

Soviet intentions exposed in Namibia

by Jeffrey Steinberg

If anyone is looking for a concrete test of Soviet President Gorbachov's real intentions, a good place to start is southern Africa, where the Moscow-backed Angola-Namibia accords are now well into their second month of implementation.

May 16 was the deadline for all military forces of the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) to withdraw from Namibia (South West Africa) into bases more than 100 kilometers inside Angola. But, according to accounts of observers who visited the United Nations Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG) border check points and searched the informal border crossing points, the vast majority of the 2,000 armed SWAPO insurgents who crossed into Namibia on April 1, are still inside the country.

After the independence agreement was signed at Brazzaville last December, some of the Soviet-backed insurgency movement's supporters reportedly shifted their allegiance and have come forward to UNTAG and South West African provisional government authorities. These SWAPO defectors have provided the locations of at least seven large weapons caches hidden in the bush prior to the April 1 startup of the seven-month electoral process that was to lead to the independence of Namibia and the withdrawal of all Cuban forces from neighboring Angola. The deal, sponsored by the Soviet Union and the United States, has been heralded as outgoing Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Chester Crocker's "crowning achievement," and the best demonstration to date of Moscow's willingness to deal above board on regional conflicts.

The captured arms caches were reportedly stockpiled with modern Soviet bloc weapons, including assault rifles, sniper rifles with high-powered scopes, grenade launchers, enormous volumes of ammunition, and—most alarming—SAM-7 shoulder-held surface-to-air missiles. SAM-7s have never before been part of the SWAPO arsenal. These underground caches were secured in such a way as to be accessible at any time over the next several years, indicating that SWAPO has had a secret agenda for a protracted insurgency.

The conclusion drawn by some observers is that SWAPO never intended to allow the election process to go forward. Bolstering that view is the fact that during the weekend of May 6-7, in two separate incidents, UNTAG peacekeeping troops carrying out routine patrols were wounded when their jeeps drove over land mines, believed to have been recently planted by the invading SWAPO terrorists. As a result of

those incidents, along with the discovery of the arms caches, all 5,000 UNTAG troops were temporarily ordered to their barracks while arrangements were made to obtain jeeps and personnel carriers armored to protect against mines, and to issue weapons to all U.N. forces. Previously, only 500 of the 5,000 UNTAG troops were to be issued weapons.

However, both the international press corps, swarming all over Namibia, and even U.N. officials overseeing the implementation of Resolution 435, have been playing down the SWAPO violations. Though reporters were given access to the captured SWAPO arms and provided with details of other SWAPO violations of the Brazzaville Accords, no major press coverage has occurred anywhere in the West.

U.N. contingent called 'biased'

Earlier this month, in response to this pattern of media coverup and UNTAG inaction, South African Gen. Loui Pienaar, the Administrative General in Namibia under the transition terms of 435, issued a public statement expressing his concern that the UNTAG contingent in Namibia is heavily biased in favor of SWAPO. He cited a number of instances that demonstrated this bias:

- The presence of Kenyan UNTAG troops in uniform at pro-SWAPO electoral rallies in Windhoek May 13-14;
- At least one instance in which SWAPO terrorists wearing UNTAG blue berets had ambushed South African troops conducting patrols along the Angolan border area just prior to the full transfer of reconnaissance functions to the U.N. forces;
- The appointment by UNTAG of a known SWAPO front group to administer a commission assigned to determine the whereabouts of 300-1,000 Namibian children believed to have been kidnaped by SWAPO during the course of the civil war and smuggled into Angola. At the beginning of May, a parents' group submitted to UNTAG officials photographs and other information on the missing children and held a press conference demanding answers.

Windhoek sources continue to emphasize to *EIR* that if the elections do proceed on schedule, SWAPO will be resoundingly defeated at the polls—particularly since the April 1 guerrilla invasion and the more recent land mine incidents. While Angola enjoyed U.N. Refugee Relief Agency (UNRRA) funding for over a decade for an estimated 70,000 Namibian refugees living in camps inside their territory, the truth has now come out: There were never more than 12-15,000 refugees. That refugee vote had always been cited as one key component of the SWAPO "electoral" coalition.

Whatever the outcome of the so-called "independence process"—and it is far too early to tell how events will unfold over the next five months—the events in Namibia continue to paint a damning picture of what Gorbachov's *glasnost* looks like up close. Perhaps it's time for some of the polyanas in certain Western capitals to wake up to the realities of Soviet irregular warfare.