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Central Intelligence Agency

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Washington, D. C. 20505

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

29 April 1986

DATE 7/1/86  
DOC NO ALA M 86-20018  
OCR 3  
P&PD 1

SWAPO Influence on the United Nations Institute for Namibia

Summary

The avowed purpose of the United Nations Institute for Namibia (UNIN), created by the UN in 1976, is to train administrators for an independent Namibia. Increasingly, however, the UNIN appears to be serving the South West African People's Organization's (SWAPO) political and propaganda purposes. Moreover, SWAPO's influence over the administration, faculty, and student body is increasingly pervasive.

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The United Nations Institute for Namibia (UNIN), established by the UN Council for Namibia, opened in Lusaka, Zambia in August 1976 to conduct research and provide education and administrative training to prepare future leaders for Namibian independence. According to its Charter, admission to the Institute, which has a total capacity of some 540 students, is open to all Namibians. The UN Council for Namibia finances the Institute through a separate account with the UN Fund for Namibia. The Fund solicits voluntary contributions from UN member countries and private organizations for the UNIN and two other Namibian programs. In addition, the UN Commissioner for Namibia conducts periodic fund-raising activities for the Institute to augment voluntary contributions.

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The UNIN's goal, however, is being increasingly undermined by SWAPO; indeed, faculty and administration include some senior SWAPO members and students are almost exclusively drawn from SWAPO ranks

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This memorandum was prepared for Alan Keyes, Assistant Secretary of State for International Organizations, by [Redacted] the Office of African and Latin American Analysis. It has been coordinated with the Directorate of Operations. Comments and queries are welcome and should be addressed to the Chief, Africa Division, Office of Latin American Analysis [Redacted].

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SWAPO Influence on Administrators and Faculty

The Institute is administered by a 16-member Senate that includes eight members selected by Zambia, the Organizations of African Unity, and SWAPO. The remaining eight members include the UN Commissioner for Namibia, four representatives from the UN Council for Namibia, and three members appointed by the UN Secretary General. These members support SWAPO's status as sole representative of the Namibian people, and they are almost certainly sympathetic to SWAPO's aims. [redacted]

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The SWAPO connection also is evident in the day-to-day administration of the Institute. The Director of the Institute, Hage Geingob, is an acknowledged member of SWAPO's Politburo and Central Committee. According to one press report, Geingob admits that SWAPO influences the Institute, but attributes SWAPO's UN recognition as justification for this influence.\* SWAPO Central Committee member, Secretary for Information Hidipo Hamutenya, was formerly Assistant Director of the Institute. In October 1985, SWAPO ordered all Namibian UNIN personnel, some of whom were provided housing and food by SWAPO, to contribute 5 to 15 percent of their monthly salaries to help defray SWAPO expenses, [redacted] [redacted] we have no evidence that funds have been channelled directly from the UN Fund for Namibia to SWAPO. [redacted]

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[redacted] one SWAPO Central Committee member, Mose Tijitendero, is a regular lecturer at the Institute. SWAPO has at least five other members on the UNIN staff [redacted] [redacted] Some other teachers include Europeans, North Americans and other Africans, probably some are from the University of Zambia, as the University underwrites the Institute's management and development studies. [redacted]

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SWAPO's Growing Control Over Students

SWAPO's control over the student body probably is extensive, in our judgment. The UNIN initially drew young Namibian refugees, many of whom fled Namibia in the 1970's to join SWAPO's "independence struggle." The student body was largely a cross section of young Namibian males, a number

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\* In 1973 the United Nations General Assembly (Resolution 3111) recognized SWAPO as the authentic representative of the Namibian people. Three years later, in December 1976, SWAPO was declared the sole and authentic representative of the Namibian people and accorded UN observer status. [redacted]

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of whom continued their education at universities in Africa and Europe. Other UNIN graduates have taught in SWAPO refugee camps in Zambia and Angola [redacted]

Recently, however, the student body appears to be drawn exclusively from SWAPO ranks. SWAPO members at the Institute must maintain their links with the organization, according to a SWAPO publication. In our judgment, some students may have joined SWAPO in an effort to increase their chances for admission to the UNIN. Others probably calculated that through the UNIN they could either defer or avoid possible SWAPO military commitments. [redacted]

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Most UNIN students reportedly are Ovambos, which is the dominant tribe within SWAPO.

- In 1985, [redacted] only 4 non-Ovambo students were attending the UNIN, prompting some non-Ovambo SWAPO members to dub the UNIN the "United Nations Institute for Ovambos".
- All 150 students entering the UNIN in January 1986 were SWAPO members and, with the exception of two or three, belonged to the Ovambo tribe, [redacted]

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Moreover, in this year's class most of the 90 male students are from SWAPO's armed wing, the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN). UNIN instructors reportedly are shocked by the poor calibre of the 1986 class--in particular the PLAN soldiers many of whom could neither read nor write--and are concerned that these students will damage the Institute's reputation. [redacted]

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[redacted] officials at the Institute speculate that the UNIN is either a perquisite for "good" PLAN soldiers and/or a place to send the rebellious ones. [redacted]

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At the same time the paucity of military recruits appears to have led SWAPO to tap students at the UNIN as potential conscripts. Many young educated SWAPO members, including those trained at the UNIN are frustrated by their bleak future with SWAPO and have been returning to Namibia, [redacted].

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[redacted]. SWAPO, probably in an attempt to preempt further defections, told the Institute's 1985 graduates to proceed directly to Angola upon graduation [redacted]

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[redacted]. Evidence of compliance with this SWAPO directive is unavailable. However, SWAPO's order reportedly marked a change from previous procedures. Many UNIN students reportedly were leery of their Angola assignment and regretted forfeiting the opportunity to further

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their educations. SWAPO likely hopes to train some students for military operations and assign others to teach in SWAPO refugee camps in Angola.

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#### A Vehicle for SWAPO Training?



We believe SWAPO's influence over the Institute, particularly over the student selection process, is pervasive. We have no evidence that the Institute is a military-training center for SWAPO guerrillas. Given SWAPO's access to refugees in both Angola and Zambia--some 77,000 according to recent UNHCR estimates--and military training facilities in Angola, it is unlikely that SWAPO conducts military training at the UNIN. We believe, however, that SWAPO recruits new members from the Institute and likely tries to inculcate non-SWAPO students to support SWAPO's military struggle.

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SUBJECT: SWAPO Influence on the United Nations Institute for Namibia

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- 1--Donald Gregg, Office of the Vice President
- 1--Stephen Sestanovich, Director, Political-Military Affairs, National Security Council
- 1--Chester Crocker, Assistant Secretary of State for Africa
- 1--Charles Freeman, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of African Affairs
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- 1--Jeffrey S. Davidow, Director, Office of Southern African Affairs, Department of State
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