

Phony peace reigns in southern Africa

by Jeffrey Steinberg

These days, the bars in Windhoek, Southwest Africa (Namibia) are filled every night with a cast of characters that underscores the nature of the “phony peace” in southern Africa. Cuban officers, South African Army regulars, Angolans, American and European soldiers of fortune, and even SWAPO periphery, mingle and joke, according to one recent American visitor. Yet, a short distance to the north, on the Angolan-Namibian border, full divisions of Cuban and South African troops sit across from each other, a stark reminder that the minute that the superpower-administered “peace process” breaks down, all of southern Africa can be plunged into a modern version of the Thirty Years War.

Two events in late October underscored the nature of the crisis: the elections in the Republic of South Africa, and the intervention of the United Nations in Namibia.

First, in nationwide municipal elections in the Republic of South Africa, the Conservative Party scored impressive victories in the Boer-dominated Transvaal region, for the first time captured several city councils in the British working class suburbs of Johannesburg, and came within several seats of capturing control over Pretoria and Johannesburg proper. The massive defections from the ruling National Party reflect a growing climate of rage and despair, directed largely against 1) the policies of Foreign Minister Pik Botha, which many view as an effort to satisfy American anti-apartheid demands by turning the country over to the terrorist African National Congress (ANC); and 2) against the economic suffering brought about by Western embargoes.

According to U.S. intelligence sources, this unrest is being fueled by a new and more sophisticated deployment of East German and Soviet intelligence operatives, who are now approaching conservative South Africans on a “friendly” basis. Pointing to the American-Soviet new era of cooperation, the Russians are arguing that parallel solutions may be developed to end the East-West conflict within the southern African region. At the same time, according to sources in the region, Moscow is urging such frontline states as Mozambique to jump through the hoop to secure Western credit lines, arguing that Lenin consolidated the Bolshevik Revolution through the flows of Western technologies, food supplies, and credits during the early 1920s era of the New Economic Policy (NEP).

The second event was a several-day tour of Namibia by the U.N. team responsible for overseeing the spring 1989 elections and for securing the peaceful transition to full in-

dependence. At the conclusion of its tour, the U.N. team announced its projection that the total cost of administering and securing the election would be over \$1 billion, according to sources in Windhoek. That announcement triggered a furor among Southwest Africans, who are starved for development credits to expand the country’s infrastructure. According to one farmer, that \$1 billion could pay for irrigation projects, expanded electrical power, and the completion of a nationwide communications grid. “No election is worth \$1 billion,” is the conclusion of many Namibians, who would vastly prefer to sink those funds into infrastructure, and who see the U.N.-administered “independence” as an external imposition of a terrorist regime, SWAPO, on one of southern Africa’s most stable spots.

Peace deals doomed to fail

All across the region, the question of genuine economic development has been swept from the agenda—in large measure through the direct intervention of Tiny Rowland’s Lonrho, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank, and through the U.S. Treasury Department’s blocking of Japanese and French efforts to build up an African development fund. In its place, a set of superpower phony peace deals has been imposed, which are by their very nature doomed to fail, without a strong foundation of economic aid.

From Mozambique to Angola, the State Department is pressing for legitimate anti-Soviet resistance movements to enter into coalition governments with communist majorities, a recipe for slaughter.

- In Angola, where Jonas Savimbi’s UNITA forces have apparently survived a dry season redeployment into the northern third of the country, the MPLA government in Luanda is “offering” to integrate UNITA into a one-party government—provided that Savimbi goes either into exile or “retirement.” Savimbi insists that Angola transform itself into a multi-party state, reflecting the three major resistance groups that joined forces to expel the Portuguese during the 1970s. Savimbi has spoken out against the corruption and tyranny that emerge out of one-party dictatorships, and has also underscored his own understanding that he is a high-priority target for assassination by both the Cubans and the Lonrho apparatus.

- In Mozambique, Renamo is faced with the prospect of a complete cutoff of support from South Africa, largely under pressure from the State Department’s Chester Crocker, and the acceleration of assassination threats from the Mozambique SNAF secret police, now being trained and supported by Defense Systems Limited, a Lonrho subsidiary that was probably responsible for the assassination of top Renamo figure Evo Fernandez in Lisbon early this year.

With the American elections just days away, the President-elect will find that one of the very first crises to be taken up long before the inauguration will be the prospect of an explosion in southern Africa.