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## INTERAGENCY INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENT

5 May 1982

## Southern Africa: At a Turning Point?

Summary

In light of the stalled Namibian negotiations and what they have called "South Africa's undeclared war against its neighbors," the Frontline States appear to be increasingly skeptical about the possibility of peaceful solutions to regional security problems. The Maputo summit in early March pledged to increase Frontline security cooperation and to expand support for the insurgencies of the South-West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) and the African National Congress (ANC). [redacted]

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Even while they talk of stepping up the fighting, the Frontline states are still pursuing negotiations over Namibia, if only to avoid responsibility for a breakdown in the talks. The Frontline's attitude towards the Namibian settlement process may reflect increasing pessimism over the course of negotiations, and a belief among some Frontline states that the likely terms of a settlement would be too favorable to Pretoria. In addition, they are preoccupied with mounting regional and domestic problems, and they seem to doubt that a settlement of the Namibian question would contribute significantly to a resolution of their other security problems. [redacted]

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While they resolved at Maputo to develop greater self-reliance in combating South Africa, the Africans could not counteract Pretoria's superior military and economic power without a dramatic increase in external support. But the Maputo summit may be a warning to the West that if help is not forthcoming and Frontline security concerns eased, they will have little recourse but to increase their reliance on military support from the Soviet Union and its allies. They know that more Communist support is unlikely to help them much, but by implying a new willingness to accept Soviet support, they hope to provoke the West into stronger efforts to restrain South Africa. [redacted]

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Frontline Policy During the Past Year

Fear of South African reprisals has made the Frontline States very cautious in their policies towards Pretoria. After the Zimbabwean settlement, the Frontline States tried to avoid confrontation with South Africa and concentrated on developing their economies and reducing their dependence on Pretoria. South Africa's stranglehold on the region's transportation network, dominant role in bilateral trade relationships, and overwhelming military superiority dictated that Pretoria's neighbors tread carefully. [redacted]

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The South African raid in January 1981 on ANC facilities near Maputo left little doubt about Pretoria's willingness to strike aggressively against what it considered excessive assistance for anti-South African insurgents. Moreover, the extent of South African support for insurgencies in neighboring countries--the National Resistance Movement of Mozambique and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA)--as well as its military strikes against Angola for its support to SWAPO, underlined the consequences for any Frontline state of too much practical support for the anti-apartheid cause. [redacted]

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Most black African governments attributed the collapse of the Geneva "pre-implementation" conference in January 1981 to Pretoria's perception that it could get a better deal from the new US Administration, and the Frontline States initially were distrustful of US efforts to restart the negotiating momentum for a Namibian settlement. This distrust was fueled by later reports that the United States wanted a "comprehensive" settlement that linked Namibian independence to Angolan accomodation of UNITA and to withdrawal of Cubans from Angola. The new US Administration's early efforts to repeal the Clark Amendment were also disquieting to the Frontline. Frontline suspicion probably reached its highest point when the US vetoed the UN Security Council resolution condemning the major South African incursion into southern Angola in late August. [redacted]

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The Frontline pessimism toward the US-led Contact Group effort eased later in the year as a consensus on a negotiating approach emerged from the Contact Group and the South Africans appeared to be going along. Botswana, Zambia, and Tanzania enthusiastically supported negotiations and expressed optimism about the prospects of success. [redacted]

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[redacted] Tanzania's suggestion early in January 1982 that the Frontline States approve the Phase I package without calling a meeting appeared to have broad support. [redacted]

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SWAPO, however, continued to oppose elements of Phase I, particularly the "one-man, two vote" electoral provision, and the

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negotiating momentum dissipated. A Frontline meeting of Foreign Ministers was convened in late January and, after a tour of Frontline capitals by Nujoma, the Frontline States and SWAPO refused to accept the electoral provisions of the Phase I proposals. Despite pressure from the Contact Group, the Frontline States made little effort during February to overcome SWAPO's opposition, and instead asked the Contact Group to go back to the South Africans and persuade them to accept either a proportional representation or a single-member constituency scheme. At the same time, Communist efforts to obstruct negotiations appeared to have increased: the Soviets offered SWAPO increased aid if it abandoned negotiations, and a high-level Cuban delegation touring southern Africa in early February heavily attacked Western efforts and probably offered some Frontline states increased military and security assistance.

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Frontline concern and preoccupation with serious domestic problems and with perceived South African "destabilization" policies appear to have grown markedly in the last year. Several events contributed to the increased alarm over regional developments. These included South Africa's continued control of an area of southcentral Angola, alleged South African involvement in coup plots in Zambia and the Seychelles, a significant expansion of South African-backed insurgent activity in Mozambique, and the sabotage of transportation routes through Mozambique vital to Zimbabwe. The Frontline States had made various entreaties to the Contact Group countries, particularly the United States, to restrain South Africa. Continued South African assertiveness--felt most intensely by Angola and Mozambique--added to a growing suspicion that the West was colluding with South Africa.

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The impetus for the Maputo summit stemmed in part from Tanzanian President Nyerere's visit to Mozambique, where Machel explained how precarious his position had become. Nyerere subsequently heard similar complaints from Kaunda, who repeated allegations that South Africa was trying to subvert his regime.

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### The Maputo Summit

Unlike most other Frontline meetings, the Maputo summit did not primarily address Western initiatives, but instead concentrated on exploring regional security problems and seeking ways to respond collectively. The Maputo meeting was significant not because of any new dramatic departures undertaken by the Frontline, but because of the expression the meeting gave to a number of trends already underway.

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The Frontline rhetorical attack against South Africa and its Western supporters was strong but not unusually so. The Frontline leaders maintained that Pretoria's growing aggressiveness was aimed at increasing Frontline dependence on

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Pretoria, delaying Namibian independence, and preventing liberation in South Africa. The Frontline leaders also announced their intention to increase regional cooperation to counteract South Africa, and to provide more support for SWAPO and the ANC to enable them to intensify the armed struggle. [redacted]

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Few concrete actions were taken at Maputo. The Frontline States agreed to send a defense team to Angola to assess the security situation and make recommendations. [redacted]

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The Frontline leaders apparently spent little time discussing the impasse over Namibian electoral procedures. The Contact Group's Maputo demarche was dismissed as adding nothing new and warranting no change in their position. SWAPO, which had anticipated pressure to accept the proposals, was instead given responsibility for drafting a response which was predictably negative. For a variety of reasons--to be discussed below--Frontline leaders supported SWAPO's desire to step up the fighting. [redacted]

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#### Impact of Maputo Decisions

Security Measures Although the Frontline States remain alarmed about the South African threat, they have not moved dramatically towards greater regional cooperation or towards greater reliance on Communist support. Tanzania has followed up an earlier decision to provide modest military training support to Mozambique. [redacted]

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[redacted] The Frontline defense team plans to visit Angola shortly. [redacted]

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The Frontline pledges to increase military cooperation are unlikely to amount to much. They are strapped financially, and many face pressing internal security problems which would prevent them from aiding their neighbors. [redacted]

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The Frontline States' inability on their own to counter South African aggressiveness may make them more receptive to longstanding Communist offers of increased assistance. [redacted]

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[redacted] Most Frontline States, however, distrust Soviet motives, and some are dissatisfied with the quality of Soviet and Cuban military aid and would like to reduce the role of the Soviet Union and its allies as the primary military aid suppliers in the area. In the near term, the Frontline continues to look for non-communist sources of aid--Mozambique, for instance, recently signed a military cooperation agreement with Portugal. Moreover, the Frontline States most likely are skeptical that more Communist support will do much to deter Pretoria; 20,000-25,000 Cubans and Soviet arms did not stop South Africa and UNITA from retaining control over a third of Angola during the past year. [redacted]

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Support for Insurgents

Despite Frontline pledges to provide more support for SWAPO and the ANC, it is unlikely there will be much change in insurgent activity. SWAPO has stepped up its military activities in Namibia in an attempt to make good on its promise to the Frontline to put more pressure on South Africa and bring a sense of urgency to the negotiations. SWAPO may also believe that this is its last chance to prove to the Frontline that it is a viable military force. SWAPO probably will not be able to resume the level of activity reached before the major South African operations into Angola began last summer. Once the rainy season ends, SWAPO activity probably will decline again, regardless of any increase in Frontline aid. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Fears of South African reprisals, however, have prevented most Frontline States, particularly Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Botswana, from stepping up their support for the ANC. [REDACTED]

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Namibian Negotiations. Although the new Contact Group proposal for "one-vote, counted-twice" appears to have dealt with Frontline objections that the proposed system is too complex, most Frontline States have demonstrated little desire to press SWAPO on the basic issue of the combined electoral system, despite their irritation over Nujoma's failure to appear in Luanda. Several Frontline States expressed deep resentment over the Contact Group's refusal to go back to the South Africans on this issue. [REDACTED]

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The inability and/or unwillingness of the Frontline States to force SWAPO's acquiescence on Phase I reflects a variety of attitudes held by separate states.

- Angola desperately wants a settlement in order to end South African incursions into southern Angola and has been urging its Frontline allies to press SWAPO to accept. Luanda appears unable to exert much effective pressure itself because of its heavy dependence on Soviet and Cuban support and its weak, divided political leadership.
- Zambia and Botswana also want a negotiated settlement but have until recently let Tanzania take the lead. Kaunda's pessimism over the course of negotiations--as well as his personal predilection for dramatic moves--led him to call for direct talks with the South Africans, a move that is opposed by some Frontline states.
- Tanzania seems determined to play a low-key role at this time. Despite strong Contact Group entreaties, Dar es Salaam has refused to pressure SWAPO even while

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expressing approval of the new Contact Group proposals. Nyerere may simply be waiting for a more propitious moment, believing it unwise to expend much effort now when the prospects for success do not seem very good.

- Both Zimbabwe and Mozambique seem preoccupied with their own problems. The Zimbabweans are somewhat sympathetic to SWAPO, and Mozambique has been following Tanzania's lead, but neither has paid much attention to Namibia.

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At the same time, the Frontline States may now see the negotiating task as more formidable than previously thought. The continuing impasse over a seemingly minor Phase I issue most likely increased their pessimism that the more difficult Phase II issues can be resolved. Moreover, the Frontline States have been briefed on the US-Angola talks begun earlier this year and are now fully aware of the US position that a regional settlement centered on Namibia must also include movement on related Angolan issues, namely Cuban withdrawal and accommodation of UNITA. The Frontline States may believe not only that there is little prospect for a successful outcome but also that the likely terms of settlement would be too favorable to Pretoria. This pessimistic attitude about the future of negotiations has probably reduced Frontline willingness to expend much effort over the current impasse.

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SWAPO, for its part, seems emboldened since Maputo. It delivered a stiff reply to the Contact Group's Maputo demarche, stepped up the fighting in Namibia, threatened to pull out of negotiations if delays continued, and called (without Frontline approval) for direct talks with the South Africans. Nujoma spurned the Contact Group in Luanda--apparently at Soviet behest--and instead went to Havana, presumably to plan for the military struggle.

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### Implications

The Maputo summit's focus on regional security problems, the Frontline's attitude towards the Namibian negotiations, and the Frontline's pledge to respond collectively to South African actions probably reflect deepening pessimism among the Frontline States about the prospects for peaceful change and regional stability and growing disillusionment about the Western role in the region. While not irreversible and not fully shared by all Frontline States, a growing consensus along these lines among the Frontline States could lead to a breakdown in the Namibian talks and increased regional tensions.

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The Frontline States still want a negotiated settlement as much as ever--witness Kaunda's personal initiative to try to break the stalemate--but not just any settlement. Their disillusionment over Namibia, as well as doubts that a Namibian settlement would encourage more restrained South African behavior

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elsewhere in the region, may cause them to lower their expectations about Western efforts to promote regional stability. They recognize, however, that only the West can significantly reduce regional tensions. They are frustrated about having nowhere else to turn. [REDACTED]

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The Frontline States appear to be groping for ways to counter South Africa's increasingly aggressive regional policy. At Maputo, they spoke of a more self-reliant approach, but they require external assistance in order to have even a remote chance of success. [REDACTED]

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Their recent pledges of defense cooperation may be aimed at demonstrating to the West their seriousness and determination to combat South Africa. Despite growing apprehension about the relationship between Pretoria and the West, the Frontline States undoubtedly would prefer that the West come to their aid by reining in Pretoria. But the Maputo summit may be a warning to the West that if help is not forthcoming and Frontline security concerns eased, they will have little recourse but to increase their reliance on military support from the Soviet Union and its allies. They know that more Communist support is unlikely to help them much, but by implying a new willingness to accept Soviet support, they hope to provoke the West into action.

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