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'12-Year Operation' DEC 22 1975

# The CIA's Role in

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The Central Intelligence Agency's covert operation in Angola, which the agency has described to Congress as a recent response to massive aid shipments from the Soviet Union to Marxist guerrillas, has actually been running for at least 12 years, U.S. intelligence sources say.

The suggestion that the CIA operation was a short-term project is among a number of misleading and incomplete statements the CIA has made about an Angola operation designed to block the "Marxist" faction in the civil war in Angola, according to the intelligence sources.

"Congress is only beginning to get some pieces of the puzzle," one source said. "When they find out the whole thing, there'll be hell to pay. We're in deep and we're in long."

The intelligence sources added that the recent intensification of the operation stems from a secret, high-level decision made earlier this year. In turn, the sources said, the decision stemmed from a number of basic — and secret — commitments made by the U.S.

Among the facts concealed from Congress, the sources say, are that:

- A group of 15 CIA agents is operating in the Angolan interior, giving arms training to one of the pro-West factions. Congress was told last week that several CIA agents were in Angola but that they were involved in intelligence-gathering activities.
- American civilian pilots under CIA contract in Zaire are flying airdrop and reconnaissance missions over Angola.
- Zaire President Mobutu Sese Seko has moved 3000 troops into Angola to fight beside the pro-West factions with U.S. knowledge and approval.
- Although U.S. government officials have talked about a \$50,000,000 to \$60,000,000 price tag on the Angola operation, the total projected cost is actually closer to \$100,000,000.

Additionally, the sources claim the operation thus far is a complete failure despite the U.S. involvement. Since November 11, when Portugal formally granted



AGOSTINO NETO  
Radical doctor, poet

Angola its independence, the military fortunes of the two pro-Western factions have declined rapidly. Initially, the two factions made excellent progress in a drive to eliminate the Marxist faction, but the drive bogged down, and last week began to fall apart completely. Indeed, some senior U.S. intelligence analysts now believe that the Marxist faction — the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola — might defeat the two other factions militarily.

Such a development would be due mainly to heavy shipments of Soviet arms to the Popular Movement, plus the presence of an estimated 5000 Cuban troops operating more sophisticated weapons, particularly 122-mm. rockets, artillery and light tanks. Originally hemmed in in a strip of land through Central Angola, the Popular Movement is now pushing north against the territory held by the anti-Communist National Front for the Liberation of Angola and south against the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola, also anti-Communist.

Both groups get arms, advice and other aid from the U.S. and South Africa. Pretoria has 1000 troops fighting with the National Union; this faction is also assisted by an estimated 500 white mercenaries of various nationalities.

It seems that almost overnight, a small struggle in a nearly forgotten African nation has suddenly escalated toward a confrontation between the major powers, involved three other nations in



HOLDEN ROBERTO  
'Nationalist leader'

Africa and became so confusing that it is almost impossible to tell the players without a scorecard. How did the U.S. get involved in such a mess?

It did not happen over night, of course. The roots of the U.S. involvement go back more than a dead decade, and many of the secret decisions and actions taken then — and in the years since — have now borne their bitter fruit.

The roots of the American involvement, according to a number of American intelligence sources, began in the turmoil of the Congo during 1960-61. Along with Laos, the Congo operation was the CIA's most notorious "intervention operation" a paramilitary effort to ensure that a particular faction emerged triumphant from a struggle between competing independence movements.

Operating under a White House mandate based on a decision that the Marxist faction led by Patrice Lumumba must not be allowed to take control of the new nation, the CIA sponsored a counter-Lumumba movement. (The CIA plan included an assassination plot against Lumumba, but it was never carried out. Lumumba eventually was murdered by his opponents.)

"It was the heyday of the CIA 'cowboys,'" said one source. "These were the covert operations boys who had carte blanche to do anything to get our boy, Mobutu (Sese Seko, now president of Zaire) in power wild times: They were Cuban exile pilots, paratroopers, mercenaries, you name

it. On the other side, there was the KGB Soviet Security Service, with their cowboys. Our cowboys finally won, but I think we paid a heavy penalty, ultimately — as a result, we got cocky, thinking we could go into any African situation and by spending enough money and killing enough people, we'd be able to get any result we wanted."

Events in the Congo had an immediate effect on Angola to the south as demands for "revolutionary independence" swept across the continent. The first move against the Portuguese colonial regime came in 1956, when the Popular Movement was founded. It attracted mostly urban intellectuals (only ten per cent of the black population was literate), but the group immediately ran afoul of colonial officials because it included members of the outlawed Angolan and Portuguese Communist parties. The decision to include Communists in the Popular Movement was to have far-reaching effects nearly two decades later.

Banned from Angola, the Popular Movement went into exile in leftist-dominated Congo-Braza-

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# Angola

ville, and radical poet and doctor Agostinho Neto emerged as president

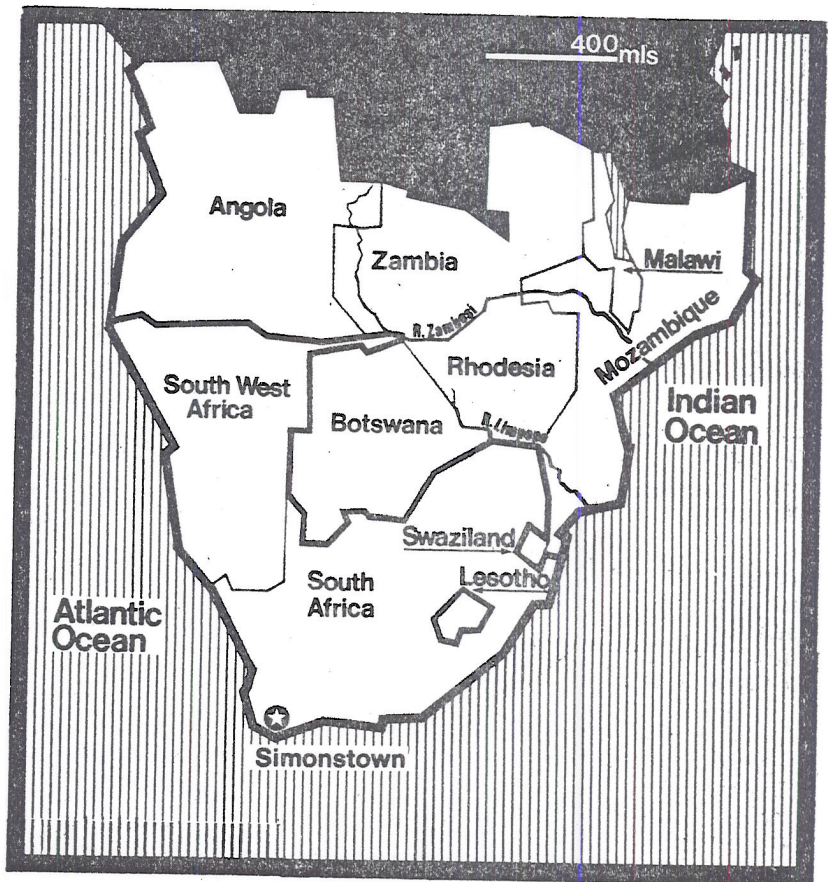
Neto attracted the attention of U.S. intelligence because of his vaguely Marxist background. In 1963, Neto visited the United States to solicit American help for a "liberation struggle" against Portugal but was rebuffed because of his Marxist background. Regarded as a Communist by the United States, Neto returned to the Soviets and Algeria for support. A guerrilla war in Angola began.

Actually, the struggle then was not very politicized, and was more related to Africa's most dominant theme: tribalism. Neto is a Mbundu (one-fourth of the black population), and native Angolans interested in independence joined his small guerrilla army mainly along tribal, not political, lines.

But other powers — the United States, the Soviet Union, China, Cuba and Algeria — were interested in politics, and they began to get deeply involved. The CIA, disturbed over Neto's movement, sought to create a "non-Communist alternative." They found it in Holden Roberto.

Roberto, a member of the Bakongo tribe (20 per cent of the native population), started his own separatist movement in 1957. He joined with Neto and then broke with him in 1962 over ancient tribal antagonisms. Driven out of Angola, Roberto wound up in Kinsasha, Zaire, where the CIA took him over and converted him into a "nationalist leader." with a hefty annual retainer, arms and advice.

Roberto who also got aid



This map shows Angola and southern Africa

from Romania and China in those confusing days, announced a new liberation movement in 1964 — the National Front for the Liberation of Angola, whose CIA-armed guerrillas soon began operations in Angola. On American advice, Roberto sought to broaden his movement by appointing members of other tribes as key leaders; the most important was Jonas Savimbi, a member of the Ovimbundu tribe (about 30 per cent of the population).

By the mid-1960s, Angola's liberation struggle had already become a poker game among world powers. As one side raised the bet, the other side countered. The CIA operated from Zaire, the Soviets from Congo-Brazzaville, the Chinese from Tanzania. Then there were the Cubans, determined to block the United States.

In 1963, the Cubans had signalled they were in the game for real when a Cuban ship

docked at Oran, Algeria, with 450 Cuban guerrilla warfare experts. The group spread out all over southern Africa, including Angola.

By the late 1960s, the United States felt at a disadvantage because Roberto had proved ineffective. In the face of growing Popular Movement military strength, the CIA devised a "counterweight" plan — creation of a new organization that would be pro-Western, but without overt Western connections.

In 1968, The American interest and the Chinese interest happened to converge. The Chinese were looking for the same sort of alternative, and had been approached by Savimbi, who had broken with Roberto. Savimbi had formed his own organization — the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola — but, as one CIA report put it, the group was 12 guys with knives."