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Different opportunities, different outcomes –  
Civil war and rebel groups in Angola and  
Mozambique

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## Preface

This study explores the development and dynamics of non-state actors in Angola and Mozambique and so contributes to the ongoing debate at the German Development Institute on the issue of non-state (armed) groups and governance impact on development conditions.

The study discusses the effect of various dimensions on the historical process of the two countries from the perspective of the rebel movements: the Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) in Angola's case and the National Resistance of Mozambique (RENAMO) in Mozambique's. The analysis focuses on two dimensions: geography and endowments.

Angola and Mozambique have a number of features in common. For example, the lack of political space in Portuguese politics precluded a political solution for independence, which led to armed struggle. Other similarities can be found in their post-independence period: both countries became independent in 1975 and soon after independence plunged into long, brutal civil wars characterised by external interference. However, a number of major dissimilarities are also to be found (development achievements, etc.). The paper analyses the extent to which their geography and endowments have played a major role in the choices open to the two countries and in the decisions taken by their political and military leaders.

The study is the result of periods of research undertaken by Ana Leão at the German Development Institute (DIE – Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik) in November / December 2006 and February / March 2007. Until mid-2007 Ana Leão was a senior researcher at the Institute for Security Studies (ISS / Pretoria) in Maputo / Mozambique.

I would like to thank everyone concerned for the very fruitful cooperation with the ISS. This applies particularly to Ana Leão's kind and enriching collaboration. My thanks also go to Dr Jakkie Cilliers, the Executive Director of the ISS. His personal commitment made it possible to lay the foundations for cooperation between the Institute for Security Studies and the German Development Institute.

Dr Stephan Klingebiel

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## Abbreviations

ANC	African National Congress
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
FAPLA	Forças Armadas Populares de Libertação de Angola (People's Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola)
FNLA	Frente Nacional da Libertação de Angola (National Front for the Liberation of Angola)
FRELIMO	Frente da Libertação de Moçambique (Mozambican Liberation Front)
GNP	Gross National Product
HRW	Human Rights Watch
MPLA	Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola)
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
PIDE	Polizia Internacional de Defesa do Estado (Portuguese Secret Police during Fascism)
RENAMO	Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (National Resistance of Mozambique)
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SWAPO	South-West Africa People's Organisation
UNAVEM	United Nations Angola Verification Mission
UNITA	National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front





## Executive summary

Politically, Angola and Mozambique have a common colonial history that determined the violent nature of their independence. Further similarities can be found in their post-independence period: both countries became independent in 1975 (June in Mozambique's case, November in Angola's) and soon after independence plunged into long, brutal civil wars characterised by external interference. Peace in both countries was attained by means of agreements reached under the auspices of the international community. Both countries exchanged a single-party regime with a centralised economic policy for multi-party democracy and a market-led economy. But the processes of transformation in the two countries have as many dissimilarities as their geography and endowments, which have played a major role in the choices open to them and in the decisions taken by their political and military leaders.

The nature of Portugal's colonisation of Angola was to have considerable influence on its social differentiation. The supply of slaves to European traders enabled local elites to emerge, thus initiating the social divisions later reflected in the Angolan liberation movements. The conflict between the colonial settlers' expectations and the privileges enjoyed by the local elites from the early days of colonialism accentuated existing social tensions and created new ones. These tensions fuelled the political discontent felt by the three movements that would ultimately fight for independence: the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) and the Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). The Portuguese colonisation of Mozambique was different. Located on the Indian Ocean and thus farther from Portugal, Mozambique's economy was particularly determined by the ebb and flow of trade with India and controlled by Portuguese settlers who enjoyed privileges akin to those of a sovereign state. Unable to establish control, Portugal resorted to the use of chartered companies, assigning each a portion of Mozambican territory until as late as 1942, when the last chartered company saw its mandate expire. More than social differentiation, this form of administration would create domestic asymmetries, later aggravated by colonial development policies. Being a long, coastal country, Mozambique provided landlocked neighbours with access to ports, and this strategic advantage became the backbone of colonial revenue. The economic development of each region was thus intimately linked to those of the adjacent countries. But such economic and communications policies – East-West rather than North-South – further reinforced the internal divisions created by the chartered companies.

Although UNITA and RENAMO cited ethnic and local regional grievances at the time of their inception and used them to justify their political claims, it is questionable whether they would have survived, or even surfaced at all, had they not had external support and economic assistance. UNITA was formed while Angola was still under colonial rule, while RENAMO came into existence shortly after independence, formed by external actors and later supported by national asymmetries.

The Angolan liberation movements mirrored the Cold War geography of the time. The Soviet bloc supported the MPLA, while the FNLA was backed by the USA in a pattern that would play itself out fully at the time of Angola's independence in 1975. Set up in 1964, UNITA first sought the help of China and, after the FNLA's military defeat, of the Western bloc. The situation in Mozambique was different, being regional rather than global in scale.

The Mozambican liberation movements would have to count on Tanzania for support, although Nyerere preferred a single movement operating from his country to several factionary groups. A single movement would be not only easier to support and control but also closer to Nyerere's ideology and vision for an independent Africa. For Zambia it was also easier to provide support for a single movement through Tanzania than to have dissidents setting up bases inside its borders. FRELIMO came into being as a result of the diplomatic pressure brought to bear by the leaders of Tanzania and Zambia. Even though FRELIMO was plagued by internal dissent from the outset, it was only after independence that different political leanings would emerge.

Independent Mozambique had to contend with two formidable opponents in the region – South Africa and Rhodesia. Both countries had economic resources that enabled them to develop powerful military forces skilled in counterinsurgency. The emergence in their own backyards of regimes friendly to their enemies (the ANC in South Africa and ZANU-PF in Rhodesia) was at best uncomfortable and at worst unacceptable. Rhodesia in particular was confronted not only with Mozambican support for nationalist fighters but also with the closure of the Beira Corridor – Rhodesia's only outlet to the world market – in 1976. This combination of internal grievances and external opportunities gave rise to RENAMO.

When Angola attained its independence, a civil war was already being fought by the three liberation movements, funded and supported by their respective international allies. During the colonial war, not only were the three movements divided and in competition with one another: at no time did they discuss power-sharing models for the time when Angola might become independent. In spite of the signing of the Alvor Accords in January 1975, which were to govern the military and political transition and co-habitation, the three movements expended more effort on positioning their military wings for the takeover of Luanda than on implementing any of the provisions of the Alvor Accords. The perception was that the party controlling Luanda on 11 November 1975 would control the rest of Angola. As UNITA was the youngest participant in the Angolan war and did not have a strong external backer, its lack of military leverage made it a particularly interested stakeholder in the Alvor Accords: it had everything to gain from a political solution. Given the foreign support they enjoyed, however, the other two participants, the FNLA and MPLA, were attracted by a military solution to the conflict rather than by the peaceful and political solution represented by power-sharing. On the date set for independence Luanda was in the hands of the MPLA and under heavy attack from the FNLA and UNITA. The battle for Luanda led to the dismantling of the FNLA's military capacity; with support from the West, UNITA became the Angolan government's only military opponent.

Whether manipulated or genuine, ethnic and regional grievances seem to have been the root cause, or that at least is the impression conveyed by the political discourse of both rebel movements – UNITA and RENAMO. But grievances alone do not explain rebellion: they must be linked to opportunities for sustaining it (Collier / Hoeffler 2001). In UNITA's case, such opportunities as access to resources, whether external financial and military support or internal mineral wealth, would determine how a movement that had everything to gain from a political solution at the time of Angola's independence became Africa's most powerful rebel army and a reluctant party to the peace process. For RENAMO opportunities came in the form of external financial and military support, and once it dried up, the nature of Mozambican natural resources and of the new post-Cold War configuration turned peace into a

viable option, thus enabling RENAMO's transformation from rebel movement to political party.

Given Angola's wealth of natural resources, the two major players in the Cold War period (the West and the Soviet Union and its satellites) had a vested interest in the outcome of the conflict, and the war in Angola followed the ebb and flow of the nature of international support – overt or covert. As Mozambique is less well endowed with natural resources, its politics attracted the interest of regional rather than international players (South Africa and Rhodesia). While international interests in Angola vied for a regime change and control of the government, regional interventions in Mozambique sought only to destabilise the Mozambican government and to prevent economic and social development.

Once external support ceased, RENAMO, unlike UNITA, did not have access to major internal resources capable of sustaining protracted conflict. Both RENAMO's leaders and its foot soldiers had everything to gain from a political solution. UNITA, on the other hand, saw the Angolan peace process as an opportunity to gain access to internal resources – diamonds – that would more than compensate for the lack of external support. The geostrategic configuration at the time is perhaps the strongest argument for the role played by opportunities in the changing nature of conflicts. The lack of opportunities for Mozambique's RENAMO turned peace into a viable option; the general availability of resources in Angola prolonged the conflict for another decade. While the 1990s saw a worsening of the conflict in Angola, Mozambique's different resource endowment and fewer opportunities for continued war meant that it benefited significantly from the new world order.

In Mozambique the end of the Cold War also increased the leverage of the international community in its push for a peaceful resolution of the conflict. The Mozambican government was highly impoverished, and its administration was confined to urban areas. RENAMO was losing its important (and only) ally, South Africa, and by 1990 the war had reached stalemate. Experts argue that both sides could have continued fighting longer, but groups within both warring parties, supported by international pressure, were now leaning towards a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Both sides had more to gain from a political solution funded by the international community.

In Angola, the ironic fact is that the MPLA, which had preferred a military solution in 1975, had everything to gain from a peaceful settlement in the 1990s. Peace would enable the government to rebuild the country and implement development policies. But UNITA, which in 1975 had had everything to gain from a diplomatic settlement, used the different cycles of the various peace processes to rebuild its military capacity. This stance undermined the international efforts to achieve peace and was to reinforce the government's conviction that only a military solution would bring the Angolan conflict to an end. It reduced the leverage of the international community as it pressed for peace, eventually dragged Angola into the regional Great Lakes conflict and ultimately brought the government military victory when, in February 2002, Jonas Savimbi was killed in Moxico Province.

Nonetheless, it is the two countries' natural endowments that seem to have determined what leverage the international community applied in the peace processes. Mozambique was and remains dependent on external aid. The international community was thus able to put pressure on the government, but it was also forced to honour its own commitments, and donors

began to take an interest in the successful outcome of the peace process. Angola achieved peace by means of a perceived military victory, and the peace process was accomplished without the international community's involvement. The leverage enjoyed by Angola as a result of its mineral wealth reduced the leverage the international community might otherwise have applied, and international vested interests in Angola are eminently economic rather than humanitarian.

## 1 Introduction

Geographically, the only characteristic that Angola and Mozambique seem to share is that they are both in Africa, albeit on opposite shores of that continent, Angola dominating the western, Atlantic coast and Mozambique stretching along the eastern coast of the Indian Ocean. Mozambique is a long coastal country with little hinterland, whereas Angola consists of a vast plateau with a narrow coastal plain. Angola's rivers and other watercourses are permanent except in the Southwest of the country, where the rivers depend on rainfall; in Mozambique most rivers are seasonal, with high waters during the rainy season, but drying to a trickle during the eight to nine months of the dry season. Angola covers a range of climatic areas, while the climate in Mozambique is tropical to subtropical. The endowments of the two countries seem as different as their geography. To add to its tremendous agricultural potential, Angola is rich in natural and mineral resources, especially oil and diamonds. Coal and natural gas are Mozambique's main mineral resources, and its agricultural potential is constrained by its limited climatic diversity and the scarcity of water resources.

Politically, Angola and Mozambique have a common colonial history that determined the nature of their independence: the lack of political space in Portuguese politics precluded a political solution for independence, which led to armed struggle. Further similarities can be found in the post-independence period: both countries became independent in 1975 (June in Mozambique's case, November in Angola's) and soon after independence plunged into long, brutal civil wars characterised by external interference. Peace in both countries was attained by means of agreements reached under the auspices of the international community.<sup>1</sup> Both countries exchanged a single-party regime with a centralised economic policy for multi-party democracy and a market-led economy. But the processes of transformation in the two countries have as many dissimilarities as their geography and endowments, which have played a major role in the choices open to them and in the decisions taken by their political and military leaders.

This paper sets out to explore the impact of these two dimensions – geography and endowments – on the history of the two countries from the perspective of the rebel movements: the Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) and the Mozambique National Resistance (RENAMO). Both movements evolved within the context of the Cold War world: external pressure and interference was paramount in the way they developed and in their legitimacy (or lack of it); resources would ultimately determine their choices in a changing global order. The aim of the paper is to contribute two case studies to the ongoing debate on the dynamics of non-state actors, to the understanding of the environment in which they operate, and the choices associated with each setting, and to the role of the leverage which the international community can or cannot apply. The paper further explores the role of the historical context in the genesis and legitimisation of non-state actors.

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1 The Memorandum of Luena signed by the two warring factions in Angola in 2002 reinforces the political commitments established in the Lusaka Protocol of 1994 and details a DDR plan for UNITA forces.

## 2 Grievances and legitimisation

Grievances seem to have been the cause of the emergence of both UNITA in 1964<sup>2</sup> and RENAMO in 1976. While social disruptions and alliances due to colonialism may have been at the root of the various liberation movements in Angola,<sup>3</sup> RENAMO was able to tap the discontent caused by post-independence policies in Mozambique.

The nature of Portugal's colonisation of Angola was to have considerable influence on the country's social differentiation. Situated on the Atlantic coast of Africa, Angola was linked to Brazil by particularly favourable sea winds and currents, which enabled trade in goods and slaves between the two colonies to develop. Indeed, Angola played a vital role in the slave trade from the beginning of the sixteenth century, so much so that by the nineteenth century it had become the main supplier of slaves to the Americas. The supply of slaves to European traders enabled local elites to emerge, thus initiating the social divisions later reflected in the Angolan liberation movements. After the abolition of the slave trade in the late nineteenth century, the Angolan economy was based on exploration for mineral resources, especially diamonds, on cash crops and on trade with Portugal. Angola differed from Mozambique in having agricultural potential and in being climatically diverse and closer to Portugal, which made it attractive to European settlers. The conflict between settlers' expectations and the privileges enjoyed by the local elites from the early days of colonialism accentuated existing social tensions and created new ones. These tensions were legitimised when they fuelled the political discontent felt by the three movements that would ultimately fight for independence: the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) and UNITA.

*“Continuous rivalries between various elites have played an important role in Angola's recent history. The FNLA embodied the aspirations of the northern elite focused on Kinshasa but with some cultural links with the old Kongo kingdom. The MPLA had its heartland in the territory of the Mbundu people of the Luanda hinterland but included many groups in the urban centres including some who descended from the old assimilated families of black Angolans and others who were the mixed-race children of modern colonization. UNITA became the expression of a third political tradition and embodied the economic aspirations of the Ovimbundu and their merchant leaders on the southern planalto. To a large extent the ethnic identification of these movements has come about as a result of conscious political manoeuvring by each leadership rather than as a genuine expression of popular sentiment and aspiration. Over time the social and political factors of identity and cohesion have become real.”* (Meijer / Birmingham 2004)

The Portuguese colonisation of Mozambique was different. Located on the Indian Ocean and so farther from Portugal, Mozambique's economy was particularly determined by the ebb and flow of trade with India and was controlled by Portuguese settlers who enjoyed privileges akin to those of a sovereign state: the prazo system allowed almost total control over the labour force and the establishment of slave armies. The prazos, or large estates,

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2 Technically, UNITA came into existence in 1966. However, Savimbi's public split with the FNLA occurred during a conference of the then OAU in 1964.

3 See Marcum (1969) for an exhaustive account of the formation of each of the Angolan liberation movements.

evolved into virtually independent fiefdoms ruled by Afro-Goan-Portuguese descendants with the support of the slave armies.

In the nineteenth century and at a time when Portugal needed to demonstrate that it controlled the territories it claimed at the Berlin Conference, these fiefdoms and autonomous kingdoms were showing growing resistance to colonial rule. Unable to establish control, Portugal resorted to the use of chartered companies, assigning each a portion of Mozambican territory until as late as 1942, when the last chartered company saw its mandate expire. More than social differentiation, this form of administration would create domestic asymmetries, later aggravated by colonial development policies. Being a long, coastal country, Mozambique provided landlocked neighbours with access to ports, and this strategic advantage became the backbone of colonial revenue. The economic development of each region was thus intimately linked to that of the adjoining countries. But such economic and communications policies – East-West rather than North-South – reinforced further the internal divisions already created by the chartered companies.

Rather than being an obstacle, these asymmetries may have played a role in the unification of the various liberation movements under the umbrella of the Mozambican Liberation Front (FRELIMO), as FRELIMO's discourse on national identity suggests. However, they were to surface periodically during the liberation struggle and would later be used to justify and legitimise divided factions and political claims.

*“A fierce internal conflict between FRELIMO and Renamo followed after Mozambique became independent in 1975. The division between these parties was primarily regional – with FRELIMO being mainly a Southern party, Renamo for the most part representing the Centre, and the North was divided between the two.”*

(Stewart 2005, 22)

It would be local regional grievances, together with unpopular post-independence FRELIMO policies, that would provide RENAMO with an internal support base.

*“ ... RENAMO has indeed taken on local roots, ... and ... it has been able to feed on peasant discontent with FRELIMO economic policies ... ”* (Hall 1990, 39)

Although UNITA and RENAMO cited ethnic and local regional grievances at the time of their inception and used them to justify their political claims, it is questionable whether they would have survived, or even surfaced at all, had they not had external support and economic assistance. UNITA was formed while Angola was still under colonial rule, citing ethnic grievances and supported by external actors, while RENAMO came into existence shortly after independence, formed by external actors and later supported by national asymmetries.

### **3 Global and regional geostrategies**

In terms of the support they received, the first two Angolan movements – the MPLA and the FNLA – mirrored the then Cold War geography from the outset. The Soviet bloc supported the MPLA while the FNLA was backed by the USA in a pattern that would play itself out fully at the time of Angola's independence in 1975. Angola's neighbours were equally split along this line: Mobutu's Zaire was allied to the USA and the Western bloc;



the Republic of Congo, with its Marxist government, was the natural ally of the Soviet Union and its satellites.<sup>4</sup> As Zambia's economy was dependent on Portugal's colonial railways, support for any liberation movement in the Portuguese colonies had to be covert and discreet. Finally, Namibia was still South-West Africa and under the rule of apartheid South Africa, a close ally of Portugal. Not surprisingly, no regional diplomatic pressure was ever exerted on the Angolan movements to unite under a single umbrella.

The FNLA had started as an ethnic movement representing the aspirations of the Bakongo people – the Union of the Peoples of Angola. Its leader, Holden Roberto, soon understood the need for the movement to become national if it was to attract external financial support – from the USA in this case – and hence the need for other ethnic groups to be represented in the FNLA's leadership. Jonas Savimbi, the founder of UNITA some years later, thus became the representative of the Ovimbundu people within the FNLA and Foreign Minister in the FNLA government in exile (Wills 2002).

In 1964 Savimbi accused the FNLA leader of corruption and tribalism and decided to set up his own movement – UNITA. Within the regional framework at the time Savimbi must have known he had no option but to set up his bases inside Angola, as no neighbouring country would be likely to support him openly. But Angola's economic potential was already well documented in the 1960s, and support for a new liberation movement, though perhaps modest, would eventually be forthcoming. UNITA's need to establish domestic bases was consistent with the ideology of the most likely source of external support at the time – China, an emerging power seeking political influence.

*“Savimbi and other top UNITA leaders had received guerrilla warfare training in China from 1965 to 1966. And, over the next decade, China supplied the rebel movement with weapons and war material.”* (Wills 2002)

The situation in Mozambique was completely different, and the regional set-up favoured external pressure – from Julius Nyerere in Tanzania, backed by a discreet Kenneth Kaunda in Zambia – to unite the various liberation movements under the umbrella of a single front – FRELIMO – in spite of the differing motivations and political leanings of the factions. Malawi depended on remittances from workers in South Africa, and President Banda voiced little criticism of the apartheid regime; Zimbabwe was still Rhodesia and a close ally of Portugal, as was apartheid South Africa. Support for Mozambican liberation movements from any of these countries was highly unlikely. Zambia, as previously mentioned, depended on the Portuguese colonial railways for its links with the world economy, and any support it gave would have to be covert and discreet. Mozambican liberation movements would have to count on Tanzania for support, and Nyerere preferred a single movement operating from his country to several factionary groups. A single movement would be not only easier to support and control but also closer to Nyerere's ideology and vision for an independent Africa. For Zambia it was also easier to provide support for a single movement through Tanzania than to have dissidents setting up bases inside its borders. FRELIMO came into being as a result of the diplomatic pressure brought to bear by the leaders of the two countries. Even though FRELIMO was plagued by internal dissent

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4 In 1963, for instance, Mobutu had the offices of the Marxist-oriented MPLA in Zaire closed and denied the MPLA transit through what was then Zaire. The MPLA then transferred all its operations to Brazzaville.

from the outset, it was only after independence that different political leanings would emerge.

*“... these internal disputes were shelved rather than settled ... The disputes of the 1960s and their tragic consequences in the deaths of Mondlane and other party members haunted the government which came to power in 1975.”* (Vines 1996, 6)

These tensions, together with the imposition in independent Mozambique of a single-party regime that left no room for political dissent and of a state-driven economy that forced peasant farmers to live in communal villages and to abandon their customs and traditions, soon alienated sections of the population who aspired to social mobility. The fact that most FRELIMO leaders came from the southern provinces merely strengthened the perceptions of domestic discrimination that economic asymmetries had already created. Political dissent was discouraged, and the dissenters were re-educated in camps set up in the more remote areas of the country. Abuses of power by petty officers were widespread.

Independent Mozambique had to contend with two formidable opponents in the region – South Africa and Rhodesia. Both countries had economic resources that enabled them to develop powerful military forces skilled in counterinsurgency. The emergence in their own backyards of regimes friendly to their enemies (the ANC in South Africa and ZANU-PF in Rhodesia) was at best uncomfortable and at worst unacceptable. Rhodesia in particular was confronted not only with Mozambican support for nationalist fighters but also with the closure of the Beira Corridor – Rhodesia’s only outlet to the world market – in 1976.

From this combination of internal grievances and external opportunities RENAMO emerged. Its first military leader, André Matsangaissa, had been dismissed from the Mozambican armed forces after being accused of theft and was in a re-education camp when he was able to escape to Rhodesia. There he found support from a regime that wanted to destabilise Mozambique’s hostile government. This support enabled him to free a further 500 inmates from the re-education camp in which he had been imprisoned. These men became the first RENAMO fighters. Matsangaissa died in 1979 and was replaced by his lieutenant, Alfonso Dhlakama, who still leads RENAMO today.

Whether manipulated or genuine, ethnic and regional grievances seem to have been the root cause, or that at least is the impression conveyed by the political discourse of both rebel movements – UNITA and RENAMO. In Angola’s case, such grievances, together with a hostile regional configuration and global economic interests, prevented the three movements from uniting to oppose the common enemy:

*“Although ideological differences should not be taken as paramount in the relations between the movements before independence, the connections and alliances each one maintained undoubtedly influenced their future development. This was also a reflection of the bipolar structure of the international system at the time.”*

(Leão / Rupyia 2005, 12)

In RENAMO’s case, it seems to have been the disruptive interference of regional considerations that enabled it to turn national asymmetries into a political card at a later stage.

*“... RENAMO recruited from all ethnic groups and never significantly emphasized ethnic issues in its communiqués or negotiating positions. It has, however, criticized FRELIMO for being dominated by southerners.”* (U.S. Department of State 1994)

However, as previously shown, grievances alone do not explain rebellion: they must be linked to opportunities for sustaining it (Collier / Hoeffler 2001). In UNITA's case, such opportunities as access to resources, whether external financial and military support or internal mineral wealth, would determine how a movement that had everything to gain from a political solution at the time of Angola's independence became Africa's most powerful rebel army and a reluctant party to the peace process. For RENAMO opportunities came in the form of external financial and military support, and once it dried up, the nature of Mozambican natural resources and of the new post-Cold War configuration turned peace into a viable option, thus enabling RENAMO's transformation from rebel movement to political party.

#### 4 Angola's wealth, UNITA's opportunity

The reluctance of the Portuguese colonial authorities to recognise, let alone deal with, the liberation movements of what were then considered to be Portugal's overseas provinces pointed to a protracted conflict, and grievances alone did not seem to be enough to sustain longer-term rebellion. Resources were needed to finance the continuing effort. They were not only vital if the rebellion was to be sustained: they can also help to explain it.

*“Rebellion may be explained by atypically severe grievances, such as high inequality, a lack of political rights, or ethnic and religious divisions in society. Alternatively, it might be explained by atypical opportunities for building a rebel organization. Opportunity may be determined by access to finance, such as the scope for extortion of natural resources, and for donations from a diaspora population.”*

(Collier / Hoeffler 2001, 1)

In UNITA's case, grievances may have played a part in harnessing support from a particular ethnic group for its leader, but opportunities also played an important role and one that grew as the conflict was played out over the decades. In the Cold War geography of the time UNITA could not, as a late-comer, have had much hope of gaining more support than that cautiously provided by China. Thus UNITA seized a more accessible, if modest, opportunity – Portuguese economic and political interests. Several authors claim that Savimbi was hostile to the other liberation movements and forged an alliance with the Portuguese secret services (PIDE) (Wills 2002; see also Bender 1978).

During the colonial war, the three movements were not only divided and competing with one another: at no time did they discuss eventual power-sharing models for the time when Angola might become independent. After the coup<sup>5</sup> in April 1974 Portugal had to bring the three Angolan parties together to negotiate a transition and a date for independence in a process that culminated in the signing of the Alvor Accords in January 1975. These Accords set the date for independence as 11 November 1975 and defined a transitional period for Angola to be ruled by a government led by a Portuguese High Commissioner. National security forces were to include members of each of the warring parties.

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5 In April 1974 the dictatorship initiated by Salazar in Portugal in 1938 came to an end in a military coup staged by mid-ranking officers supported by high-ranking colleagues. The coup was peaceful, but led to an important change in the Portuguese political regime with a tremendous impact on the decolonisation process.

At the time of the Portuguese coup in April 1974 the FNLA was considered to be the militarily strongest movement, even though recent leadership disputes had reduced this advantage. The MPLA enjoyed strong diplomatic support and had been able to sustain the rebellion within the country. As UNITA was the youngest participant in the Angolan war and did not have a strong external supporter, its lack of military leverage made it a particularly interested stakeholder in the Alvor Accords: it had everything to gain from a political solution. Given the foreign support they enjoyed, however, the other two participants, the FNLA and MPLA, were attracted by a military solution to the conflict rather than by the peaceful and political solution represented by power-sharing.

Portugal's ability to achieve a political solution in Angola was questionable, and the power vacuum and political dissent caused by the coup in Portugal was eventually reflected in the chaotic process of decolonisation. The perception that a left-wing military government in Portugal, with a strong communist element, would favour the MPLA may have compounded distrust among the Angolan parties and certainly did not help to build confidence. While Portugal was conducting negotiations, the three movements were happily diverting stockpiles of weaponry from the Portuguese armed forces to their own supporters. The Portuguese forces themselves assisted in these activities, with a bias towards support for the MPLA, which only served to strengthen the perception that Portugal's impartiality was questionable. Between the signing of the Alvor Accords in January 1975 and independence in November 1975, the three movements expended more effort on positioning their military wings for the takeover of Luanda than on implementing any of the provisions of the Alvor Accords. The perception was that the party controlling Luanda on 11 November would control the rest of Angola.

Internationally, the situation had also changed. During the colonial period, Western and African support for Portuguese dissent was constrained by geostrategic interests.<sup>6</sup> Given Portugal's political instability at the time of decolonisation, the climate of distrust among the Angolan movements, the ideological differences and Angola's enormous natural wealth, foreign interests were quick to forge and consolidate alliances. The aim now was not to support a liberation movement but rather to ensure a friendly regime in an independent Angola. As independence approached, so the conflict among the liberation movements increased, along with foreign support for each movement in the form of military and financial assistance. As early as January 1975 the US government had authorised a grant of US\$ 300,000 to the FNLA; in March the Soviet Union increased military supplies to the MPLA; not to be outdone, the US government raised its assistance to the FNLA and, for the first time, funded UNITA. By early October there were up to 1,500 Cuban troops in Angola. African states openly supported UNITA (Library of Congress 2005). Andresen Guimarães asserts that *"between April and October 1975 Angola was supplied with 27 shiploads of weapons, said enough to arm 20,000 troops. Armed with Soviet weapons the MPLA embarks into securing Cabinda and the major urban centres and violence escalated with increasing confrontations between MPLA and FNLA militants. By June there were already 5,000 dead."* (Andresen Guimarães 1998). Birmingham adds that the *"... total amount of Soviet military support has been placed at US\$ 400 mil-*

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6 Portugal was one of the founding members of NATO in 1949, which precluded open Western support for liberation movements. Furthermore, Portugal had the advantage of the strategic importance of the Azores islands, where the USA has a military base.

*lion, which makes the US support of around US\$ 60 million pale by comparison.*" (Birmingham 2002).

Initially, the US was very cautious about supporting UNITA. Roberto and the FNLA had a long history of alliance and a family connection with Mobutu, whereas UNITA was a relatively new player with a weak military capacity. Of all the parties that signed the Alvor Accords, UNITA appeared to be the only beneficiary of a political solution, but as violence escalated between the other two parties, UNITA was sucked into the turmoil and in August 1975 declared war on the MPLA. UNITA's approach to South Africa had begun in mid-1975 as it searched for a steady foreign supplier of military equipment (Andresen-Guimarães 1998). In political terms, this alliance would prove to be a disaster, but militarily South African support tipped the balance of power towards UNITA, albeit no more than temporarily; the party that until recently had had a vested interest in a political solution was now on a military par with the other two contenders (Leão / Rupyia 2005).

The dawn of Angolan independence saw the MPLA, strongly supported by Cuban troops, controlling Luanda in spite of heavy attacks from the FNLA in the North (supported by Zairian forces) and UNITA in the South (led by South African troops). The FNLA and Zairian troops were disbanded by the People's Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola (FAPLA), with the support of Cuban troops, and retreated to Zaire. South Africa's support for UNITA discredited the movement and had as its immediate outcome the consolidation of the MPLA as the legitimate government of independent Angola. For the MPLA, the conflict changed from a struggle for power into an invasion of foreign forces: it now formed the legitimate government with an obvious need to defend the country. The conflict that followed Angolan independence was to turn the MPLA and UNITA into military machines that waged war for almost 30 years. The chaotic decolonisation opened the doors to external military intervention in Angola, which in turn, by arming and training parties reluctant to accept a political solution, turned war into an option. Ultimately, it was in Angolan territory that the Cold War game would be played at its hardest (Leão and Rupyia 2005).

## **5 Civil war of opportunities**

South Africa's invasion of Angola and its support for UNITA had cost US\$ 130 million (Birmingham 2002), and after the debacle of the battle for Luanda South Africa was reluctant to support UNITA without international backing. However, the FNLA, after operating from the North, had been dismantled; UNITA, the movement controlling the southern part of the country, was not only geographically closer to South Africa's border but also, more importantly, covered the territory from which SWAPO – the Namibian freedom movement – operated. The pursuit of SWAPO guerrillas provided the South African military with a reasonable, though questionable, excuse for crossing the border into Angola. The same argument justified South African support for UNITA in the form of training and air cover (Library of Congress 2005).<sup>7</sup> At the time when Angola became independent, UNITA could count on another regional ally – Mobutu's Zaire. Mobutu never lost hope of gaining access to oil-rich Angola and, given the FNLA's military debacle, UNITA was the

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<sup>7</sup> South Africa also supplied arms, fuel and food to UNITA.

next option for Mobutu to remain militarily involved in the Angolan process. Furthermore, the MPLA-backed Angolan government was supporting the Katangan movement against the Mobutu regime. After two abortive invasions of Zaire by the Katangan opposition and several border skirmishes, the MPLA and Mobutu signed a peace agreement in 1978, which excluded Zairian support for the Angolan opposition movements. This would be the *coup de grâce* for the FNLA and would leave UNITA keeping a lower profile for some time.

UNITA's survival from 1979 until the Bicesse Accords of 1991 was due to its alliance with the USA. The Clark Amendment of 1976 had precluded open American support for UNITA, but the Carter administration could not simply allow Angola to fall under Soviet influence. Ideology apart, American business was thriving in Angola; politically and diplomatically, the USA supported UNITA. Even though Reagan was unable to repeal the Clark Amendment until his second term, the USA illegally supplied UNITA with weapons through third countries: weapons came not from the USA but rather from such client states as Belgium, Switzerland and Israel, with funding from Saudi Arabia and other Western partner countries. It was, however, a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) charter firm that won the air supply contract and transported legitimate mining equipment for the government together with illegal weapons for UNITA (Birmingham 2002).

Although the South Africans realised that they did not have the capacity for a successful invasion of Angola, their support for UNITA did not wane, and by August 1981 they were no longer using SWAPO as a pretext. The military stepped up attacks on Angola's economic infrastructure, and the South African Air Force participated in UNITA operations against government troops (U.S. Department of State 1994).

In 1984 the second Reagan administration was able to repeal the Clark Amendment, which was followed by an increase in military and financial support for UNITA. Savimbi was provided with an annual US\$ 15 million, and covert operations grew “... *from a dozen small ones in 1980, to about forty major operations in 1986*” (Bodenheimer / Gould 1989).

As the war in Angola escalated again and spread to the highlands, both parties – the MPLA government and UNITA – targeted the population for supplies and manpower, although they also engaged in conventional warfare, such as the battle for Cuito Canavale in 1987. UNITA counted on Portuguese mercenaries trained in South Africa (Breytenbach 1999). After 1985, UNITA was able, with American support, to extend its operations to the whole country. With few illusions about the possibility of a military victory, UNITA then attempted to increase its leverage in case negotiations began at some time. Yet by then UNITA was “... *a conventional military organisation with command and specialised staff organs, a formal hierarchy of ranks, an impressive array of weapons and equipment, and considerable international support*” (Library of Congress 2005).

In April and May 2004 the author of this paper had a series of meetings with a former UNITA officer. Referring to the 1980s, he said:

*“UNITA used to have compact forces, accountable to the direction of the party. They were strategic and under the supervision of the General Staff. Then we had the compact guerrillas that were spread around the country and under the commanders of the areas. Another group of troops formed the disperse guerrillas, which were closer to*

*the populated areas and operated in small groups. Finally, we had the ONSP (civil defence) similar to the government's civil defence.*" (Series of interviews by the author, 20 April to 4 May 2004)

The escalation of the conflict during the 1980s once again led to an impasse. International support enabled UNITA to withstand the MPLA's counterattacks, to set up a form of public administration to run the territory under its influence and to establish headquarters in Jamba, considered to be the capital of UNITA's territory. To complement external opportunities, UNITA also relied on the exploitation of Angolan natural resources, and especially ivory. Some sources claim that Savimbi's forces killed between 60,000 and 100,000 elephants in the 1980s. Ivory was smuggled together with rhino horn and rare hardwoods with the help of South African military intelligence (*Globe and Mail* 6 Dec. 1989 and *New York Times* 21 Nov. 1989, as cited in Naylor 2003).

The level of Western support being given to UNITA led to an increase in the assistance received by the Angolan government. By now Cuban troops in the country numbered 50,000, and the debt to Moscow amounted to a billion dollars (Birmingham 2002). Given the country's oil wealth and the international interventions in the conflict, the opportunities enjoyed by the two warring parties never waned, even though a humanitarian disaster was taking place in Angola. Supplies of weapons to the government similarly increased, the value of imports almost doubling after 1980, and by 1988, Angola's external debt had risen to some US\$ 4 billion, most of it to the Soviet bloc. As the war dragged on, government military expenditure rose from US\$ 343 million in 1978 to US\$ 1.3 billion, or 40.4 % of GNP, in 1986 (Library of Congress 2005). In the 1980s Angola also received military assistance in the form of training and in kind from Belgium, Brazil, Germany, France, Spain and Switzerland, although it is alleged that no lethal equipment was supplied:

*"Broadly speaking, there was an international division of labour in which the Soviet Union supplied large quantities of heavy weapons and equipment, other communist states furnished small arms, and the non-communist suppliers provided mostly nonlethal items... From 1982 to 1986, the Soviet Union delivered military equipment valued at USD4.9 billion... Poland and Czechoslovakia transferred arms valued at USD10 million and USD5 million, respectively... During 1987 and 1988, Moscow more than compensated for FAPLA losses with accelerated shipments of heavy armaments... in addition to the tanks... dozens of aircraft, heavy weapons, and air defence systems were delivered."* (Library of Congress 2005)

The small arms and light weapons (SALW) the MPLA received from Poland and Czechoslovakia were joined by supplies of grenade launchers, trip-wire grenades, anti-personnel landmines, hollow-charge rockets and air defence artillery. There are also indications of Hungarian support, but no details. Cuba was the main source of troops. Angola spent between US\$ 300 and 600 million every year on Cuban services, including the securing of the Cabinda oil fields, which were exploited by Western countries (Library of Congress 2005).

However, the Soviet bloc's weapons supply monopoly was not to the MPLA's liking. The equipment was not always of the best quality, and some of it could be difficult to procure. The MPLA therefore turned to Western countries for alternatives. Countries such as the U.K., West Germany, Belgium, Japan, Brazil, Switzerland, Spain and France supplied a great variety of military equipment.

Portugal's involvement did not end with decolonisation. During the 1980s the MPLA hired, albeit unofficially, Portuguese military consultants associated with the Portuguese Communist Party to provide training and military assistance.

The impact that both the war and the expenditure on defence had on Angola's economy and its social fabric has been duly documented. Suffice to say that the violence of the war led to the destruction of infrastructure in a way that made development impossible; the violence visited on the population displaced communities to safer, urban areas or to refugee camps in neighbouring countries.

## 6 Regional strategies in Mozambique

Compared to the number of external players involved in the Angolan conflict, international attitudes towards Mozambique can only be called lethargic. This allowed domestic disagreement with and regional distrust of FRELIMO's policies to combine in a happy marriage when, in 1976, Matsangaíssa escaped to what was then Rhodesia. The internal dissidents needed logistical support, and Rhodesia had several advantages for them. It had been a refuge for thousands of Portuguese settlers and former colonial soldiers of Mozambican descent; it shared a border with central Mozambique, the region from which most of the disaffected guerrillas came; and it had enough financial and military resources to train and maintain insurgent groups in Mozambique. In terms of global geography, Mozambique formed part of the Soviet sphere of influence, but its wealth did not justify vigorous intervention by either bloc: Western objections to regional interference were no more than half-hearted, if voiced at all, while the Eastern bloc provided moderate military support, thus increasing Mozambique's external debt and dependency.

For Rhodesia, Mozambican dissidents willing to fight under its sponsorship represented the ideal opportunity both for counterinsurgency operations across the border and for counter-propaganda at home. Some of the dissidents were assigned to the Sealous Scouts, a special unit created in 1974 to fight an unconventional war against the nationalist fighters operating mainly from Mozambique. Internally, the Sealous Scouts were to terrorise black communities in an attempt to alienate them from the nationalists; across the border they would infiltrate rebel bases and pave the way for attacks by conventional forces. Mozambicans knew the terrain and the language and would not cause embarrassment if they were caught.

*"In August, 1976, the Sealous Scouts launched the first cross border strike against terrorist bases in Mozambique. In that raid alone, they killed 1,184 terrorists... The purpose of the unit was the clandestine elimination of the Nationalists without regard to international borders... It was defined as a Pseudo-Gang concept. A team of 4-7 men was deployed into an operational area. All other friendly forces in that region were withdrawn. The team was dressed in insurgent uniforms, carried communist weapons, and gave the appearance of being a guerrilla force."*

(Lohman / MacPherson 2007)

Rhodesian support for RENAMO would not even be very costly, as the aim was not to overthrow the Mozambican government or to seize power but merely to help destabilise the country in such a way as to make development impossible, thus causing more dissent. The targets chosen and methods used by RENAMO in the early stages of the war are evi-



dence of this strategy: raids targeted the country's economic infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, railways and power-lines, and the massacre of civilians. As RENAMO operations intensified, it became necessary to set up more permanent bases inside Mozambique that could be used in counteroffensive operations (Vines 1996, 16).

But no amount of violence could contain the drive for independence, and in 1980 Rhodesia became Zimbabwe. Rhodesian support for RENAMO came to an end, but another regional player was interested in the movement's continued existence: South Africa. The regional configuration was beginning to change, and South Africa now had to contend with three hostile neighbouring countries providing support for the African National Congress (ANC): Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. The only buffer zones on which South Africa could count were a neutral Botswana and a war-torn South-West Africa (the future Namibia). Although it was already militarily involved in Angola, South Africa now openly supported RENAMO's insurgency against the Mozambican government on grounds of its own national security.

At the time of Mozambican independence in 1975 South Africa favoured a policy of détente with Mozambique. But a shift in domestic policies in the late 1970s meant that by mid-1979 South Africa was supplying RENAMO with firearms and by 1980 assisting Rhodesia with an estimated one million dollars (Vines 1996, 18). After Zimbabwe gained its independence, South Africa became, somewhat reluctantly, the main source of support for RENAMO. In June 1980, however, RENAMO suffered some major military setbacks and dispersed in groups that survived by "... pursuing a career of uncoordinated armed banditry" (*Africa Confidential* (1982), 23 (15), as cited in Vines 1996, 19).

Despite this, Maputo favoured ideology to regional stability and, when Mozambican support for the ANC intensified, so too did South African support for RENAMO, turning a shrinking movement into an efficient war machine. Some sources estimate that by 1981 RENAMO had up to 7,000 fighters in Mozambique (Vines 1996, 19). More than it had done while under Rhodesian control, RENAMO now concentrated its attacks on economic infrastructure, while inflicting brutal violence upon the population.

*"RENAMO's sponsorship changed in 1980 with Zimbabwean independence. South Africa took control of the group and used it to destabilize Mozambique, essentially a punishment for the FRELIMO regime's support of the African National Congress (ANC). In line with apartheid South Africa's aim of destabilizing frontline states, RENAMO focused its attacks on communications and trade infrastructure of Mozambique and Zimbabwe, including railways, pipelines and roads ... By the late 1980s, Romano's insurgency had caused the deaths of at least 100,000 people and the creation of more than 1,000,000 refugees. Mozambique's economy was brought to a standstill, and the government was unable to keep the country's railroad network functioning without the help of Zimbabwean, Zambian, and Tanzanian troops."*

(OnWar 2000)

South African intervention in Mozambique enabled RENAMO to increase its operations to the whole territory and extended beyond direct military support; South Africa understood the need to portray RENAMO as a political alternative to the FRELIMO party. In an attempt to legitimise RENAMO internationally as a credible opposition to the Mozambican government, South Africa sponsored a tour of Western Europe by the movements' leaders. In spite of the dubious outcome of this venture and the distrust of many Western governments at the time, RENAMO was able to establish offices in Portugal and West

Germany and to gain some political support from European right-wing movements. However, political support was not translated into financial or diplomatic backing, and choices had to be made. Public international hostility to the apartheid regime was growing, and South Africa's military capacity was being stretched as its buffer zones shrank.

Mozambique's economic links to South Africa were confined to transport services, which the South African government was already diverting to its national shores by investing heavily in its own ports, such as Durban, as an alternative to Maputo.

Despite the South African push for RENAMO's political legitimacy, the support provided for the movement was entirely military. At political level, RENAMO was still very much under the influence of former Portuguese settlers, led by Orlando Cristina, who was based in Pretoria, as was the movement's dubious political leadership. To support a rebel movement led by white settlers against an internationally recognised African government was not feasible even by apartheid standards. In the ensuing power struggle within the movement, Cristina was assassinated at a RENAMO base near Pretoria in 1983, and Dhlakama took over the political and military leadership.

Moreover, while the Portuguese-backed faction strove for a change of government in Mozambique, South Africa seemed more interested in conducting a lower-cost destabilisation campaign inside Mozambique. Neither the South African government nor the Portuguese supporters invested in the building of political capacity within RENAMO.

*"In fact, during all the years I was with the organisation [RENAMO] every effort I noticed was made to conduct and prolong war. The South Africans never showed any interest in providing textbooks, never offered scholarships, never provided technical training. In fact, they would hinder contacts with countries that could potentially provide this type of training. They demanded from RENAMO that conversations be kept at a political level, whereas the movement was politically inconsistent."*

(Oliveira 1988; translation from the Portuguese by the author)

Given the paucity of its natural resources, Mozambique never attracted the same economic and geostrategic attention internationally as Angola. While in Angola UNITA enjoyed the support of one legitimate African country – Zaire – through which covert Western support could be provided, RENAMO's only ally was a rogue government, apartheid South Africa, and received only discreet support from questionable Western movements that had little credibility, such as former Portuguese settlers seeking to regain their pre-independence privileges. Moreover, UNITA had already established its political credibility and had seen itself as a legitimate player in the Angolan process before the war began; this unquestionable legitimacy of the movement, together with its alliance with Zaire, provided windows of opportunity for both covert and overt external support.

RENAMO never boasted such a scenario and was never able to articulate a credible political agenda that would attract Western support. On the contrary, the calculated targeting of economic infrastructure and the atrocities committed against civilians led to a crescendo of external criticism of the movement.

*"It was in Mozambique that, for the first time in independent Africa, Africans [RENAMO] resorted to the systematic use of mutilation and the killing of parents by their children in order to assure subservience."* (Schoeman 2001)

Even though Mozambique formed part of the Soviet bloc's sphere of influence, US policy sought rapprochement rather than alienation, particularly after Mozambique's refusal to join COMECON in 1983.

*“Despite a powerful pro-Renamo lobby in Washington, the US government sought to coax rather than force Mozambique from its ‘Marxist’ inclinations. From the early 1980s, it provided substantial humanitarian aid and some military assistance to the Mozambican government.”* (Conciliation Resources s. a.)

This is not to say that South African interventions in Mozambique met with official controversy. In fact, they were condoned, if not encouraged, particularly with the advent of the Reagan administration in 1981 and its policies of constructive engagement.

*“The South Africans, meanwhile, viewed the US’s willingness to engage in ‘constructive engagement’ while maintaining an openly hostile line towards its neighbouring states, as a signal for the intensification of attacks on Mozambique. South Africa’s main objective was to maximise destabilisation and inhibit development in the region. From 1981 they stepped up their commando attacks and raids into Mozambique, attacking both ANC members and Mozambicans. The American government did nothing to discourage these actions.”* (Conflict Early Warning Systems s. a., 3)

However, by the mid-1980s constructive engagement had proved ineffective, and the USA imposed economic sanctions on South Africa, although analysts argued that “... *sanctions, applied at once with fanfare and apologies, do not represent a fundamental change in American policy toward South Africa*” (Ungar / Vale 1986). But even if sanctions did not represent significant changes in American policies towards the region, they seem to have provided an opportunity for détente that enabled Mozambique and South Africa to engage in negotiations. The Mozambican government never had the internal resources and never attracted the international interest that enabled the Angolan government to withstand UNITA's growing military capacity.

Internally, the Mozambican government had lost control of most of the country by the mid-1980s, its power being confined to urban areas. The devastation of war was compounded in 1983 by one of the worst droughts to have affected the area. Given this set of internal, regional and international circumstances, the governments of Mozambique and South Africa reached a peace agreement, known as the Nkomati Accord, in 1984.

*“The sustained violence and devastating famine impelled the Mozambique Government (still a one party state under the control of FRELIMO) to engage in negotiations. The first attempt to end hostilities came on 16 March 1984 when President Michel met Prime Minister ‘Pik’ Both of South Africa at the border town of N’Komati to sign the “Agreement on Non-Aggression and Good-Neighbourliness”. Mozambique was to close down the ANC military bases in its territory; in return, the South Africans were to halt their support of Renamo. South Africa reneged. With airlifts and transport routes through Malawi, it continued to supply Renamo with food, medication, and weapons, including large numbers of landmines.”*

(Conflict Early Warning Systems s. a., 4)

At the time South Africa was fully engaged in Angola, and from the political viewpoint it had everything to gain from a diplomatic settlement of the conflict with Mozambique. The South African military, however, obviously had different views and took all the necessary

precautions to resettle RENAMO within Mozambique, while helping it to retain some military strength in the continued fight against Mozambican government troops.

*“While proceeding with the contacts between South Africa and Mozambique, the South African military provide Dhlakama with guarantees that, whatever the political outcome of the meetings, they will go on supporting the movement, though more cautiously. Privately, they tell us they cannot allow our organisation to die. If it ever became necessary in the future, it would be more difficult to start another movement from scratch than maintain an existing one, providing support as the need arose. I believe this policy will prevail now and in the future unless there are substantial changes in either Pretoria or Maputo.”* (Oliveira 1988; translation from the Portuguese by the author)

In spite of the violations of the Nkomati Accord, the relative decline in South African support led RENAMO to a shift in its tactics, which sparked an increase in violent acts against civilians, including mutilations, and in the recruitment of children and their deployment in military operations. Such tactics were reflected in the erratic organisation of RENAMO at the time and certainly did not help to cement a political agenda. To supplement South Africa’s support, RENAMO seized internal opportunities to increase its manpower and traded ivory and other natural resources. It is estimated that the elephant population in Mozambique fell from around 65,000 to about 7,000 owing to military operations. RENAMO *“... ran rackets in ivory, rhino horn, rare hardwoods, stolen gemstones, even counterfeit currency ... They would pass it, along with rhino horn and rare hardwood, to South African military intelligence at special drop points.”* (Naylor 2003, 11–12)

The violence of the war, the demographic displacements within and outside the country and the impossibility of implementing any development strategies caused the FRELIMO government to reconsider unpopular policies. In 1985, admitting to internal discontent and the failure of communal farms, FRELIMO advocated a return to family-based plots of land (Historyworld s.a.). But in a country ravaged by rebels who treated civilians with extreme violence, the return to family-based agriculture could not be achieved without other contributory factors at national, regional and international level.

## **7 The opportunities presented by peace processes**

Global geopolitics was changing. The 1980s was the decade of Reagan in the USA and Gorbachev in the Soviet Union; 1989 was marked by the fall of the Berlin Wall and the concomitant dismemberment of the Soviet Union; the oil crisis was over, and Namibian uranium had lost some of its appeal: steps were being taken to achieve nuclear disarmament, and public opposition to nuclear energy was growing; Western governments were no longer able to maintain an ambiguous position on apartheid South Africa in the face of highly emotional domestic constituencies calling for more thorough sanctions against that country. There was a general consensus on the need for peaceful alternatives to ongoing conflicts and wide-ranging hope of a less violent world order. It was against the background of this global positive mood that negotiations aimed at ending the wars in both Angola and Mozambique took place. But while the violent conflict in Mozambique was resolved, the war in Angola escalated to an unprecedented level: opportunities, or the lack of them, had played an important role in both countries.

Western economic interest in Namibia began to wane in the mid-1980s, Angolan oil grew in importance, support for Angola and Mozambique became a burden on the Soviet economy, and social unrest in South Africa stretched the capacity of the apartheid regime. Unable to resist the drive for independence in Namibia much longer and faced with growing international sanctions, South Africa had to yield to diplomatic solutions. In New York in December 1988 South Africa, Angola and Cuba signed the Tripartite Agreement, which called for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Angolan territory as a precondition for Namibia's independence. The implementation of this agreement was to be overseen by United Nations Angola Verification Mission I (UNAVEM I), which was to stay until May 1991 to ensure that all foreign troops had left Angola.

The escalation of political violence in South Africa was eroding the apartheid regime's illusion that it could hold on to power, and in July 1989 President Botha met the ANC's leader and the country's future President, Nelson Mandela, thus launching negotiations that would culminate in a change of regime and in the establishment of majority rule in South Africa. Significant changes were expected for the country, changes that would also have a major impact on the region.

The détente between Mozambique and South Africa was relative and erratic, but nevertheless a reality.

*“From 1988, and especially after the accession of President F.W. de Klerk in 1989, relations warmed between the two governments, leading to agreements on common military and economic interests.”* (Conciliation Resources s. a.)

As Mozambique is a country modestly endowed with natural resources, the peace process there did not begin by attracting major international players, but rather with the intervention of Mozambican players and civil society under the auspices of the Church. Unlike UNITA, once external support finished, RENAMO did not have access to significant internal resources capable of sustaining protracted conflict. Both RENAMO's leaders and its foot soldiers had everything to gain from a political solution. UNITA, on the other hand, used the Angolan peace process as an opportunity to gain access to internal resources – diamonds – that would more than compensate for the lack of external support. The international configuration at the time provides perhaps the strongest evidence for the argument that “opportunity” played an important role in changing the dynamics of conflict. The lack of opportunities open to Mozambique's RENAMO turned peace into a desirable option; the general availability of resources in Angola prolonged the conflict for another decade. While the 1990s saw a worsening of the conflict in Angola, Mozambique with its poorer resource endowment and fewer opportunities for continued warfare could literally reap a peace dividend from the new world order.

## 7.1 Mozambique

The end of the Cold War increased the leverage of the international community in its push for a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Mozambique.

*“When the Soviet Union imploded, the ‘great African game’ lost its charm, and a complex system of patronage unravelled. FRELIMO and RENAMO both lost their material support for the war and FRELIMO, moreover, began to lose its faith in Marxism. Poverty drove it into the arms of the IMF and World Bank ... The donor*

*community saw an opportunity to convert its humanitarian investments into sustainable development – through peace.” (Salomons 2000)*

The Mozambican government was highly impoverished, and its administration was confined to urban areas. RENAMO was losing its important (and only) ally, South Africa, and by 1990 the war had reached stalemate. Experts argue that both sides could have continued fighting longer, but groups within both warring parties, supported by international pressure, were now leaning towards a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Both sides had more to gain from a political solution funded by the international community.

Several attempts were made at mediation, among others by South Africa, which tried to use Tiny Rowland’s influence to approach RENAMO. At the time, Tiny Rowland, CEO of the multinational Lonrho, was one of the main foreign investors in Mozambique. He had paid RENAMO to protect his investments in Mozambique, but soon understood that a peaceful solution had to be found.

*“Rowland became personally engaged in the peace process and was instrumental in building up Renamo’s confidence to step out of the bush and negotiate.” (Vines 2003)*

This initiative, as well as later ones, proved to be fruitless. The climate of distrust between FRELIMO and RENAMO was conspicuous, and neither seemed to trust international players. Kenya, Zimbabwe, the USA and Portugal were all mentioned as possible mediators, but were never fully accepted by either side. Given its political isolation, RENAMO was particularly reluctant to trust outsiders.

*“None of these initiatives was conclusive, and RENAMO’s leaders remained reluctant to accept the good offices of any foreign government, as they were distrustful of any unknown entity.” (Salomons 2000)*

This lack of trust in foreign institutional stakeholders paved the way for the involvement of civil-society-based organisations, and specifically the Churches in this case. Church leaders in Mozambique had previously engaged in talks with RENAMO in an effort to gain the freedom of religious hostages, and the Archbishop of Beira had ethnic links with RENAMO leaders. These Church leaders were equally accepted by FRELIMO.

*“Church leaders in Mozambique made a major effort to create a dialogue and bridge the abyss of distrust. Ultimately, it was a small Roman Catholic community, the Community of Sant’Egidio... which managed to penetrate Renamo’s psychological armor... In 1982, members of Sant’Egidio had helped to negotiate the release of priests and nuns held by Renamo and it facilitated negotiations between the Vatican and Frelimo in 1985, when religious freedom was restored in Mozambique.”*  
(Salomons 2000)

Although the peace talks turned out to be a long and difficult process marked by ups and downs, the mediators were able to gain both parties’ agreement on basic principles that solved the issues of legitimacy and supervision, leaving the details until a later stage of the negotiations. At the first meeting in Rome in July 1990, they agreed on the mediators, observers, advisers and verification committees. Later that same year they signed a partial cease-fire that protected transport areas against attacks by either side and restricted the movements of the Zimbabwean troops protecting the Beira Corridor. The process of negotiating the basic principles enabled the parties to find common ground and take ownership of the process. The deconstruction of the distrust between the parties and the careful me-

diation by civil society in the search for a solution to be implemented and funded by international partners proved to be a successful recipe in the Mozambican case. It made for the empowerment of the warring parties in the peace agreement and for relatively balanced power relations among stakeholders during the implementation of the peace process. According to Salomons, it gave leverage to an international community that demanded compliance with agreed clauses, while also giving leverage to the Mozambican parties in their demands that the international community honour its pledges (Salomons 2000).

The military protocol referred to the demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration (DDR) of both government soldiers and rebel fighters and linked this process to the funding to be pledged at a donor conference. During the implementation of the DDR programme each fighter was awarded two years' basic salary to be paid in monthly instalments in the community designated by him. The programme also stipulated that soldiers could not cash more than two months' instalments. In spite of the many difficulties and complaints that this arrangement caused, two facts cannot be denied:

1. It enabled soldiers to settle in their communities of choice as providers.
2. As they could not accumulate more than two months' salary without forfeiting the cash, their mobility was fairly restricted, which prevented the formation of rogue groups of demobilised soldiers engaged in criminal activities

Furthermore, the two-year salary award coupled with the usual demobilisation kit of tools, seeds, clothing and building materials made peace a profitable option compared to the harsh conditions under which fighters lived in base camps and barracks. Given the scarcity of exploitable natural resources, peace represented a better economic and social option than any reward accrued from war. This was not to be the case in Angola.

## 7.2 Angola

### *The Bicesse Accords*

In Angola the geopolitics of the Cold War was replaced by domestic wealth, leaving little scope for peaceful international interventions; South- West Africa (Namibia) was rich in uranium, a valuable resource, particularly during the oil crisis of the late 1970s, Western economic interests and strategic considerations thus being put on a par with South African defence needs. Maintaining a presence in and control over the territory was deemed vital for the apartheid regime, and the West would not question support for UNITA. South African interventions in Angola and support for the movement would elicit no more than half-hearted international official objections, which went along with covert support from the West.

Foreign support, or the lack of it, for Angola had determined the cycles of the conflict, and in the late 1980s foreign troops were made to withdraw from Angola. Once foreign troops were out of the territory, it was thought that the lack of international support would force a political decision to the conflict, but this was not to be. Diplomatic pressure was able to bring the warring parties together to negotiate and sign the Bicesse Accords in May 1991, which were to be implemented and supervised by UN Angola Verification Mission II (UNAVEM II). But now UNITA had more to gain from conflict than from a political so-

lution. It was to gain access to domestic resources that enabled it to act independently from external support.

The Bicesse Accords were intended to govern the transition from conflict to political cohabitation. The process was mediated by Portugal, Russia and the US, and the three countries constituted what became known as the troika. The accords included a provision – known as the triple zero clause – that prevented either party from procuring new weapons and from rearming. UNITA acknowledged the authority of the government of Angola, which was to remain in place and set the date for the first general elections in Angola; UNAVEM II was to coordinate and oversee the transition. The troika played an observer and diplomatic role in ensuring that the parties complied with the agreed clauses.

Compared to 1975, the situation for the warring parties was now different: in military terms and just as in 1975 the conflict had reached an impasse, but unlike 1975 the two armies were now two efficient war machines; politically, however, the world had changed. In 1975 the MPLA had had powerful allies with global leverage on its side and could count on the sympathy of the mediator; in 1991 the wheel had turned and UNITA was now the favourite party, in spite of its many claims to the contrary.<sup>8</sup> In 1975 UNITA had everything to gain from a political solution: it would have given legitimacy to a relatively young movement still struggling for international support. In 1991, after years of support from powerful international allies, UNITA had enough political clout to adhere to the agreement or refuse to do so. Although UNITA could not count on American military support, it should be remembered that it was only in 1993, after the war had resumed, that the USA established diplomatic relations with the government of Angola.

Moreover, the Bicesse Accords underestimated the difficulties the transition involved. There was considerable distrust between the contenders; some joint commissions that should have been chaired by the UN were entrusted alternately to the MPLA and UNITA; UNAVEM II was understaffed and underfunded. Besides, one of the parties – UNITA – was obviously neither demobilising nor disarming, with the tacit agreement of the international community. The new Angolan army – FAA – was empowered two days before polling day. According to a former senior UNITA officer interviewed by the author:

*“At the time of the Bicesse agreement the FAPLA [the government military] were practically dismantled. There should have been an integration of both armies in the FAA, but FAPLA had demobilised and were practically paralysed. UNITA had to gather in cantonment areas, but we kept the best men and the best equipment hiding and only sent the battalions UNITA could live without – the disperse guerrilla forces. The big, compact, well-organised UNITA forces did not demobilise. FAPLA, on the other hand, was being demobilised in their barracks and most of their soldiers just left, escaped, took off. They really wanted to leave; they were mostly soldiers from mandatory conscription and did not want to stay with the army. UNITA had also mandatory conscription, but the first thing we would do to conscripts was political awareness and indoctrination.”* (Series of interviews from 20 April to 4 May 2004)

The Bicesse process came to an end when UNITA refused to accept the outcome of the elections in 1992. The turnout was 91 % of registered voters, and the result 54 % for the MPLA and 34 % for UNITA. In the presidential election 49.6 % voted for dos Santos and

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8 Several analysts refer to UNITA's constant complaints about the course of the Bicesse process.



40.1 % for Savimbi. In normal circumstances, the presidential election would have gone to a second round, since one candidate had to have a clear majority of over 50 % (CIA 2007). In reality, Savimbi did not accept the result, and when war resumed, the government forces were at a disadvantage.

*“The elections came and the results were not accepted; UNITA strikes and the new FAA could not react – they did not have enough manpower. When the war started many of UNITA demobilised soldiers joined again UNITA. At the time the FAA had only integrated 4,000 UNITA men and mainly at administrative level. There were hardly any men from the operative level of UNITA. The operatives never joined the FAA and they went back to war.”* (Series of interviews from 20 April to 4 May 2004)

Having lost the elections, UNITA had everything to gain from resuming the war: the government armed forces had been dismantled and were unable to counter UNITA's offensive; UNITA had kept the best equipment in spite of the agreed disarmament clauses; it was able to control 70 % of the country, but most importantly, it controlled the diamond areas of the Lundas provinces. The end of the Cold War and the crumbling of the Soviet Union created a surplus of weaponry that was poured into Africa, where it began to fuel existing conflicts and trigger new ones. As supply exceeded demand, weapons were cheap. As diamonds are low in volume but high in value, they are easy to smuggle and worth the effort. Opportunities for UNITA in the form of external support may have come to an end, but the revenue generated by diamonds was far superior to any financial settlement a peaceful solution would entail. In spite of the triple zero clause, UNITA continued procuring weapons in the international market, which was more than willing to supply them in exchange for diamonds.

War resumed fully in 1993; acknowledging this reality, the UN imposed an arms embargo on UNITA in September 1993. Before Bicesse UNITA had three main sources of military equipment: government forces, South Africa and the USA. Covert aid from the USA to UNITA between 1986 and 1991 is estimated at about US\$ 250 million (Human Rights Watch 1994). To procure arms after the Bicesse Accords UNITA had to violate not only the triple zero clause but also the sanctions imposed by the UN from September 1993.<sup>9</sup>

Unable to procure weapons in the USA because of the triple zero clause and lacking the support of its main ally owing to the changes in South Africa that led to majority rule in 1994, UNITA seems to have had difficulty in procuring weapons in the short term. According to Human Rights Watch (HRW), much of the equipment in the hands of UNITA soldiers in 1994 was old and had probably been seized from government forces. However, there was evidence of UNITA procuring new weapons. HRW acknowledges that many of the arms in the possession of UNITA may have been captured from government forces, but goes on to say that *“... UNITA has also been active on the international arms market in 1993 and 1994, using cash obtained from the sale of diamonds to buy weapons and ammunition from private sources ... Among other things, UNITA appears to be buying new D-30 120mm artillery and replenishing its stocks of surface-to-air missiles, both of which have been used by UNITA to force suspension of humanitarian aid flights to besieged government-held towns.”* (Human Rights Watch 1994)

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<sup>9</sup> United Nations Security Council Resolution 864 of 15 September 1993 prohibits the supply of arms and fuel to UNITA.

Zaire provided most support for UNITA at this time, in exchange for diamonds. Zairian support took the form of the facilitation of logistics rather than the supply of actual equipment, but other countries such as South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, the United Kingdom and Russia helped UNITA to violate the UN sanctions on arms and fuel (Human Rights Watch 1994). HRW accuses diamond corporations and dealers of paying UNITA officials hundreds of thousands of dollars for smuggled diamonds (Human Rights Watch 1994). The following quotations clearly illustrate how profitable war can be:

*“Diamonds sales enable UNITA to pay for weapons, as well as oil and lubricants, obtained in violation of international sanctions. The De Beers diamond cartel and other international dealers are buying gems mined in rebel-held territory in violation of Angolan law. Intermediaries have made payments of hundreds of thousands of dollars to UNITA officials for diamonds smuggled across Zaire's southern border. In January 1993, UNITA officials were reportedly paid \$400,000 in cash by dealers in the Zairian town of Tshikapa, about seventy miles from the Angolan frontier. Lebanese dealers working as licensed traders in the town claim that one-third of the diamonds they handle comes from Angola, almost all from UNITA zones.”*

(Human Rights Watch 1994)

*“De Beers has admitted spending \$500 million to buy legally and illegally mined diamonds originating in Angola in 1992...”* (Human Rights Watch 1994)

However, the Angolan government was not powerless in the face of the military disaster. Oil revenue and the lack of transparency in the government's accounts provided Luanda with enough funds to procure weapons and made a diplomatic settlement increasingly unattractive. As the war resumed fully in 1993, the government unilaterally repealed the triple zero clause and procured equipment for the now unified army. Later in that year all the members of the troika recognised the need to repeal the triple zero clause, thus opening the door to further procurement. The new shopping spree was, of course, beneficial to certain individuals with government connections.

*“In December 1992, with war against UNITA opening up on all fronts, the government decided it needed to rebuild and retrain its armed forces... Thus, throughout 1993, the government's arms purchases were primarily aimed at replacing obsolete and poorly maintained equipment ... Procurement has continued to be chaotic and poorly coordinated, with senior government and military officials sometimes carrying conflicting or duplicate lists on their shopping missions ... The enormous quantities of war material being purchased with such evident urgency by military and government officials may be at least partially explained by potential profits involved. Human Rights Watch has received reports that a recent first-time purchase of advanced T-72 tanks was clinched as much for the commission payments to those settling the deal as for the strategic need.”* (Human Rights Watch 1994)

The government paid for the arms procured by mortgaging future oil revenues. The Human Rights Watch report mentions that more than 60 % of oil revenue was being channelled to the defence budget (Human Rights Watch 1994).

In spite of direct external interference in the Angolan conflict, internal sources of revenue precluded diplomatic solutions until another military stalemate was reached in 1994.

### *The Lusaka Protocol and peace in 2002*

In 1994 the MPLA and a very reluctant UNITA signed the Lusaka Protocol. UNITA was experiencing difficulty in containing government counterinsurgency and was losing territory. However, it still controlled the diamond-producing areas and may have considered that a suspension of hostilities, as provided for by the Lusaka Protocol, would enable it to regroup its forces and rebuild its capacities. Despite the arms and oil embargo, the wealth represented by diamonds was more attractive than any peaceful settlement. In 1996 and 1997, UNITA procured large quantities of arms and fuel, thus again failing to demobilise and disarm and also refusing to transfer the territory it controlled to the government (Human Rights Watch 1999).

Ironically, the MPLA that in 1975 had preferred a military solution now had everything to gain from a peaceful settlement: it was now an internationally recognised government, having won the elections in 1992. Peace would enable the government to rebuild the country and implement development policies. But UNITA, which in 1975 had had everything to gain from a diplomatic settlement, now used the Lusaka Protocol to rebuild its military capacity. This stance undermined the international efforts to achieve peace and strengthened the government's conviction that the Angolan conflict could be resolved only by military means. It eventually dragged Angola into the regional Great Lakes conflict and brought the government a military victory in February 2002, when Jonas Savimbi was killed in Moxico Province.

In the 1970s the MPLA had supported the Katangan opposition to the Mobutu regime until the two countries – Angola and Zaire – negotiated a peace agreement in 1978. However, Zaire's support for the Angolan opposition never weakened and was instrumental in UNITA's violation of the UN sanctions. It is not surprising, then, that the Angolan military assisted Kabila's armed forces when they advanced on Kinshasa to bring down the Mobutu regime, while UNITA fighters supported the falling regime. As the Mobutu regime collapsed, UNITA transferred its most valuable military equipment to Togo, which assumed the position of main supporter after Mobutu's fall (Hodges 2001).

By October 1997 the constant violations of the cease-fire for which the Lusaka Protocol had provided and UNITA's reluctance to comply with the agreed clauses led to another UN Security Council resolution (No 1135), extending the existing sanctions against UNITA to include an embargo on travel by UNITA officials and freezing UNITA's bank accounts abroad. Despite the sanctions, UNITA's capacity was not greatly affected. It had maintained large stockpiles of weapons and procured others in spite of the sanctions (Human Rights Watch 1999). A report to the UN Security Council in March 2000 found that, despite the sanctions, UNITA had been able to procure

*“ ... a wide range of military equipment, including mechanised vehicles such as tanks and armoured personnel carriers, landmines and explosives, a variety of small arms and light weapons, anti-tank weapons, anti-aircraft systems and artillery pieces... Most of the weapons came from Bulgaria, often using Zairian, Togolese and Burkinabe end-user certificates. “* (Hodges 2001)

External support for UNITA now took the form of the provision of alternative routes to arms and diamond deals. Given Angola's extreme wealth, literally no country in the region or further afield would deny support, albeit covert, to a potential future leader of the

country. According to Human Rights Watch, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique, Uganda, Tanzania, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire and Togo were used as transit routes for supplies to UNITA at one time or another. These routes were mostly used by private individuals and dealers and would change as checks and controls tightened or were put in place. But the profits were too high and hampered the efforts to apply the sanctions in full.

*“During 1996 and 1997 UNITA produced about two-thirds of Angola’s output [of diamonds] with a peak value of U.S.\$730 million in 1996 ... The wealth of diamonds mined in UNITA-held areas has provided the rebels with the resources to rearm and prepare for renewed conflict during the Lusaka process. The diamonds have left the country through the same pipelines through which sanctions-busting oil and weapons have entered Angola. UNITA’s exports of diamonds during the Lusaka process netted the rebels some U.S.\$1.72 billion, much of which it invested in military supplies, petroleum products, food, and medicines.”* (Human Rights Watch 1999)

In 1998 the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1173 imposing an embargo on diamonds from UNITA-controlled areas. In spite of the difficulties in implementing such an embargo, Resolution 1173 did raise the transaction costs and made trading with UNITA more difficult. An unexpected outcome of the resolution was the rise in public awareness of conflict diamonds; in a way it laid the foundations for what culminated in 2000 with the Kimberly Process for the certification of diamonds.

Applying the fuel supply sanctions proved equally difficult, and there is evidence that government officials were supplying UNITA with fuel. During field interviews conducted in Kuíto in 2004 the author repeatedly heard allegations of collusion between the militaries of the two sides, particularly towards the end of hostilities. Human Rights Watch mentions similar acts of collusion in its report (Human Rights Watch 1999).

Not to be outdone, the Angolan government, now on grounds of national security, continued to procure military equipment and diverted large portions of the state budget from social areas to defence expenditures. This phase of the war was characterised by gross violations of human rights and the laws of war on both sides. It was also during this period that government troops stepped up their scorched earth tactics, with the concomitant displacement of hundreds of thousands of civilians and the growing impoverishment of people who were already poor. At the end of the war, it was estimated that 4.6 million people had been internally displaced as a result of the conflict (Human Rights Watch 2003).

In addition to its military effort, the government in Luanda integrated UNITA into a government of national unity. The UNITA leaders and military staff who engaged in dialogue with the government were also included in the profit-sharing schemes of the Luanda nomenklatura. The inclusion of UNITA members in this circle and the appeal of urban life were sufficient incentive to preclude their return to a bush war. UNITA was literally split into two factions: the political and the military.

As UNITA’s military funds were dwindling and as there was no rural population from whom to steal food and recruit manpower, life became increasingly difficult for the bush fighters, and especially for the foot soldiers excluded from the diamonds deals. The worsening of the living conditions of the UNITA fighters was joined by government incentives to desert and abandon the movement. By 2001 UNITA was already suffering from mass desertions. UNITA deserters were then integrated into special counterinsurgency units.

With the deterioration of UNITA's military and financial capacity, coupled with the government's amnesty and the death of the leader, Jonas Savimbi, in February 2002, a negotiated resolution of the conflict was now attractive enough to enable both parties to agree on a peace settlement known as the Luena Memorandum of Understanding.

*“Discreet contacts between the warring parties followed, and a public breakthrough came on 13 March when the government declared a unilateral cessation of offensive military movements and presented a 'Peace Plan' ... It called for the resolution of outstanding military issues in accordance with the Bicesse Accords and Lusaka Protocol, UNITA's demilitarization and reintegration into political life, and an amnesty for all crimes committed in the framework of the armed conflict ... The plan came as a surprise but was widely welcomed.”* (Griffiths 2004)

This document was agreed and signed by the warring parties on their own terms, without the intervention of the international community. The Luena Memorandum has proved capable of maintaining the peace in Angola until the time of the writing, despite the difficult humanitarian and political situation Angola is still experiencing.

## 8 Conclusion

The two countries – Angola and Mozambique – have a common colonial history that determined the nature of their independence: the lack of political space in Portuguese politics precluded a political solution for independence, which led to armed struggle. Both countries exchanged a single-party regime with a centralised economic policy for multi-party democracy and a market-led economy. Both movements were founded in the context of the Cold War geography on the basis of ethnic, social and economic grievances. It is unlikely, however, that either could have progressed without the opportunities presented by the support they received from external actors; external pressure and interference was paramount in the way they developed, in the legitimacy they enjoyed or lacked and in the choices open to them. While UNITA began with a clear political agenda, RENAMO's initial agenda was entirely military. UNITA progressed from political party to warlordism; RENAMO developed from a warlord movement to a political opposition.

The roles played by Angola and Mozambique in the geopolitics of the Cold War were very different, as were their natural endowments. Angola's mineral wealth put it on the global agenda; Mozambique's geopolitical importance was regional rather than global. This difference in geopolitics would determine the degrees of external interference and support. The end of the Cold War geography had a different impact on the two movements, and domestic imperatives ultimately dictated their choices: from militarism to policy and legitimacy in RENAMO's case; from geopolitical ally to international pariah in UNITA's.

The natural endowment of each country was to play an important role in the decision-making processes of the two movements. In the absence of external support both UNITA and RENAMO pursued various strategies in the search for financial assistance and political legitimacy. For RENAMO's fighters the immediate gains from peace in the form of two years' salary proved to be more advantageous than a return to a foreseeably protracted conflict. UNITA's diamond wealth precluded any immediate gains from a peace agreement or any pledge the international community might make: the movement had more to

gain from the conflict. Once that wealth started to dwindle, UNITA began to falter. Grievances alone were not able to sustain the continuing war.

*“Where individuals lack a strong commitment to the organization and participate for short-term gains or because they are coerced, cash payment schemes can work especially well in reducing the motivation for continued conflict. With the high costs of war, the risk of death, and a significant probability of failure, offers of economic resources will often be sufficient to encourage individual combatants to lay down their arms, even if the leadership of the group is not committed to the process.”*

(Weinstein 2002, 4)

While RENAMO fighters had a vested interest in the Mozambican peace settlement, since it entailed a material gain for each of them, UNITA fighters benefited from the revenue generated by diamonds, which exceeded anything a peace agreement might bring. Once that revenue declined, UNITA suffered mass desertions, even though its leader continued to be committed to war.

*“Peace requires either that the intense political conflict continue but that the military option of conducting it should be made infeasible, or that the political conflict should itself be resolved. Each of these is difficult. To remove the military option requires demilitarizing the rebel organization, turning it into a conventional political party. This can happen. For example, Renamo, once a rebel military organization in Mozambique is now a successful political party. Renamo was willing to demobilize whereas UNITA was not. Mozambique was a post-conflict success whereas Angola was a failure, partly because Angola had diamonds whereas Mozambique did not. Aid donors were able to come up with a moderate financial package for Renamo which made peaceful political contest an attractive option. Diamonds had made UNITA so rich that nothing that donors could offer would matter, while renewed predation offered massive rewards. In the first two years of renewed war UNITA is believed to have earned around \$2bn from diamond mining. The massive importance of aid donors to the Mozambique economy may also have made the maintenance of a democratic system in which Renamo would have a fair chance more credible. In Angola the government did not need the donors, and so had no means of reassuring UNITA that democratic rights of political contest would be maintained.”*

(Collier 2000, 18)

It is none the less the natural endowments of the two countries that seem to have determined the leverage of the international community in the peace processes. Mozambique was and remains dependent on external aid. This enabled the international community to put pressure on its government, but also bound the international community to its commitments and gave donors a vested interest in the successful outcome of the peace process. Angola achieved peace by means of a perceived military victory, and the international community was not involved in the peace process. The leverage Angola enjoyed as a result of its mineral wealth reduced the leverage which the international community might otherwise have had, and international vested interests in Angola are eminently economic rather than humanitarian.



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