. Unitas territory shrank, they made a stand near the town of Mavinga, 250 km north of Jamba. Beaten and lost 2000 troops. SADF stepped in and bombing raid in October halted North of Mavinga. SA showed they were prepared to tear up the pact with Angola. Also during 1985 Clark Amendment repealed and weaponry worth millions of dollars began flowing to Unita. President Dos Santos goes to Moscow for help and got it. Millions of dollars worth of old but effective arms poured in, and a Soviet general arrived to help in training and tactics. Angola improved its air force until over 50 supersonic fighters were ready for battle, and built major bases at Cuito Cuanavale and Cangamba. Then in September this year, Fapla began the assault of Mavinga.

Mavinga is UNITA's northernmost airfield. Here South African and American aircraft supply Unita sabotage teams attacking transport and other economic targets in central Angola. Because south-eastern Angola has very bad roads, UNITA's capacity to cripple Angola's economy would be much weakened if Mavig were lost - while if Fapla possessed Mavinga the airstrip could be used to assist attacks on Jamba in 1986.

~~When Fapla reached the Lomba river, north west of Mavinga, they were~~

well informed
Very difficult to piece together what has been happening. Seems that on their way to Mavinga Fapla had a run in with the SADF's 32 Battalion on September 13. 32 was badly beaten and 21 SADF members lost their lives. This is probably where the claim of the 11 dead in the raid on the SWAPO base comes from.

When one of the 12/14 Fapla Brigades reached the banks of the Lomba river on October 3 they were overwhelmed by South African airforce, army, and UNITA brigades. It seems they regrouped and there has been continuous fighting and skirmishes since then. Several thousand Unita soldiers, several thousand Fapla soldiers and independent journalists estimate that over 200 SADF soldiers have been killed in the fighting. The SADF deaths would be mostly black soldiers (explain) from 32 Battalion and SWATF. We have been told about at least some of the white deaths.

just brigades
At this stage, according to SADF reports, ^{the two major columns of} Faplas ^{expeditionary force} ^{are} making an orderly retreat towards Cuito Cuanavale. The SADF has most recently admitted that the Fapla offensive has not been routed but rather held back. The SADF intends stopping the retreat of these two brigades before the Chambinga bridge near Cuito Cuanavale.

Some of the questions that still need to be looked at: Were Cubans and Russians involved in the fighting? Very unlikely. Cubans have been deployed guarding strategic instalations incl. oil etc. Clear that Cuban and Russian military officers have been involved with training and strategising. Equally clear that at least some of the Migs are being flown by Cuban pilots. The most the SADF has been able to come up with in the way of proof, is that a Cuban and Russian armoured column retreated when it made contact with the SADF.

Another question is, have SAAF planes been shot down? It was put to me by a journalist who's integrity I respect, that by and large you can trust the essence of ANGOPS news releases. - I just want to read from the days leading up to the event that we know happened i.e. the battle on the Lomba river on October 3 when Fapla suffered a defeat.

SADF was admitted the loss of 1 ocean plane & an impaler that crashed on landing back in Nam after being damaged over Cuanene.

(2)

The point is not the detail or who is winning this battle. The point is rather the war, and why it is being fought. The govts justification is the total communist onslaught thesis. They argue that the presence of Cubans in Angola is part of a master plan to destabilise the sub-continent and enslave all its people in the cause of Russian imperialism. In a word, this is rubbish. The Cuban presence and the Russian armaments have escalated at exactly the same pace as South Africa's intervention. There is not a jot of evidence to suggest that the Cubans are doing anything more than defending an ally. There is certainly no evidence that Cuba or Russia is engaged in destabilising any of Angola's neighbours - they are there at the request of a sovereign country whose government is recognised throughout the world.

The real reason is that the MPLA is prepared to give both moral and political support to SWAPO who are fighting against South African occupation of Namibia and the African National Congress, which is fighting to end Apartheid in South Africa. South Africa's intentions are in the long run to change the govt in Angola through the incorporation of UNITA. Their short term intentions are to keep Angola in a state of enough chaos and misery so that they are able to hold a gun against their heads. So we see that at the heart of the conflict in Angola is the question of domestic South African politics. Unable to even consider the establishment of a democratic system in South Africa, this government has chosen instead to make war on those who oppose the present system. SA had success in Mozambique..... But Angola is another story..... The only solution to this conflict is change in South Africa. Apartheid system is causing suffering throughout the sub-continent. It is unthinkable to ask black South Africans to stop struggling against this system - the ball is in white South Africa's court.

And for ECC the message is clear. It is easy to succumb to the temptation to see the South African invading army as a gang of racist thugs plunging black Southern African states into despair. But we know that that army is made up of conscripts whose refusal to be their would entail 6 years in prison, a life in exile or in hiding. The families and friends of those boys are in despair, they are frightened. The whole of white South Africa is asking itself the question - is it worth it, and night after night they are hearing - yes it is; these boys are heroes who are dying for a just cause. This is a time when the government is trying desperately to establish what the dominant ideas are. Those are our boys. We owe it to them to

fight the government on this issue. We need to create public debate around the role the SADF is playing in the subcontinent. We must be arguing that they must bring the boys back home. That the SADF cause in Angola is not a just one nor is it a cause that they are likely to win. It is easy for the politicians to sit safely in their offices and play the Southern African political arena like a chess game with the objective to keep the white king in power. The pawn that they push unthinkingly into townships and neighbouring states are real young men who bleed and die when they are shot. We cannot allow the ideology that justifies this killing to triumph. We must be out there on the streets and in the universities fighting a different kind of war. Each pamphlet that we put in someone's hand counts. Each person we can convince not to support this madness is a battle won. The terrain for ECC has shifted sharply over the last few weeks. ~~Our potential to grow is greater but~~ Our failure to seize this moment would be extremely costly - for us, for the Angolan people, for the boys in Angola. ~~The challenge is yours, the ECC members and the other~~

But our potential has probably never been greater. While SA is asking questions which we have an urgent duty to be answering. We answer: no.

The Borain Talk.

Two problems exist in it. The first is a failure to identify ambiguities in the role of the Unita movement and the Angolan situation generally. The second problem is that our media is liable for searching and unfriendly criticism, so it has to be very cogently argued and must be based on a full knowledge of the facts in order to demonstrate the reasons for a partisan resolution of the ambiguities. The second problem is that his address does not clearly describe the development of the situation. I do not think that my own interpretation is correct but perhaps I should give it because it is very coherent and may give some guidance towards a clearer description.

The central ambiguity is the role of the Unita movement. If Unita were ever anything but a pro-colonial bandit movement then it is hard to see how they could have evolved as they have, with a sizeable army willing to suffer heavy casualties. (It is significant that Unita is willing to fight set-piece battles against strong opposition, in contrast to the MNR's tendency to melt into the bush under pressure.)

Unita was formed in 1964 by Savimbi after he left the FNLA following differences with FNLA leader Holden Roberto. These differences arose largely because Roberto was not seen by Savimbi as a true patriot, but as a puppet of the Zairean government (which indeed seems to have been the case). Unita then grew rapidly, and by the late 1960s was the largest guerrilla movement operating entirely inside Angola. (The MPLA was relatively weak, having been crushed in the cities by the Portuguese and in the north-eastern countryside by the FNLA.) Unita saboteurs operated widely throughout the interior, although staying out of the north, which was largely FNLA territory, and the east, which was commanded by the Portuguese and where the people largely supported FNLA. It will be noted from this that the political situation was entirely up for grabs with no one political movement dominating.

Undoubtedly in the early 1970s Unita was collaborating with the Portuguese. Without wishing to defend this action it should be seen in its context. Unita followed the FNLA black-consciousness line which was strongly anti-Communist and thus saw the MPLA as being no less of an imperialist force than the Portuguese. (Obviously such philosophies were cynically exploited by Unita and FNLA leadership, but the philosophies remain understandable and are echoed today by our own black-consciousness movements.) Moreover Unita's collaboration with the Portuguese strengthened Unita's position in the south-east (and incidentally strengthened SWAPO's position, probably, since Unita was not unwilling to support its tribal comrades at the time and PLAN infiltration into Owamboland largely increased at this time). Hence despite the apparent clarity of the situation there are important ambiguities.

It is interesting to note that after the FNLA abrogated the Alvor agreement under which the three movements would form a transitional government until elections would be held) and began massacring MPLA forces with Zairean support, Unita's response was (in mid-1975) to seek alliance with the MPLA. This is manifestly an about-turn in Unita policy, but is consistent with Savimbi's desire to be part of the Angolan government. An FNLA victory would have spelled disaster for Savimbi because Roberto disliked him. In any case Unita's FNLA and South African backers threatened to cut off support if he joined the MPLA, but it is interesting to speculate on what could have happened had the alliance been consummated, given the MPLA's worker support and Unita's peasant backing. Soon after this Unita threw in its lot with the South Africans and destroyed its credibility for good with the MPLA, although this doesn't seem to have done him any harm among his south-eastern constituency (probably because they are ignorant and illiterate and Unita commissars could convince them, as is happening now, that the South African aid was negligible). Following this defeat Unita fell into the hands of South Africa; it began fighting against PLAN instead of helping it, cooperating with the largely ex-FNLA 32 Battalion, and generally acting in South African interests.

This does not mean against the interests of Unita or its constituents. South Africans have offered medical and agricultural aid to Unita which made it extremely popular among the peasantry. (This is in important contrast to the unpopularity of the MPLA, which for a long time ignored the needs when by the mid-1980s it woke up to its blunder, it was too late, since guerrilla raids were able to destroy clinics and agricultural stations, thus keep the MPLA unpopular while promising the peasants the earth or took power. The MPLA's political incompetence linked to its military position in the provinces (itself a product of a terrible lack of communications, ever since the Portuguese destroyed them after the war began) puts it in a very difficult position which Unita and South Africa exploit, and many commentators believe that a government of national unity would be a favourable move and the only thing to satisfactorily stop the collapse of infrastructure. However, this would require a stopping of South African aid (and the independence of Namibia) and it is unclear whether MPLA would be politically efficient enough (or disciplined enough) to accept Unita personnel into government if the MPLA won military support. (The alternative would probably be continued Unita banditry, as in Mozambique for another decade.)

I trust that this shows that the view of Unita as simply a South African stooge to be instantly obliterated is not necessarily correct. Rightly or wrongly, Unita is the political voice of the largest single tribal group in Angola, and in such an undeveloped country tribal considerations are extremely important despite ideological problems (as the MPLA have discovered).

The progress of South African/Unita fighting against the MPLA has covered over twelve years and may be divided into a number of phases (for convenience rather than out of real significance).

The first phase was obviously the war phase of 1975-6. During those months South Africa attempted to install Unita and the FNLA as a government in Angola. This ideal was doomed from the start because both movements were at each other and the latter movement was virtually worthless as a fighting force. Furthermore the SADF had not yet deployed the huge logistic and support force in Namibia which was later to support its invasions of Angola, and in any case the SADF was not well equipped to fight such a war. (The system of conscription had been in force for only seven years, ARMSCOR had only been in force for a similar period of time, and thus re-equipment of the SADF had not really begun.) As a result of these facts the SADF relied heavily on Unita and the MPLA could receive weapons supplies from the USSR which outgunned South African equipment and troops from Cuba. This made Unita unable to operate while the South Africans could not function effectively because their communications were so poor. South Africa might have redressed the balance with its Mirage fighters but these had too short a range to operate over northern Angola from Namibian bases. Therefore the South Africans were unable to operate and forced to withdraw.

The second phase can be seen as the raiding phase between 1977 and 1979. During this time the MPLA was very weak, with considerable factionalism. At least one attempted coup (the Nitista insurrection of 1978) and consequent repression (trade unions were suppressed). This helps to explain why Unita survived in the south-east with South African assistance. 32 Battalion operated extensively in Angola and was the only regular SADF unit to do so as far as is known, probably because they resembled Unita troops. This was a transitional time for the South African government (between Vorster and P. W. Botha) which helps to explain why a consistent line of aggression against Angola was not taken, and why there were ambiguous offerings of independence for Angola. In the mean time the SADF launched two major raids into Angola; one in 1977, a two-pronged offensive involving a bombing raid followed by a paratroop operation on what was believed to be a military base at Kassinga (it was, of course, a refugee camp) and an armoured attack on a PLAN base not far from the Namibian border; another in 1980 (Operation Sceptic; the former being Operation Mistral).

3.
The effects of these raids were to tie down Angolan troops in the central south-facing Owamboland, which enabled Unita to score more successes in the south-east. However they did not seriously inconvenience PLAN, which was growing in strength and prestige all the time. What they did was to restore the SADF's confidence in its ability to win battles, which had been shaken by the defeat of 1976. This also restored the confidence of the public and the government in the SADF and gave ~~President~~ Prime Minister Botha the chance to install his crony, Chief of the SADF General Malan, as Defence Minister in 1980. This gave the military much-increased political power and prestige.

The effects of this may be seen in the occupation phase of 1981-1985. In 1981 the SADF launched Operation Protea, involving at least a brigade of troops, to occupy a 100-km deep strip of Angolan territory. The reason for this was that the huge SADF buildup in Namibia 1975-1980 had not stopped PLAN, and the SADF realised that a further buildup would damage the South African economy and tie down troops which would be needed guarding the Mozambican border. The South-West African Territory Forfe had been established in 1979, but it was weak, and for it to contain PLAN, PLAN would have to be weakened. The solution was to occupy southern Angola, create a free-fire zone north of the Namibian border by forcibly removing the inhabitants, and force PLAN bases further to the north to cut communications with Owamboland. This succeeded fairly well in a technical sense. At the same time it enormously assisted Unita, which now had a secure western flank where the SADF was operating and could sometimes undertake joint operations with 32 Battalion and with South African special forces which were used to sabotage Angolan communications. Because the Angolan armed forces could not be sure that the SADF had truly stopped (there was another raid the following year, Operation Daisy, in which both sides suffered relatively heavy losses when an SAAF helicopter was shot down and a FAPLA column was ambushed) the occupation tied down many Angolan troops. The SAAF solved its range problem to some extent by establishing a jet-capable airstrip at N'giva in southern Angola. Still, PLAN continued harassment. With the run-down of SADF forces in Namibia there were not enough troops to seal off the occupied zone completely. Therefore in 1983 Operation Askari was launched, with over 5 000 troops and vast numbers of ~~pieces~~ pieces of equipment, an operation to occupy Angola to a depth of about 300 kilometres. This completely smashed PLAN's and FAPLA's logistic base in Angola, forcing those forces far to the north, and causing immense casualties to both. Unita took advantage of this once again and pressed north into Moxico province north of its traditional stronghold of Cuando Cubango. The Angolans were rendered virtually helpless, losing much material.

However, by 1984 South African political policy had suddenly been reversed with the appearance of the tricameral parliamentary system which strove to co-opt elements of the majority which had previously been perceived by the SA government as the enemy. This challenged the simplistic 'total onslaught' theories of the military by suggesting that negotiation was possible with people who had been enemies. At the same time the SA government knew that it was desperately vulnerable and needed allies to support it in order to strengthen the resolve of the white population. As a result of these pressures and encouragements, Chester Crocker's initiative aimed at neutralising Angola was allowed to proceed and the Lusaka Agreement was signed in early 1984 to get the South Africans to withdraw from Angola if Angola stopped supporting SWAPO. This, like the Nkomati Accord in Mozambique, should have presented South Africa as a peacemaker. However, the SADF violated the agreement from the start by refusing to withdraw by the time allowed; six months after the agreement they were still occupying N'Giva and only by 1985 had they fully withdrawn. The reason was probably to keep FAPLA tied down until the rainy season, a time when they could not attack Unita, and thus give Unita time to prepare to defend its gains made during Operation Askari.

This began a new phase, which I would call the mercenary phase. I managed to contain PLAN infiltration, together with SWATF, but it has stopped and might rise if Unita were ever to be defeated. Thus the SADF must be ready to save Unita if it were threatened; roles had been reversed. It was the SADF which was obliged to intervene in Unita's interest instead of Unita ~~making~~ being made use of by the SADF. Initially this could be done at a scant cost; at Mavinga in 1985 the SAAF bombed an Angolan column through the town, and the column retreated after suffering heavy losses. However, by 1987 the Angolans had grown far stronger. The Unita forces had shown that they were no match for FAPLA, although heavy use of SA anti-aircraft missiles had slightly redressed that balance. Thus in August the SADF moved into Angola with at least 3 000 troops and the heaviest assortment of vehicles ever seen in Southern Africa. In September they stopped the offensive, which suffered heavy losses and withdrew. This would have been the end of it, but the October rains came late and the SADF-Unita forces failed to breach the FAPLA line defending the strategic town of Cuito Cuanavale. The SADF failed to do this and suffered heavy losses before the rains returned. Unita's serious military activity ceased.

The point about this new phase is that it has 'upped the ante' versus the old. On both sides the fighting is vastly heavier; South Africa lost four times the losses that it ever suffered before in an Angolan battle, and this was largely because it used Unita troops and Namibians for the most dangerous tasks. (If reports are true, the SWATF lost in that one battle the same proportion of soldiers to its population, as the US Army lost in the Vietnam War.) There have been air battles, whereas previously Angolans fled when attacked. South Africa has lost an Impala shot down, a Mirage aircraft (probably a Bosbok) shot down, a Mirage damaged and crash-landed, possibly another Mirage. Most importantly, Unita has fallen totally under South African control, because without an SADF presence Unita cannot survive the dry season. What effect this will have on Unita troops' morale is uncertain, but cannot be positive given the heavy Unita losses. How long that South Africa has taken up this role it cannot relinquish it. If it falls PLAN will have a clear field to make life impossible for the Angolans. Then heavier SADF forces will have to be committed, which will be very difficult given the needs of the townships, the restless countryside and ever-increasing guerrilla infiltration from Botswana and Mozambique. The SADF must help Unita win a decisive victory which will put Unita in control of Angolan government and ensure a South African presence in Luanda and drive PLAN out of Angola altogether. The SADF may decide otherwise, but a decision seems likely to weaken its position in Namibia, and given the problems (eg. the evident continued popularity of the ANC, despite the denials, evinced by the Govan Mbeki affair) it cannot afford to lose Unita. At the same time if it delays a Democrat unsympathetic to the Cold War interpretation of the Angolan situation might be elected, gaining office in February 1989, and given the Democratic hegemony in Congress US aid might be cut off. Thus it seems extremely probable that when the current season ends in about January 1988 a resumption of the SADF/FAPLA struggle around the town of Cuito Cuanavale will be expected. FAPLA is obviously preparing for this. It seems eminently likely that a lot of heroes will be returning in plastic bags and buried with no display of the body that they were coming autumn.

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