



DEPARTMENT OF STATE
ACTION MEMORANDUM

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DOS Review Completed.

To: The Secretary

From: AF - Edward W. Mulcahy, Acting

US Options on Recognition in AngolaThe Problem

Assuming no decisive military reverses between now and November 11, the MPLA can be expected to declare itself the sole government of Angola on or before that date and to seek widest possible recognition. There are indications that FNLA and UNITA may set up a rival government, or governments, at the same time. We should be considering whether to recognize any of the movements and what influence our decision might have on FNLA and UNITA.

Background/Analysis

The MPLA has made clear its position as the sole legitimate claimant of sovereignty and has rejected any idea of political accommodation with FNLA and UNITA. The Portuguese have tried without success to bring the three movements together before independence. They now appear resigned to handing over sovereignty somehow to all three movements without insisting that they form a coalition again. There is currently an OAU initiative to achieve peace and unity in Angola, but we as yet know relatively little about its progress. It has so far produced a call for a cease fire from Field Marshal Amin and a reported OAU suggestion that the Portuguese transfer power to all three Angolan movements. We believe that only a major defeat, including the loss of Luanda, would deter MPLA from declaring unilateral independence and seeking international recognition as the successor to the Portuguese.

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[REDACTED] FNLA and UNITA are making plans to establish a provisional government of their own, probably to be based in Nova Lisboa, Angola's second largest city. Such a rival government would give substance to FNLA/UNITA's claim that together they control the majority of Angola's population and territory and at the same time would underscore the MPLA's minority position. Its existence would provide hesitant governments with a reason to go slow in deciding on recognition of an Angolan government. A rival FNLA/UNITA government could be psychologically beneficial to FNLA and UNITA fighting forces, and could provide a basis for closer cooperation between the two movements. It would also strengthen their position for eventual negotiations with the MPLA. The absence of such a rival government would fortify the MPLA's claims that FNLA and UNITA had been reduced to outlawed guerrillas.

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The reported FNLA/UNITA plan would have some drawbacks as well. While we would expect most communist governments to recognize the MPLA regime fairly soon after independence, as would certain "progressive" governments in Africa and elsewhere (possibly some 25 governments, at a guess) there would be few governments willing to recognize an FNLA/UNITA regime set up outside the capital. The contrast with recognition extended to the MPLA government would be politically damaging to FNLA/UNITA's cause.

US Options on Recognition

The recognition question could pose difficult decisions for the United States although our general policy in Africa of letting OAU governments take the lead in matters like this should provide us with a time cushion. This is based on the assumption -- which we believe to be correct -- that a significant number of African governments will delay recognition of any Angolan government. Our public position on Angola is to favor a negotiated solution giving all groups representing the Angolan people a fair role in the country's future. We therefore, could not recognize a minority MPLA regime, and by the same token it would be difficult for us to recognize a

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rival FNLA/UNITA government which totally excludes the MPLA. Furthermore, few other states would join us in recognizing FNLA/UNITA, and our move would probably elicit criticism from other countries and at home.

Our position, therefore, would logically be to withhold recognition from either rival regime pending the formation of an Angolan government representing all three movements. This is a position that many African governments are likely to take, at least at the outset. Our position should probably be conveyed to Mobutu very soon, and in any case before November 11, so that he, Holden and Savimbi can take it into consideration when formulating their plans. We are inclined to believe that he will not be surprised but will count on us to try to dissuade other non-African governments from recognizing MPLA.

Our position if FNLA and UNITA should decide to establish two separate regimes to rival the MPLA would still logically have to be to withhold recognition from either one. Such a decision on their part would probably favor MPLA. Their collaboration thus far against MPLA has served to underscore MPLA's go-it-alone approach and pro-communist orientation. The establishment of separate FNLA and UNITA seats of government would lessen this collaboration and provide opportunities for MPLA to play the two regimes off against each other.

Our position in the seemingly unlikely event of an agreement between MPLA and UNITA to form a government would be difficult. Such a government would presumably be opposed by Mobutu but would stand a good chance of gaining early recognition by many or most African countries. We would probably wish to consider recognizing it if it showed signs of durability. We doubt that such a link-up will happen, but it is conceivable. Efforts by Neto in this direction ceased months ago and he and Savimbi now appear to be definitively estranged. If Neto were to lose power in MPLA, however, a rapprochement with UNITA might occur.

The scenarios and options that follow lead us on balance to conclude that we should be in no hurry to recognize a successor regime in Angola.

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Scenario A:

MPLA declares UDI; FNLA and UNITA continue fighting without jointly or separately establishing rival government(s).

Option 1: Recognize the MPLA regime as the legitimate government of Angola.

Advantages:

- Would improve the potential for establishing amicable relations with an MPLA government.
- Would facilitate protection of American citizens and investments in MPLA-held areas of Angola.

Disadvantages:

- Would be contrary to our publicly-stated policy of favoring a government representative of all three movements.
- Would be politically damaging to the other two movements.
- Would damage our relations with Zaire.
- Would present an image of US weakness and undermine our global prestige.

Option 2: Refuse to recognize an MPLA regime.

Advantages:

- Would underscore our opposition to an MPLA minority government.
- Would be viewed favorably by the other two movements, by Mobutu and perhaps Kaunda, and by other moderate African leaders.
- Might serve to discourage other governments from recognizing an MPLA regime.

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Disadvantates:

-- Would place us in an unfavorable position with the MPLA should circumstances require us to deal with their regime at a future time.

Recommendation:

That you approve a policy of not recognizing an MPLA UDI.

Approve _____ Disapprove _____

Scenario B:

MPLA declares UDI; FNLA and UNITA jointly proclaim their own Angolan government and continue the war.

Option 1: Recognize MPLA as the legitimate regime; refuse recognition to FNLA/UNITA.

Advantages:

-- Would improve the potential for establishing amicable relations with MPLA.

Disadvantages:

-- Essentially the same as for Option 1, Scenario A on Page 4. However, the political impact on FNLA and UNITA, our relations with Zaire and attitudes of other governments, would be much more negative.

Option 2: Recognize FNLA/UNITA; refuse to recognize MPLA.

Advantages:

-- Would further strengthen US relations with Zaire.

-- Would strengthen US relations with FNLA/UNITA.

Disadvantages:

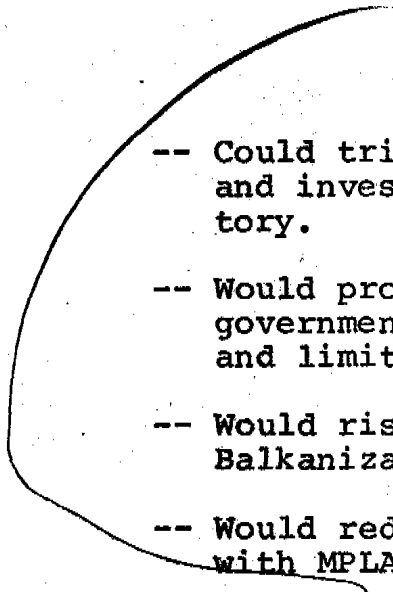
-- Would not be consistent with our public policy of favoring a government representing all three movements.

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- Could trigger MPLA retaliation against US citizens and investments remaining in MPLA-controlled territory.
- Would probably not be followed by many other governments, thus isolating us on the Angolan issue and limiting our influence.
- Would risk African charges that we support the Balkanization of the continent.
- Would reduce prospects for future amicable relations with MPLA.

Option 3: Recognize neither regime.

Advantages:

- Would be consistent with our public policy
- Might discourage other governments from recognizing a separate regime.

Disadvantages:

- Could be construed by FNLA, UNITA and Mobutu as inadequate political support for FNLA/UNITA regime.
- Might cause MPLA to retaliate against remaining US citizens and investments in MPLA held areas of Angola.

Recommendations:

That you approve a policy of not recognizing a separate FNLA/UNITA regime.

Approve _____ Disapprove _____

That you approve of our informing Mobutu of this policy as soon as possible with appropriate explanation.

Approve _____ Disapprove _____

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Scenario C:

MPLA and UNITA establish a JOINT Government that appears viable.

Option 1: Recognize this regime; break contact with FNLA.

Advantages:

- Would be in line with the likely recognition by most other African and European powers.
- Would facilitate protection of US citizens and investments in areas controlled by the regime (80% of Angola).
- Would forestall charges that the US is supporting Balkanization.
- Would put us on the side of the likely victors.

Disadvantages:

- Could severely damage our relations with Zaire.
- Would be inconsistent with our policy of favoring a government composed of all three movements.

Option 2: Refuse to recognize this regime until FNLA is included.

Advantages:

- Would help our relations with Zaire.
- Would be consistent with our policy.

Disadvantages:

- Would be viewed by the Angolan regime, most African governments and the OAU as interference in African affairs.

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- Would commit our prestige to a losing cause.
- Would jeopardize our investments and future economic ties with Angola.

Recommendation:

AF considers that it is too early to make a recommendation concerning this scenario because it is still fairly hypothetical. However, if a union between MPLA and UNITA did show signs of viability we would probably wish to consider following the lead of the moderate African states on recognition.

Scenario D:

All three movements establish separate governments in their areas of control; fighting continues.

Option 1: Recognize MPLA; refuse recognition to the other two.

Advantages and Disadvantages:

- Same as Option 1, Scenario A, Page 4.

Option 2: Recognize the FNLA (or UNITA) regime.

Advantages:

- Would give political support to FNLA (or UNITA).
- Would please Mobutu (or Kaunda).

Disadvantages:

- Would not be supported by many other governments, leaving us exposed.
- Would elicit widespread criticism at home and abroad as US support for Balkanization of Africa.
- Would be inconsistent with our publicly stated policy of favoring a government representative of all three movements.

Option 3: Recognize none of the competing regimes.

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Advantates and Disadvantages:

-- Same as Option 3, Scenario B, Page 6.

Recommendation:

That you approve a policy of not recognizing any single movement as the legitimate government of Angola.

Approve _____ Disapprove _____

Scenario E:

The OAU makes progress with its announced peace keeping plans and gets sufficient cooperation from the three movements so that separate governments are not proclaimed by any movement or movements. A coalition of the movements takes power in Luanda on or soon after November 11.

Option 1: Quickly recognize the coalition government.

Advantages:

- Would offer possibility of maintaining a presence in Luanda and protecting US lives and investments.
- Would put our policy in line with the OAU's.

Disadvantages:

- Such a coalition might prove shaky, and if it collapsed our personnel could be caught up in the subsequent street fighting.
- In event of breakdown of regime, MPLA would be likely to emerge on top, at least in Luanda, placing us in the position of having to continue recognition of MPLA or break relations with an MPLA rump regime.

Option 2: Delay recognition of tripartite coalition until it appears reasonably steady on its feet.

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Advantages:

- Avoids risk to our personnel.
- May give added weight to our recognition once we decide to accord it.

Disadvantages:

- Could be interpreted by Angolan or OAU authorities as US hostility to new regime.
- Would reduce our ability to protect US citizens and investments.

Recommendation:

This scenario is almost as hypothetical as Scenario C. We would be inclined to favor Option 2, but political factors we cannot foresee might alter this view. We make no recommendation at present.

Drafted: AF/C: ~~EE~~ ^{WLC} ~~git~~ / WLCutler / RFAndrew:lar ^{per Ra}
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Clearance: S/P:Mr. Petterson ^{per Ra}
INR:Mr. Hyland (Intelligence assessments only) ^{per Ra}
S/NM:Mr. Vance (Draft) ^{per Ra}

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