

PET TO  
MEMO

11/13/79

TO: PAUL

FROM: CHRIS C.

RE: Summary of conversation with Dr. Jonas Savimbi, President of UNITA, on November 9, 1979.

Savimbi began with a historical survey of his political activities, beginning with his search for support in 1964. He sought help from the Soviets and from the OAU with no success. In 1965, the Chinese offered support and he entered Angola in 1966 and fought with Chinese assistance against the Portuguese.

He places blame for current conflict on the internationalization of the struggle dating from 1974 when the independence coalition broke apart.

The FNLA has "a presence" in the north of Angola now. Holden Roberts is in Zaire.

On the subject of recognition, he argues that if the U.S. recognizes Angola, we will lose our neutrality. Recognition is an act of support for the MPLA.

PET: How will non-recognition get Cubans out?

Savimbi: Recognition will not affect the long-term ambitions of the Cubans and the Soviets.

PET: Recognition does not confer approval on a government; it merely recognizes status quo.

Savimbi: U.S. recognition will cause a loss of U.S. influence with UNITA.

PET: On the forthcoming trip to Angola, PET will want to discuss future U.S./Angola relations, the status of Cuban presence, the Benguela railway, and any plans for UNITA/MPLA accommodation. What are Savimbi's suggestions as to what PET should say to the Luanda government?

Savimbi: The MPLA feels that a Namibia solution will hurt UNITA. But Savimbi disagrees. He has a long history of accommodation with Sam Nujoma and SWAPO. The Cubans are not welcome in Angola. The People of Luanda are at the breaking point with the Cubans. UNITA is ready to talk to the MPLA, but he will not be played off against other groups. UNITA will fight on for as long as is necessary. Angola must be united without Cubans or Soviets in the country.

PET: Wouldn't Savimbi dominate any coalition government?

Savimbi: He had received a note from Neto during the OAU summit, asking for a meeting. Now Dos Santos is in power, but he does not run the government. Lara is the strong man (he is head of the party). Savimbi has never seen Dos Santos in past years. He is an unknown.

[Jerry Bender says that Savimbi has made this point about Dos Santos before. Lara and Carrera, the Minister of Defense, are both mestizos and Savimbi's line has always been that mestizos dominate the MPLA. Dos Santos is black and therefore contradicts Savimbi's thesis.]

PET: Who could sponsor the talks between UNITA and MPLA?

Savimbi: Liberia. Tolbert is a good man, Chairman of OAU. Kaunda is also a friend.

PET: Cubans are not the issue, accommodation is. When PET arrives in Angola, he will urge negotiation. He wants to be a catalyst for peace. What are three African countries who might be helpful-

Savimbi: Mr. Chiniuka in N.Y. is UNITA contact. Lara is the MPLA man to talk to.

McGovern: What is the basic quarrel between UNITA and MPLA?

Savimbi: Cubans. Other goals and objectives do not differ that much.

PET: What about the race issue? Savimbi has been accused of being anti mestizo and anti white.

Savimbi: He made these statements as a militant, now he is a leader. He tried to keep Portuguese in Angola, but Lara opposed him. Now Neto is letting the Portuguese back.

PET: Can we have a statement from you on this matter? It would be helpful.

McGovern: What is the relationship between South Africa and UNITA?

Savimbi: UNITA is victim of bad press. Someone else asked the South Africans to intervene in the civil war [the U.S.?] UNITA gets arms and assistance from the Arabs and the Chinese. MPLA has had many contacts and talks with the South Africans. Eastern arms, such as the Kalasnikov, are better weapons than Western arms.



PET: Which countries might serve as mediators?

Savimbi: Liberia - Zambia, if the Rhodesia war is settled. Senegal, Togo, Ivory Coast, Upper Volta, Niger, Guinea.

[Jerry Bender suggests that Tolbert is a good idea. Tolbert toured Angola with Neto last year (December) and was impressed with popular support for the MPLA. Yet Savimbi also likes him. If PET wants to exploit this opportunity, then he should contact Tolbert before the trip.]

Savimbi: There must be a quid pro quo for recognition.

[Jerry Bender says that many obstacles remain to an accommodation. Savimbi demands that Soviets and Cubans go as a pre-condition. MPLA objects to UNITA's South Africa connection, the tribal and racial base of UNITA. Why should the MPLA respond to a familiar initiative? But, Jerry says that the outcome is unpredictable. He does not discourage PET.]