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FREEDOM FIGHTERS GAIN ON THREE FRONTS: ANGOLA, MOZAMBIQUE, AND WASHINGTON

(Updating Backgrounder No. 470, "Angola Tests the Reagan Doctrine," November 14, 1985, and Backgrounder No. 572, "Mozambique Merits the Reagan Doctrine," March 31, 1987.)

As victory appears to near for the anti-communist resistance forces in Angola and Mozambique, increasing numbers of congressional and Reagan Administration policymakers have come to support these freedom fighters' struggles. Through several votes over the past 18 months, Congress has demonstrated clearly its support for renewed U.S. assistance to Jonas Savimbi's UNITA forces, which have been fighting the Soviet-backed regime and Cuban troops in Angola. Similarly, support is building at last to change U.S. policy on Mozambique from support for the Moscow-backed government toward support for the RENAMO insurgents. It seems that only some segments of the State Department, led by Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Chester A. Crocker, continue to resist the growing momentum to apply the Reagan Doctrine to southern Africa and to support UNITA and RENAMO freedom fighters.

In Angola, Crocker continues to negotiate with the MPLA regime, which increasingly is discredited because of its Leninist-style rule. In April, Crocker visited Brazzaville, capital of neighboring Congo, to talk to MPLA leaders. Then early last month, back in Washington, Crocker twice welcomed and entertained Pedro de Castro Van Dunem, the number two official in the MPLA hierarchy. As a payoff for this, apparently, when Van Dunem returned to Luanda, he arranged final details for the release of Joseph Longo, a U.S. citizen shot down in Angola while flying a private plane to South Africa in April. The MPLA declared this release a "gesture of goodwill" toward Washington. Several U.S. congressmen, including liberal Representative Howard Wolpe, the Michigan Democrat, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, hurriedly flew to Angola to pick up Longo. There they called for diplomatic relations between Angola and the U.S.

Actions Contradict Denials. Crocker steadfastly denies discussing the establishment of diplomatic relations with Luanda. His actions, however, contradict his denials. Knowledgeable observers report, for example, that Crocker has offered to help the MPLA in its bid for membership in the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), in exchange for a promised (though unenforceable) reduction in the number of Cuban combat troops posted to Angola. Membership in these bodies would give Luanda new access to Western credits and technology. It would ease the financial burden on Moscow at precisely the time when U.S. policy should

be geared toward raising the costs of Soviet involvement in Angola. Most important, it would strengthen the MPLA regime and thus make it more difficult for Savimbi's UNITA to fulfill the Reagan Doctrine in Angola.

Crocker's Cover-up. In Mozambique, the war continues to go badly for the communist FRELIMO regime. A couple of weeks ago, FRELIMO's rulers announced a major shakeup in the central and provincial military command structure, candidly admitting what Crocker and his group at the State Department have been trying to cover up--that FRELIMO forces could not prosecute the war successfully. The fighting has been going so badly, in fact, that the regime may have feared a coup d'etat. Colonel General Sebastiao Mabote, chief of the FRELIMO General Staff since 1975, was fired and was replaced by Lieutenant General Antonio Hama Thai, who was promoted from his position as commander of Mozambique's air force. New commanders were named for the regime's army, air force, and navy. FRELIMO also replaced 9 of the 10 provincial military chiefs.

Meanwhile, opposition has erupted inside Mozambique to Crocker's handpicked nominee for the next U.S. Ambassador, Melissa Wells. Diplomats in Maputo, the Mozambican capital, have received a letter from a group of "originados," black Mozambicans who fought against Portugal in the struggle for Mozambique independence. These originados fear that Wells "does not understand" Mozambican politics and that she will favor the mesticos (those of mixed race), who dominate the FRELIMO leadership and discriminate against blacks. Significantly, the originados call for negotiations with the RENAMO freedom fighters.

Repudiated by Reagan and Congress. In Washington, the Reagan Administration's review of its southern Africa policy continues. As Administration policymakers seek to defend U.S. interests and promote U.S. ideals and the Reagan Doctrine throughout southern Africa, they should view with satisfaction the results of U.S. military and political assistance to UNITA's forces in Angola. Washington's renewed aid to UNITA, which began in fall 1985, has brought Angolan national reconciliation closer. The Reagan Administration's success in Angola should be viewed as a model for Mozambique. There the Crocker policies, which have yielded no political reform in more than six years, should be abandoned. Instead, the Administration should establish formal contacts with RENAMO immediately, and should urge the FRELIMO regime to negotiate with RENAMO. If FRELIMO refuses, Washington should follow its successful Angolan strategy: assisting RENAMO militarily and politically.

The Administration is preparing a new National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) for southern Africa. This process is revealing that Chester Crocker and his dwindling numbers of State Department allies are becoming increasingly isolated in the battle to set U.S. policy. They already have been repudiated by Ronald Reagan on Angola policy in the winter of 1985-1986 and by Congress on South Africa policy last fall. Now is the time for the Reagan White House to repudiate Crocker's handling of Mozambique. The Reagan Doctrine offers hope of democracy and rising living standards to southern Africans. The biggest obstacle in the way of the Reagan Doctrine is Chester Crocker's support of the communist regimes in Mozambique and Angola.

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