



Africa Programme Meeting Summary

Angola: Celebrating Ten Years of Peace

HE Miguel Gaspar Fernandes Neto

Angolan Ambassador to the UK

Alex Vines OBE

Research Director, Areas Studies and International Law; and Head, Africa Programme, Chatham House

Dr Christopher Alde

Reader, Department of International Relations, LSE

Dr Justin Pearce

ESRC Postdoctoral Fellow, SOAS

Lauren Cobham

Desk Officer for Angola, Mines Advisory Group International

Ralph Publicover

British Ambassador to Angola (2005-07)

David Sogge

Board Member, Transnational Institute

Nicholas Shaxson

Associate Fellow, Africa Programme, Chatham House

Markus Weimer

Research Fellow, and Coordinator of the Angola Forum, Africa Programme, Chatham House

Professor David Simon

Royal Holloway University

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DEALING WITH THE LEGACIES OF THE ANGOLAN CONFLICT

Chris Alden:

Chris Alden's presentation focussed on how Angola experienced a 'hard peace' through the barrel of a gun rather than through negotiation, and that beyond the 'glitz and glitter' of Angola today it is important to appreciate how far the country has come (in 2002 Angola was 161 of 173 on the HDI ranking, 4 million had been internally displaced, there were 450,000 refugees, economic activity had been reduced to basic survival, and most infrastructure had been destroyed). In his study on post-civil war Angola, the speaker observed that the reintegration of ex-combatants, especially from UNITA, has been difficult. He looked at what factors inhibit or facilitate reintegration, how ex-combatants were expected to move into society, and what ex-combatants were being reintegrated into – a country with broken state structures and a dysfunctional economy.

The survey from 2007 found that the typical former soldier was a 36 year old male, married with a family of 9, earned most of his income from agriculture, and was educated only to primary level. 90% of former soldiers saw themselves as civilians, had high ambitions and expectations of getting jobs, were politically aware and took part in elections. Communities were generally receiving them well, though with some hesitations (for example, employers would prefer to hire a non-combatant over an ex-combatant). When reflecting on the ten years since the end of the war, it can be seen that this political activism did not translate into a resurgence of UNITA, and fortunately the lingering fear of the re-emergence of conflict had been misplaced. However, proposed training programmes to reintegrate former combatants did not occur. Nevertheless, economic growth did take off, creating new opportunities. The key question for the future is whether socioeconomic progress will be sufficient to limit political dissent.

Justin Pearce:

The speaker discussed the legacies of war in Angola's national political consciousness and political discourse, and how this legacy defines and limits political possibilities today. Two academics provide useful perspectives which are relevant to this question. One is the 'Ideology of Order', from Kenyan academic Atieno Odhiambo, where "the idea of order has assumed a

normative quality which gives the state the prerogative of silencing discordant political noises of opposing class interest and alternative visions of an independent state". The second perspective, from the late Angolan scholar Christine Messiant, reflects the new kind of nationalism in Angola which rejects outside interference and emphasises unity and national reconciliation as a rallying point for the MPLA (which is still conceived of as synonymous with the Angolan state). Both these perspectives are useful in understanding Angola today.

The legacy of Angola's civil war can be understood through the lens of politics. During the war, on one side the MPLA represented a one-party state, and on the other UNITA represented an authoritarian rebel movement. The MPLA generally represented the towns, whereas UNITA represented the countryside. Both sides used political education and ideology to build support, and characterising themselves as defenders of the Angolan people against outside aggressors (for UNITA, it was defence was against a Cuban invasion, and for the MPLA it was against defence against interference from the apartheid regime of South African).

This ideology has implications for politics today. UNITA is trapped in the ideology of wartime politics, and this is reflected in their poor performance in the 2008 elections. The party found it difficult to move away from their wartime support base and toward acting as a wider opposition party. In rural areas chiefs are beholden to local administrations (a legacy of colonial days). There is a tradition of local authorities being politicised and consequently, with the MPLA firmly in control of Angola, it has become difficult for opposition figures to make their voices heard in rural areas. The idea of UNITA as a trouble maker has leaked mainstream political discourse. Sometimes government politicians talk about UNITA having hidden arms caches, though without supporting evidence.

However, the most interesting development in Angola politics has been that recently for the first time there have been demonstrations in the street which are independent of any political party. The issues being raised are poverty, the long-serving president, and controversy surrounding the head of the electoral commission. Though these were small demonstrations there has been far wider support from within society, and even from some within the MPLA, for a principle of freedom of expression. But on the streets there has been violence against the protesters (not from the police, but from groups who enjoy immunity from the police). The attitude of the police is that the voicing of an opposition view on the streets is a challenge to authority rather than a manifestation of freedom of expression. In other words, the idea of

peace and reconstruction has been politicised and used to justify violence. Angola has a soldier's peace, but has failed to pacify minds. A mentality of suspicion lingers, and challenges to authority are seen as a threat to peace. These attitudes need to be overcome to secure a more peaceful path road to into the future.

Lauren Cobham:

The civil war left a deadly legacy, and Angola still remains one of the most mine-affected countries in the world. Since 2002 there have been 531 mine-related accidents and 144 fatalities, the majority of which were recorded in Moxico. A Landmine Impact Survey in 2007 found over 3,293 suspected hazardous areas, impacting on 1,988 communities. Over 1329km² are affected by mines. Land mines significantly inhibit access to services and markets and reconstruction and development efforts.

MAG began operations in Angola in 1994. The organisation works with a number of national partners, including the National Mine Action Authority (CNIDAH), the Angolan Armed Forces, the local Police, as well as national and International NGOs. During this time MAG has cleared 90,391,925 m² of land, allowing these areas to be used for housing, roads, agriculture, water, schools and health care centres. Mine risk education sessions have been provided to over 274,000 people. However, the main challenge now faced by MAG is that some big mine action donors have pulled their funding out of Angola, as they believe that such activities should now be funded by the state. Currently MAG in Angola only has full operational funding to July of this year.

It is important to note that MAG's operations do not focus simply on getting mines out of the ground. The organisation is also committed to supporting national level development plans and the MDGs. Through its work MAG seeks to increase access to schools, water, roads, bridges, etc. In the future MAG seeks to develop new programmes for national capacity building, increase gender equality and women's empowerment, continue to increase their operational efficiency through the roll out of new detector technology and innovative methodologies, continue to seek funding to maintain currently levels and expand operations, and to develop further integrated partnerships with NGOs to jointly deliver vital services to communities.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

Question: What is your definition of dictatorship?

Question: What involvement does the UK have with MAG's work, for example through DFID?

Question: What does the recent splitting of UNITA, with the creation of CASA by Abel Chivukuvuku, mean for the party?

Question: What role has the Angolan military been playing in Guinea-Bissau, and what role they can play in relation to dealing with the recent coup?

Question: Do the recent protests (and subsequent repression) represent a significant upswell in Angolan popular opinion? In short, is this a news-worthy story outside of Angola?

Question: Did Chris Alden encounter any surprises whilst conducting his Angola study, and more generally, have there been any surprises during the post-conflict process? Do people still openly refer to the war still?

Justin Pearce: Dictatorship is an unelected leadership with no on-going public accountability.

Lauren Cobham: Previously there had been funding from the UK government and DFID, but a policy shift last year meant that there is no longer funding to Angola operations (though DFID continues to fund other MAG operations).

Justin Pearce: The creation of CASA leaves UNITA in a worse position – Chivukuvuku will take away some of the party's support base. It may help in the long term for moving beyond the binary UNITA versus MPLA dynamic, but it won't help UNITA specifically.

Justin Pearce: Foreign Minister Chikoti spoke at Chatham House recently on the deployment of troops in Guinea-Bissau. This represents an interesting development in Angola being able to assert its power and project itself as a regional and continental power, particularly as a country which until recently had to deploy its army internally to protect its own cities. That Angola is now able to extend its powers beyond its own borders is a significant development for the region and the continent.

Justin Pearce: The protests represent a wider sentiment within Angolan civil society. Whilst there were only a few hundred people on the streets there is wider support for the principles of free expression.

Chris Alden: the reintegration programme undertaken in Angola was fairly unique; it was government led and there was concern about the ambitious

agenda. For example, although UNITA was formally declared to be disbanded, their training camps remained in operation for years subsequently. For a long time Angola was seen as a successful example for the DRC to follow. The speaker was surprised by the lack of animosity towards and from former soldiers, and was also surprised that there was not greater discontent from the post-war expectations not being delivered on. Regarding whether people still openly discuss the war, the war remains a feature of certain discourses, but most people want to move on.

Question: Which part of the country was Chris Alden's study conducted in, and did it account for ethnicity? The conflict was about ethnicity.

Question: Human Rights Watch has been documenting human rights abuses during the protests. Is this excessive and disproportionate crack down a legacy of the war? It seems that the further Angola moves away from 2002, the more that space is being closed down, especially since the 2008 elections. Is this a legacy of the civil war, or a consequence of one-party rule? And what are the prospects for the upcoming elections?

Questions: Are MAG preparing and empowering locals ready for the organisation's scaling back in the country? How do you see Angola after the next elections?

Chris Alden: the study was conducted the Plano Alto area, in Huambo, Huíla, and Bié, and 600 combatants were interviewed the majority of which were Umbundu speaking. Angola's institutions of security are one of the main legacies of the war, and this is what resulted in the harsh response to the recent protests.

Justin Pearce: The legacy of war and one party rule cannot be separated – they are interrelated. The war also bred an atmosphere of mistrust regarding challenges to the government's authority, and this still influences reactions to the protests.

Justin Pearce: Regarding the prospects for Angola after the next elections, there is not going to be another outbreak of war but it can hardly be called 'peace' when protesters are attacked in the street. The elections don't represent an advance on those of 2008 and there is widespread public mistrust. Democratisation at the municipal level keeps being pushed further into the future

Lauren Cobham: MAG is committed to national capacity building. In Angola the organisation has 200 national staff and 5 international staff. National staff

is usually recruited from local communities. MAG operations focus on clearing high-impact areas, so that low-impact and residual areas can be left for trained locals to deal with.

TEN YEARS OF PEACE: ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

David Sogge:

The nature of the political and social transformation in Angola over the last ten years depends on one's point of view. There are three differing schools of thought on this question: the security, peace building and fragile states perspective, Angolan public opinion, and Angolan elite opinion.

The security, peace building and fragile states school of thought focuses on three points which indicate the nature of political and social transformation in post-war Angola. Firstly, that the authority and monopoly of violence by the state has increased over the period, as indicated by combat deaths and homicide rates. A survey by the World Bank which aggregated expert opinions also supports this view. The rule of law is perceived to have improved steadily since 2002. Secondly, in terms of territorial reach and bureaucratic strength of the state (as evidenced by control over illicit goods, transport and telecoms infrastructure, etc.) there is general evidence of improvement, though this is uneven. And thirdly, government legitimacy is an important indicator of progress. Voter behaviour suggests improved government legitimacy; the 2008 election turnout was 87%, with the MPLA winning 82% of the national vote (though this was lower in some areas). However, media freedom has decreased. Reporters Without Borders ranked Angola 93rd of 139 countries in 2002, but 132nd of 179 countries in 2012. Control of corruption has also been in decline. In sum, stability and authority has been consolidated over the last ten years. Government capacity has seen uneven development, albeit from a low base. Government legitimacy is also stronger than in the 1990s, but the indicators are mixed.

Angolan public opinion emphasises different factors. In a public opinion survey 4 out of 5 people said that Angola was moving in the right direction. The most popular reasons for this were new infrastructure, new education, and the advent of peace. Citizen's greatest concerns were (in order of decreasing importance) jobs, poverty, education, health, water, wages, crime, corruption.

Angolan elite opinion favours an outward-oriented Angola and 'high' modernism – a sort of colonial model redux. This model excludes many from economic roles; as producers, consumers and taxpayers, ordinary Angolans count for little. The political system has been successful in co-opting elites by managing access to economic rents, status and power, by conflating the state with the MPLA, and conflating governance with the Executive. Real contestation is excluded from politics. Angolan elites have been successful in

gaining allies and advantages from external actors and offshore financial centres. Angola's foreign exchange reserves have increased from around \$0.1 billion to \$30 billion since 2002, which suggests that Angola has a low capacity to absorb funds from its oil wealth. Illicit outflows have also increased substantially during this time.

In sum, following ten years of peace in Angola, dispossession has been sustained, the country is on a non-inclusive development path, citizen-state reciprocity is weak, whereas elite reciprocity (and also between territorial and foreign-based elites) has thus far been sustained.

Nicholas Shaxson

Referring to progress in Angola, a few days ago an IMF report made a comment which could just as easily have been said about Angola in 2002: that the authorities 'have begun to phase out quasi-fiscal operations by Sonangol, the state oil company, and are incorporating them into the budget.' The speaker argued that the progress in post-war Angola has been disappointing – so far Angola has been picking the 'low hanging fruits' of development, and improvements to HDI rankings in Angola have been largely due to an absence of fighting rather than due to a successful development model or effective use of oil wealth.

A good indicator of how well developed a country is compared to its per capita wealth is to use the Gross National Income (GNI) rank minus HDI rank. On this measure Angola scores -38, one of the worst scores in the world. Most of the worst scorers are mineral rich countries.

In 2005 the speaker co-authored a DFID funded Chatham House report (Angola: Drivers of Change) which looked at what was driving development in Angola, from an Angolan perspective. The key themes and messages of the paper are still relevant to Angola today. A key driver of change has been Angolan leaders' vision of national development:

“To understand economic change as it affects the poor, it is first helpful to examine national visions of development. The dominant economic vision could be described as one that advocates top-down, accelerated high-technology economic development, with heavy emphasis on investment, big projects and borrowing to build infrastructure. It is a vision of master planning resting on a premise that the state can solve the nation's ills. Higher education and

technology transfer, along with strengthening the state's efficiency and boosting the role of the formal sector, are central. In this vision, development is equated, to a very large degree, with modernity.”¹

There are several reasons why this model dominates Angolan development thinking. The war destroyed most Angolan infrastructure, and so the country genuinely needed reconstruction and large-scale infrastructure projects, and this was an easy political message which ordinary Angolans could buy into. The war left development thinking frozen in the 1970s Portuguese colonial development model (based on manufacturing and agribusiness, financed through heavy international borrowing). There was also a strong Soviet influence (for example, some development plans were copied from Bulgarian technical development papers). For the same reasons, there has been a lack of experience in engagement with civil society. Vested interests also mean that the Angolan elite benefit from this development model and thus have an interest in its continuation.

Furthermore, Western models of development had been discredited by the history of malign Western involvement in Angola and due to the rising influence of emerging powers such as Brazil and China. And finally, state delivery of more complex development components such as healthcare and education was seen by Angola's leaders as too difficult for the Angolan state to provide. Similarly, financing mechanisms in Angola are geared towards infrastructure investment, making this an easier option. This development vision involves an official rejection of the resource curse thesis. However, development indicators suggest that oil wealth is not being harnessed for development.

Markus Weimer:

The speaker's presentation was based on some of the findings of the Chatham House paper 'The Peace Dividend: Analysis of a Decade of Angolan Indicators, 2002–12', which summarises data and economic indicators on Angola today. Data on Angola's economy show a heavy reliance on oil revenues. Over the last ten years there has been high GDP growth, but this has largely been due to the high prices and high production of oil in Angola. This over-dependence increases the risks to Angola's economy. A further problem is that the oil industry is not a big generator of jobs. There is a

¹ Page 6: Angola - Drivers of Change: An Overview. Chatham House Report, May 2005

recognised need for diversification into tourism, agriculture, manufacturing, etc.

The current institutions and the economic model of Angola are a legacy of the civil war. It is now crucial to focus on the business environment and especially on the creation of small and medium enterprises and the development of the private sector in general. A 2012 Doing Business survey ranked Angola 172nd out of 183 countries; i.e. it is the 11th most difficult country in the world to do business in.

What are the obstacles to doing business? In 2006 the biggest obstacle was electricity, but by 2010 this had declined. Meanwhile corruption has increased. Issues of access to finance, transportation, and access to land have also come to the fore as Angola has become increasingly urbanised and the private sector has become more concentrated in Luanda. There have been some notable achievements in electricity provision, reductions in crime rates, and improvements to transportation.

Corruption has increased as a perceived problem. In 2006 81% of firms expected to give a gift for some kind of service, whereas in 2010 almost 100% of firms expected to give a gift undertaking some business activities. In short, it is almost impossible to do business in Angola without giving gifts. Corruption is a major obstacle to economic diversification, and can be considered a strategic risk to the country, to the extent that it plays a factor in maintaining exposure of the Angolan economy to international commodity markets. Corruption inhibits the development of small and medium sized enterprises, and drives away potential foreign investment to other African countries (such as Mozambique, Ghana or Kenya). Reducing corruption is not easy; it is a cross-cutting and complex political issue. Tackling it requires sustained political will and also requires action - such as public sector reform and transparency initiatives.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

Question: This is perhaps the most pessimistic analysis in years. Are the speakers portraying a country on a collision course with kleptocracy, much like Zaire in the 1970s?

Question: What is the spatial distribution of development in Angola? From 2002 to 2007 there was little development of infrastructure in the country, but from 2007 onwards this increased. However, HDI improvements tailed off around 2007 onwards. What impact does infrastructure have on development? Does it concentrate economic activity in Luanda?

Question: No one has mentioned education and infrastructure improvements, whereas Angolans cite this as one of the greatest achievements post-war. Is this panel reflecting a Western view of Angolan progress?

Question: As a business investor I have been unable to book a flight to Angola for the next two weeks as all flights are fully booked – firms are crowding into the country. This seems to contradict the evidence presented by the speakers.

Nicholas Shaxson: The country is not on a collision course with corruption as it is not corruption of the chaotic sort but rather is tightly controlled and allocated for political support. Transport and infrastructure developments do need further investigation. In terms of whether this analysis is too pessimistic, the problem is the scarcity of data – those that are available suggest a negative picture. Is non-oil growth higher than oil growth? ‘Non-oil’ growth is concentrated in construction and finance, which are themselves dependent on the oil industry and so a collapse in the oil price would adversely affect them. This oil/non-oil distinction is not helpful. More research is needed on where investment is going, but it seems to be benefitting elites and not rural areas.

David Sogge: In terms of doing business in Angola, the charts used in this presentation showing the growth of Angola’s foreign exchange reserves are the same ones which attract businesses to the country. As a point of interest, is Angola’s import of basic food declining? During the war, the country was highly dependent on food imports, and it is still not a part of their development model to be self-reliant.

Markus Weimer: The data is based on the responses of people doing business in the country. It is not a negative story, and the country is not on a collision course. Rather, the point is how to translate the vision of economic diversification into a reality. What does Angola do now that it has picked the

low hanging fruits? The government has a role to play here. Whilst infrastructure is important, its impact is greater if there is a conducive business environment for firms to take advantage of new infrastructure and markets. Doing business statistics are not just academic, but are also referred to by investors, who may consequently favour other countries, such as Mozambique, instead.

Education is an obstacle to business development too, but this is harder to achieve than infrastructure. Economic activity is highly concentrated in and around Luanda, though there are government initiatives to reduce this. The business environment needs improving in rural areas too to encourage this. De-concentration of services and local government elections also play a role here.

Question: it seems that Angola has a development model which is uninterested in the population. Is it the case that the MPLA represents an urban elite, whereas UNITA reflects the masses? What would have happened to Angola if UNITA had won? To what extent does UNITA reflect the majority?

Question: The speakers raised the issue of the Angolan elite and the tight control of corruption, but corruption is a reciprocal activity – what is the role of the oil industry in fuelling corruption? Many companies are engaged in a profitable relationship with Sonangol. To what extent is the industry creating the problem?

Nicholas Shaxson: With regard to the political dynamics of UNITA and the MPLA, the speaker reflected on his memories of Savimbi dying and it being immediately clear that the war was over. There was a rural – urban dynamic to the conflict but it was also about oil versus diamonds. And in the early stages it was also a Cold War proxy conflict. But ultimately the war was driven by Savimbi's ambition to take over the country. If he had won, it is unlikely that things would have been better – he was a bloodthirsty, ruthless megalomaniac.

On the question of oil companies and corruption, the major companies know they are under scrutiny, but smaller players are more willing to get involved. In Nigeria there is a closer connection between oil and society (oil is produced on-shore in communities), whereas in Angola the oil industry is offshore, and thus more removed from wider society.

David Sogge: An important question has been raised as to whether oil majors are a part of the corruption problem. Furthermore, corruption and illicit flows of money are facilitated by offshore financial centres.

Markus Weimer: Corruption is a complex problem. Offshore financial centres and tax havens are a transnational issue. Fighting corruption requires the establishment of the rule of law, media scrutiny, government initiatives, opposition parties, and civil society pressure. Basically, decisions made by politicians have a real impact and can lead to a better or worse environment in Angola.

The speaker disagreed that the development model of Angola is not interested in the people. Part of the problem is that good ideas do not necessarily translate into policy outcomes on the ground. The country needs institutional change from the institutions formed in war, and this transition is not yet complete for Angola.

Chair: Several clear themes have emerged from today's discussions: that the transition in Angola is on-going, the questions over the extent to which legacies of war are being overcome, that it is easier to build a bridge than to demine hundreds of hectares of forest, that there is a bias towards urban areas, and that social exclusion and social healing are on-going challenges. To use the Portuguese phrase, 'a luta continua'.

Closing Address:

Alex Vines: It is clear that from 1992 to now there have been improvements in Angola, and John Liebenberg's photos exemplify this. The challenge now is about how to build a sustainable peace. There are also remaining psychological aspects, such as the binary politics between UNITA and the MPLA. It is important to remember however, that this year Mozambique celebrated 20 years of peace, and looking back to the situation Mozambique was in ten years ago raises hope that Angola could be in a similar position in ten years' time.

The ambition of this symposium had been to involve Angolan speakers, and notably, the signatories of the Luena Memorandum. Unfortunately, none of the Angolan invitees were able to attend. However, we were successful in interviewing both the Angolan Foreign Minister, Georges Chikoti, and the leader of UNITA, Isaiás Samakuva, on the subject of ten years of peace in Angola. The audio recording is available from the Angola Forum website.