



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

29 July 1983

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Jan T. [unclear]

Angola: Call by Mr Tiny Roland: 1 August

Mr Tiny Rowland has told us that he will wish to give the Prime Minister the most up-to-date information he can on Savimbi's prospects and intentions. He may have just returned from a visit to Savimbi.

Mr Rowland is an old supporter of Savimbi and has invested a good deal of assistance in him. He has long claimed that Savimbi would shortly take over power in Angola and that it was in HMG's interests to establish contact with him. He will no doubt take this line again with the Prime Minister.

Sir Geoffrey Howe has put in hand a study of the possibility that Savimbi might win control of Angola and the implications for our policy. He considers that a Savimbi victory cannot be dismissed out of hand. He has noted the US view (which, incidentally, the Ivory Coast Foreign Minister seemed to share) that Savimbi is most unlikely to be able to topple the MPLA in present circumstances; and that neither South Africa nor Savimbi himself expect this to happen soon. His preliminary view is that the present stalemate will continue, with the MPLA retaining power in the main cities; but with UNITA continuing to inflict considerable disruption on the economy, while being unable to supplement the civil administration outside its tribal heartland. The best hope for Angola is reconciliation between the two parties. This seems to be Savimbi's aim and Washington's long-term goal. However the main obstacle to reconciliation is Savimbi himself: no MPLA leader would be prepared to share a pond with such a big fish. The prospects for reconciliation in the short-term are therefore poor.

/This means



This means that we shall have to continue to deal with an MPLA Government at least for some time. They will have a decisive say over the release of our prisoners, our trade prospects, and a Namibia solution. At present Savimbi only influences events in a negative sense: by making a Namibia settlement more difficult and the MPLA regime more dependent on the Soviet bloc.

Mr Rowland has used the argument that when Savimbi came to power in Angola there would be a good prospect that, if we now played our cards well, Britain could have the leading role in the economic development of Angola. This is a theoretical possibility, but it would be unwise to put much money on Savimbi's words about the way in which he would run the economy if ever securely in power. Moreover, Savimbi's past history (he worked closely at one stage with Communist China) suggests that he is an opportunist who deals where he can obtain the best bargain. In any case gratitude would dictate first pickings for South Africa. Furthermore we should have plenty of opportunity to prove our friendship once he came into power: civil war would be likely to continue and he would, alas, probably be dependent on heavy Western support.

Against this background Sir Geoffrey Howe considers that we should certainly not close our eyes to the possibility that the balance of power could at some stage shift in Savimbi's favour. It is improbable but not impossible for example that sooner or later the Soviet Union and Cuba might decide to cut their losses and leave the MPLA to its fate. We must be ready to react if this looked like becoming a real possibility. Meanwhile, we should continue:

- (i) to work to convert the MPLA to genuine non-alignment. There is a real prospect that they can be turned round if a Namibia settlement enables them to reduce their dependence on the Soviet bloc and develop their economy with Western help;
- (ii) to work for an eventual reconciliation between MPLA and UNITA. There is little the UK can do itself. The main role will have to be played by Washington (and they acknowledge this) and black African States. When the time is ripe we should be ready to encourage them to do so;
- (iii) meanwhile to maintain our policy of neutrality towards UNITA, with no official contact but also no hostile comment;
- (iv) however we need to watch the situation closely in case Savimbi's prospects should significantly improve.

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/ I attach notes on the British ex-mercenaries and on
/ British mining personnel in Angola in case Mr Rowland
also raises these subjects. I also attach recent telegrams
from HMA Luanda.

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(R B Bone)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

CALL ON THE PRIME MINISTER BY MR T ROWLAND: 1 AUGUST

ANGOLA: BRITISH MERCENARY PRISONERS

1. Seven British mercenaries were sentenced in Luanda in June 1976 to periods of imprisonment ranging from 16 - 30 years. despite many high level bilateral representations (including the Prime Minister and Mr Pym to Sr Jorge, the Angolan Foreign Minister, in February) there is still no sign of the Angolans agreeing to releasing them by a humanitarian act of clemency.
2. During his visit to London, Sr Jorge said that he hoped an "opportune moment" for the men's release could occur this year. President Dos Santos faces opposition in the Political Bureau to releasing the British prisoners. The Angolans have told us that he is looking for development on the Namibia question as a possible "opportune moment".
3. In March this year, UNITA offered to exchange some Czechoslovak hostages for the seven British prisoners. The Angolan Government have made it clear that they intend to keep the question of the Czechoslovak hostages and that of the British prisoners separate.
4. We have therefore continued to concentrate on reaching a bilateral agreement with the Angolan Government. We have not discussed their offer with UNITA. We have instructed our new Ambassador, Mr Goulding, to explore the possibility of obtaining agreement with the Angolans on a package deal under which they would give a firm date for the release of the prisoners in exchange for a visit by a junior FCO Minister to sign a general agreement on co-operation (which we want for trade reasons) together with a public repudiation of the practice of exchanging hostages.

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5. A very recent development is a report that, under pressure from the Czechoslovak Government, the Angolan Government are considering either a direct exchange of some UNITA prisoners for the Czechoslovaks, or a unilateral amnesty for the UNITA prisoners. We have instructed HM Ambassador to make clear to the Angolan Government at the highest level the serious reaction in this country should the British prisoners not be included in any such deal.

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CALL ON THE PRIME MINISTER BY MR T ROWLAND: 1 AUGUST

ANGOLA: UNITA THREAT TO BRITISH PERSONNEL IN DIAMOND INDUSTRY

1. During a recent visit by Sir James Scott-Hopkins (Member of European Parliament) and three colleagues to Dr Savimbi in UNITA-held territory in Southern Angola, Savimbi said that he had 3,000 UNITA troops in readiness to attack the diamond mines in Lunda Norte province. Savimbi also said that the "50 British mining police" would be treated as mercenaries if captured. There are in fact 16 British, employed (unarmed) in supervisory duties at the sorting houses, and approximately 160 other British in management and technical positions.

2. Although Savimbi's threats may be no more than an exercise in propaganda aimed at further embarrassing the Angolan Government, we are taking them seriously. We can not rule out the possibility of such an attempt succeeding. We are in close touch with Defence Systems International who employ the supervisors, and with the other firms concerned. Our Embassy in Luanda raised the matter with the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs on 25 July. Da Moura confirmed that the Angolan Government would ensure the safety of British people in Lunda Norte in every possible way, but added that the Angolan Government could not of course guarantee absolute safety.

3. FCO officials in conversation with Mr Rowland have already pointed out that if UNITA did harm British subjects, as had been threatened, it would obviously seriously harm their image in this country. Mr Rowland may have passed this thought on to Savimbi.