



SPECIAL REPORT

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ABOUT THE REPORT

This Special Report results from John Prendergast's trip to Angola and neighboring countries during September 1999. He met with representatives of the Angolan government, Angolan civil society, the diplomatic community, and international nongovernmental organizations. This is the fourth in a series of Special Reports on African conflicts authored or coauthored by Prendergast since he left the National Security Council staff. This report was written before he joined the State Department as a special advisor to Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Susan Rice. Previous reports focused on the Horn of Africa, the DRC, and Rwanda and Burundi.

The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect those of the United States Institute of Peace, which does not advocate specific policies.

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John Prendergast

Angola's Deadly War

Dealing with Savimbi's Hell on Earth

Briefly...

- The rebel organization National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) has plunged Angola back into a recurring nightmare of war and human rights depredations. Dissatisfied with any scenario in which he is not Angola's president, UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi has chosen war over peace, for the second time this decade.
- Two hundred people are dying every day. With many more people in need of assistance than in Kosovo, and higher mortality rates than in East Timor, Angola is the world's deadliest war.
- Fabulous natural resource wealth provides blank checks for the continued prosecution of the war by UNITA and the government.
- Because Angola provides 7 percent of U.S. daily imports of oil, a figure that could double in the next five years, the United States has a direct national security interest in the stability of the country.
- Given the obstacles to immediately resuming negotiations to end the war, a peace strategy must be supported, which could include promoting quiet cross-line contacts, aggressively enforcing sanctions against UNITA, and engaging with the government on good governance, human rights, and institution building.

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Introduction

Despite a \$1.5 billion peacekeeping operation and the tremendous potential a peacetime economy could unlock, Angola has descended back into Africa's most deadly war for the fourth time in the last four decades. The rebel UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi has decided for the second time this decade that war is a better option than peace, choosing to plunge the country back into war in 1992 after losing national elections and in 1998 after abandoning—after four years of uneasy peace—an internationally brokered peace plan to which he had agreed. Savimbi again has decided that if he himself cannot govern the country, he will continue to endeavor to make the country ungovernable.

Better armed than ever, the Angolan government and UNITA rebels engage in scorched-earth offensives, destructive sieges, and other tactics that primarily rebound on civilians. More vulnerable than ever, Angola's civilian population continues to pay an increasingly heavy price.

The international community and the Angolan government face a bitter conundrum, no less difficult than that faced in Sierra Leone with its revolution by amputation. After Savimbi and UNITA walked away from two peace agreements this decade, should he continue to be viewed as a credible negotiating partner? Or should the war option be played out in full, with the military defeat of UNITA—as elusive as that goal surely is—becoming the sole path to future stability? Or is there a middle option, perhaps hard to envisage now, in which other elements of UNITA beneath Savimbi are engaged diplomatically in order to lay the foundation for a future peace agreement beyond Savimbi's capacity to destroy?

Before attempting to answer these questions, it is important to explore the current context. Angola is a country of extreme contradictions. It is one of the fifteen poorest countries in the world, despite fabulous mineral riches. Billions of dollars worth of diamonds and oil are exported each year, while the war causes 200 people to die every day from hunger and ill health. The latest series of signature bonuses (standard practice throughout the world), paid to the government by oil companies for the right to explore one of the largest untapped reserves in the world, provide nearly \$1 billion in new resources, much of which will be utilized to finance the war effort. Over the last decade, UNITA has sold over \$4 billion worth of diamonds, despite United Nations (UN) Security Council sanctions. This wealth has helped purchase one of the most highly militarized countries on earth, peppered with 10 million landmines and up to 100,000 amputees. Angola stands alone at the top of UNICEF's Child Risk Measure, which examines the risk of death, malnutrition, abuse, and development failure for children worldwide.

The future development of the country is being mortgaged in exchange for weapons and for foreign currency, which often finds its way into private bank accounts. This "war of dispossession," according to the Grupo Angolano de Reflexao para a Paz (GARP, a civil society peace advocacy organization), "makes everybody vulnerable in the face of the power of the gun." The war in Angola has raged for nearly forty years, whereas the average Angolan is only seventeen years old. Thus, over 80 percent of the population has never experienced an Angola at peace.

The war has produced twice the number of people in need of assistance as there are in Kosovo. Two million Angolans have fled their homes and suffer from a lack of basic amenities, while up to 3 million remain inaccessible to humanitarian agencies. Economic dislocation continues to increase, as inflation and a free-falling Angolan kwanza continue to eat away at purchasing power and domestic investment. The UN Food and Agricultural Organization says that Angola is in the worst shape of the sixteen countries receiving emergency food assistance worldwide.

The conflict in Angola sends sonic waves throughout the region, dramatically affecting neighboring countries and forcing governments to choose allegiances. Angolan warring parties have changed or shaken governments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Congo-Brazzaville, Namibia, and Zambia. For example, the Angolan government intervened decisively in both the DRC and Congo-Brazzaville wars in 1997 in support of the eventual victors, in both cases overthrowing governments deemed too supportive of UNITA. For its part, UNITA recently diverted some ammunition to separatists in Namibia's Caprivi Strip as punishment for the Namibian government's alliance with the Angolan government. This led to a series of military confrontations. The resulting crackdown by authorities led to charges against the Namibian army and police for human rights violations. UNITA's low-cost, low-risk strategy sends the message to governments throughout the region that if they cozy up to the Angolan government, there will be consequences.

Over the last five years, UNITA was able to rearm and resupply—during implementation of the 1994 Lusaka Protocol peace agreement and despite international sanctions—because of a robust network of sanctions busters. These ranged from neighbors looking for a payoff to illicit diamond dealers to opportunistic arms merchants. In its continuing game of musical chairs regarding resupply bases, UNITA now benefits from strong footholds in Burkina Faso and Togo, which replaced Congo-Brazzaville and Zaire after the Angolan government helped overthrow the governments there. The fuel for UNITA's resupply efforts during this decade has been diamonds, replacing the aid UNITA received from the United States and apartheid South Africa during the Cold War.

Beyond the conflict's critical humanitarian dimensions and ramifications for regional instability, the stakes for the United States are high. Already, 7 percent of U.S. daily imports of oil come from Angola, a figure that could double over the coming five years. In the next decade, between \$40 and \$60 billion will be invested in developing discoveries in the Lower Congo Basin. Given current projections, Angola will produce 2.5 million barrels of oil per day by 2015, more than Kuwait's current daily production. American refineries are the only ones outfitted for Angolan crude. Angola clearly must be treated as a country in which the United States has direct national security interests, both for the future energy security of the United States and for the American jobs related to contracting for and supplying the infrastructure necessary to exploit the oil. The United States must be willing to allocate resources commensurate with Angola's rising importance.

Renewed Warfare Erupts

With the breakdown of the Lusaka Protocol peace agreement, full-scale war between UNITA and the government resumed in late 1998, following a number of attacks throughout the year by UNITA on government positions. The Lusaka Protocol, signed by the government and UNITA in 1994, included

- (1) a cease-fire,
- (2) demobilization and disarmament of UNITA forces,
- (3) the integration of UNITA senior military officers into the government army, and
- (4) the extension of government administration into all UNITA territory.

UNITA signed the agreement when the government army was on the offensive and winning territory, and used the protocol to forestall even greater losses and buy time to rearm. Ironically, after what was supposed to be four years of an internationally super-

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vised process of demobilization and disarmament backed by multilateral sanctions, UNITA now wants significant amendments to the Protocol—or a new agreement—to reflect its stronger position.

After two bloody but unsuccessful offensives against Savimbi's headquarters in Andulo and Bailundo on the Planalto (central highlands), the government launched a new offensive in September 1999 aimed to liberate the triangle of Malange, Huambo, and Kuito from UNITA control. This comes on the heels of a string of setbacks for the government since the Lusaka peace accords fell apart and war resumed. Huge amounts of arms have been imported by both parties; a doubling of world oil prices in the last ten months boosted the government's efforts in this regard. The situation is further complicated by increased separatists attacks in the oil-rich northern Angolan enclave of Cabinda.

With its September offensive, the government seeks to degrade UNITA's military capacity and force it to return to the Lusaka Protocol. The quality and quantity of arms the government purchased may allow it to put a dent in UNITA's capacity, but UNITA also has enhanced its already impressive arsenal. Grotesque levels of corruption within the military and political elite, poor logistical lines, and inadequate soldier care also hamper the government. Fighting in rural areas and superior strategy and discipline give UNITA an advantage. UNITA also undertakes hit-and-run guerrilla operations, tactics which a government army trained for conventional warfare is ill-prepared to counter.

UNITA seeks to hold its positions, continue to increase pressure on key government-controlled towns, conduct hit-and-run attacks on vulnerable targets, make some advances in the context of a counteroffensive, make some areas ungovernable, and eventually create what it hopes will be a "victory by social explosion"—thus forcing the government back to the negotiating table or to collapse under its own weight. To do this, UNITA will likely increase pressure on infrastructure targets, such as water and electricity, and hit where the government is vulnerable. It also continues to attack small towns and villages throughout the country, resulting in countless civilian casualties and continuing displacement. Some argue that a fallback goal of UNITA is to divide the country in a way in which UNITA could control a major port and many of the key diamond-producing areas. Whatever the goal, Savimbi perceives war as his best option for now, buying him time as he fights for the day if/when his military and political fortunes might improve.

As long as UNITA is successful on the battlefield, political and military challenges to Savimbi within UNITA will be minor. But if the government's most recent offensive is successful, the financial difficulties and internal divisions plaguing UNITA may further erode support for Savimbi. If further efforts to internationally isolate UNITA begin to work, the advantage of time will return more clearly to the government. Nevertheless, there seem to be an inexhaustible supply of young cadres recruited by Savimbi and fiercely loyal to him long enough to cultivate the next batch of recruits. Savimbi retains the loyalty of his army in part because of his method of recruiting young people: totally saturating them for years with pro-UNITA and antigovernment propaganda, aiming to win their hearts and minds at an early age, and terrorizing those who don't comply.

Corruption on both sides continues to be a massive obstacle to peace and development in Angola. Power has increasingly been concentrated in the Angolan presidency (Futungo), and UNITA authority remains concentrated in the hands of Savimbi.

Human rights abuses also block the path to peace. Depredations on both sides include torture, summary executions, indiscriminate killing of civilians in the context of military engagements, forced displacement, continuous mine-laying, and media censorship. UNITA has pursued a policy of pushing civilian populations into government-held cities in order to stress the government's capacity to control these areas and demonstrate that the government is unable to protect civilians. Then UNITA shells them incessantly and indiscriminately. Most of the civilians moved into government areas are

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children and the elderly, whereas those of productive ages are press-ganged into military service or kept to work the fields. Youth are again fleeing UNITA areas across neighboring borders to escape such a fate. Like so many conflicts around the globe, the litany of horrors is nearly endless. With each incident comes another layer of suspicion and another round of retribution that must be overcome for peace to become possible in the future.

Finding the Path to Peace

The spectacular failure of previous peace agreements haunts deliberations over any potential new initiatives. Savimbi's focus on winning power by whatever means necessary, his willingness to abandon commitments made at the negotiating table, and the international community's unwillingness—however sincerely motivated—to challenge the parties when they did not comply with previous requirements all contribute to an uneasy reticence concerning next steps to counter the return to war. Government maladministration does not make the task any easier.

The Angolan government will likely not negotiate with UNITA until the government is in a better military position than it presently occupies, particularly in light of the campaign it is waging to vilify Savimbi and brand him a war criminal. Hardliners within the government exclude any possibility of negotiating with Savimbi. Others see the possibility if it is in the context of terms of implementing the Lusaka agreement. The Southern African Development Community (SADC, a political and economic umbrella for the governments of the region) supported the government's position at its August meeting, declaring that Savimbi "ceased to be a viable interlocutor to the solution of the Angolan conflict." Either way, the government at this juncture only conceives of negotiations over ways to complete the implementation of the Lusaka process. In this scenario, there might be interest in conducting direct military-to-military negotiations on outstanding issues related to demobilization, disarmament, and integration of military forces.

Key government officials expressed a willingness to listen to any ideas UNITA has—without Savimbi—regarding how to move forward in the Lusaka process. A high-ranking official in the President's office told me that, absent Savimbi and after the current round of fighting, "we can discuss forms, means, and ways to complete the implementation of the Lusaka agreement. There are no miracles here. Without peace there is no solution to the economic and political crisis." President dos Santos clarified recently that the government's objective is to fulfill the terms of the Lusaka Protocol. But the government's branding of Savimbi as a "war criminal"—however accurate—has complicated further any potential resumption of some kind of a peace process.

Although it is too soon to envisage the exact nature of a future process, UNITA could be represented by officials directly under Savimbi. Other elements of UNITA could be part of a dialogue, but without associated armies these elements are not a viable alternative to Savimbi's UNITA. These include

- (1) UNITA deputies in Luanda (who call themselves the "Platform for Understanding" and are headed by Abel Chivukuvuku) who disagree with the direction taken by Savimbi and
- (2) UNITA-Renovada ("renewed UNITA"), a splinter faction of UNITA headed by Eugenio Manuvakola that neighboring states and the government have recognized as the partner in implementing the Lusaka Protocol. Contacts of any kind in support of implementing the protocol provide an alternative to war for those in UNITA who would choose such a path.

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What to do with Savimbi is as much as anything the cause of the return to war in Angola. Dissatisfied with election results in 1992, and again unhappy with the end state called for in the Lusaka Protocol, Savimbi has exercised his veto with extreme prejudice. He has twice gone back to war and halted tentative transitions. The international community should search for ways to bring pressure to bear on Savimbi to remove himself from active UNITA leadership. Misplaced advocacy for direct talks with him or offers to mediate between him and the government provide a forum to Savimbi that will only fuel his further machinations.

The "Troika" charged with overseeing the implementation of the Lusaka Protocol (Russia, Portugal, and the United States) is too limited a lens through which the international community explores peace options. Other countries and multilateral organizations, including Mozambique, South Africa, Brazil, the European Union, and others have experience and input that would be helpful. A "Troika Plus" might meet informally and brainstorm around ways to move forward. This kind of a group also must examine ways to guarantee any future agreement against major infractions by signatories, a key failing of those charged with overseeing the deeply flawed implementation of the Lusaka Protocol.

Angolan civil society has shown an increased resolve in its advocacy for peace. Led initially by the Protestant Church, a diverse group of civil society leaders—mixing all sorts of points of view—produced a Manifesto for Peace, advocating for renewed negotiations and arguing for a role for civil society in the peace process. The Catholic bishops also have contributed to the push for peace with a pastoral letter calling on the government to negotiate. A National Convention for Peace will be held near the end of 1999 to plan more comprehensive strategies for civil society's involvement in peace.

During this period of military engagement in which the government refuses to negotiate directly with UNITA, second-track initiatives can help lay the groundwork for possible future dialogue. Civil society representatives, particularly church-based, are best positioned to undertake this role. The international community, particularly the United States, should be on the margins of any unofficial effort, creating confidence and pressuring the parties for serious engagement. Whatever dialogue that might arise will by necessity be confidential at the outset, given the nature of the rhetoric over the last year. The United States should support quiet diplomatic efforts by civil society, particularly the churches, to promote dialogue. This kind of effort could lay the groundwork for other efforts that might follow. The United States and American nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) also could support networking between Angolan civil society elements and those from other countries with experience in peace advocacy or second-track negotiations.

Incentives must be created for UNITA leaders remaining in the bush to have the confidence to make a choice for peace. The reality is that they will need to be assured of positions of authority and access to productive assets or investment opportunities. Many UNITA parliamentarians were humiliated when reduced to receiving under-the-table payments from the government just to survive in the aftermath of the Lusaka Accords, a far worse situation than the status they held while still in UNITA areas. Many of UNITA's officers received only a few hundred dollars as part of the demobilization process.

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Promoting Transparency and Good Government

The quality of administration is a key element in assuring populations that choosing peace will provide a better life than remaining at war. The government has failed so far to use this tool effectively, although many recognize its shortcomings in this area. Decentralization can be a key to enhancing accountability, but the government has not matched its rhetoric with implementation. Donors should engage in dialogue with the government about future governing arrangements, including transferring more power to regional authorities and increasing popular representation at the base of Angola's political structure.

In certain places, the government handled badly the extension of state administration called for in the Lusaka Protocol. Police and military were unleashed—often unpaid—and they proceeded to loot and pillage areas coming under the government's control. This alienated civilian populations in these areas, and word spread to other UNITA-controlled areas that a similar fate awaited them. The government also largely failed to integrate UNITA administrators, medical staff, teachers, and others into the newly extended administrative areas. Donors could dialogue now with the government over additional processes of extending administration as part of any future agreement.

Transparency also must be at the top of any list of necessary reforms for the Angolan government. Central Bank Governor Aguiñaldo Jaime has liberalized exchange rates and is a strong, articulate advocate for further reforms. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is insisting rightfully on increased budgetary transparency as a condition for further multilateral engagement. Only a credible structural adjustment program should open the door to international support, debt reduction, commercial lending, and serious World Bank investment.

Elections also will be a key ingredient to consolidating peace at some point in the future. Top officials told me that it would take four years after signing any further agreement before elections could be held. Much more thought should be given to how to use new elections as a means of conflict management, not as a concession to the opposition but rather as a means to establish popular support for a transitional roadmap for Angola's future. Starting with local elections could slowly help build a democratic culture, as lower-level contests could delay the high stakes/high-risk national competition until more investment in the process is created.

Given the national security interest the United States has in Angolan stability, the U.S. Agency for International Development should redouble its efforts in the democracy promotion arena, supporting aid programs that enhance the institutions on which a future functioning democracy might be built.

Advocating for Human Rights

Promoting human rights is rarely part of the warring parties' discourse in Angola. The Lusaka Protocol provided amnesty for anyone who committed "illegal acts" during the conflict. For what were some of the most egregious human rights violations perpetrated on the face of the earth, a blank check was handed out and the slate was wiped clean. During the protocol's failed implementation, key external actors and the UN mission did not publicize serious abuses or challenge the perpetrators for fear of upsetting the process. In its most recent report on Angola, Human Rights Watch concludes, "The impunity with which rights were abused eroded confidence in the peace process and created a vicious cycle of rights abuse that steadily worsened," encouraging "both parties to regard the peace process with contempt."

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During the protocol's failed implementation, key external actors and the UN mission did not publicize serious abuses or challenge the perpetrators for fear of upsetting the process.

The government's branding of Jonas Savimbi as a war criminal creates a thin but important precedent for reversing the state of total impunity that exists presently. Savimbi is indeed responsible for a litany of crimes against humanity, but of course he is not alone. The international community must advocate for and support development of the rule of law as one of the bases for future governance and stability. Without it, future Savimbis become possible.

As the debate continues over the role of the UN in Angola, space must be made for a human rights office that is free to investigate and report on abuses wherever they occur. But such an office should also be charged with building the capacity of the Angolan government's system of justice and ability to counter human rights abuses. Providing report cards of violations is only meaningful if actors on the ground can begin to do something about reversing this state of impunity.

Building Peace Through Economic Development

The government must use—and be seen by its population as using—some of its added revenue from rising world oil prices and from future expected production increases to undertake significant social and economic development initiatives. This should include addressing some of the structural reasons for continued conflict. The government has done little to demonstrate that it has any concern for civilian populations, particularly those from Ovimbundu areas. (Despite 40 percent of the cabinet and nearly half of the army being from Ovimbundu areas, perceptions of discrimination still linger, fuelled by UNITA rhetoric.) Transparently targeting investments at these areas would build long-term confidence and help lay the groundwork for an alternative future beyond war.

The government's announcement of a social and economic investment fund provides an opportunity to restructure internal investment and opportunity. The United States should welcome the effort and provide technical assistance in initiating this fund. If the government demonstrates its seriousness, donor agencies and oil companies should consider how to construct a tripartite initiative with the government that could support the rehabilitation of the productive economy of Angola. Such an initiative could target support for microbusiness, industry agriculture, and education. Again, some specific effort to provide funds to initiatives involving those from Ovimbundu areas would be very helpful in reducing tensions.

Enhancing Security

With U.S. leadership, the UN is stepping up its efforts to enforce sanctions against UNITA. Two expert panels under the direction of Sanctions Committee Chairman Robert Fowler (Canada's UN ambassador) began meeting in late August. Sanctions-enforcement measures may include

- (1) intelligence and information sharing,
- (2) deployment of monitoring teams at airports and other key locations throughout the region,
- (3) support for air surveillance,
- (4) interdiction of UNITA supply flights,
- (5) training for customs inspection, and
- (6) more aggressive diplomatic engagement.

Specific efforts to limit UNITA's access to legitimate diamond markets is a step toward standardized certificates of origin.

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Sanctions will increase the cost of doing business for UNITA and those that deal with UNITA, and it is hoped they will reduce the amount of business UNITA is able to do. They will not foreclose all financial transactions; there are simply too many loopholes in the international system. Significantly, though, the initiative sets the precedent for UN leadership in creating international mechanisms for ensuring that member states abide by legal obligations with respect to the arms and diamond trade.

The Angolan army's methods of counterinsurgency cause problems for postwar transition and reconstruction. For the future of the government's nationwide credibility, indiscriminate violence against civilians must be reduced, and a hearts-and-minds campaign must be instituted for real gains to be made. Angola's minister of Social Assistance, Albino Malungo, described to me the establishment of new mechanisms for government protection of humanitarian aid distribution, which is an important first step in government acknowledgement of its social responsibilities. Ultimately, humanitarian agencies need to be allowed to operate freely and without interference from either side. Until that time, though, the government must do all it can to protect humanitarian assets and the people the aid is supposed to reach.

The cease-fire agreement brokered among the belligerents in the DRC war has created a joint military commission. This provides an opportunity for the Angolan government to reestablish stronger links with the Rwandan and Ugandan governments on their shared objective of reducing the threat posed by insurgencies operating out of the DRC. Joint planning for actions against UNITA, Rwandan Interahamwe militias, and Ugandan rebels could in time reduce the damaging suspicions that helped intensify the regional struggle based in the DRC. This also could contribute to reconstructing the informal regional security framework that loosely existed before the current DRC war.

The Way Ahead

UNITA and Savimbi have succeeded in alienating virtually all of its former staunch allies in the United States Congress and around the world. The Clinton administration has moved forward with a Bilateral Consultative Commission (BCC) between the United States and Angola. The BCC provides a unique forum in which the fundamental issues facing Angola can be discussed. Joao Laurengo, secretary general of Angola's ruling party, told me that the BCC can "help us to plan for Angola's future, to think beyond war."

For example, it is critical to attract broad-based internal and external investment beyond the oil and diamond sectors as a means to stabilize the economy and offer people an alternative path away from sectors dominated by the warring parties. The BCC has as a focus sustained economic reform as a vehicle for diversifying foreign investment beyond the dominant sectors.

The Cold War logic that froze U.S. policy toward Angola has begun to thaw; still, the United States is rightly hesitant about becoming too close—too fast—to an Angolan government that fails to stop massive corruption, perpetrates human rights abuses, and uses its military to destabilize neighboring governments. Nevertheless, with Angola's movement on some key reforms—for which the United States strongly advocates—in the political and economic sectors, the relationship could grow stronger over time. This will place the United States in an even better position to support an appropriate process for ending one of the longest running and most destructive wars in the world.

Unanswered questions remain. Despite the good intentions of civil society and the creative thinking of the international diplomatic community, how can any process work if Savimbi's singular goal is the Angolan presidency? How do negotiations resolve anything if his goal is to run the country and to achieve this goal by any means necessary?

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Now, as the war intensifies, the foundation must be laid for what inevitably will be a return to some kind of process to resolve the conflict. Beating the warring parties over the head with feckless Security Council resolutions is achieving nothing. The United States realizes this and is moving to construct a new architecture of political engagement. Part of this engagement involves working with the Angolan government and other interested parties in developing a more comprehensive peace strategy, which involves economic, political, and social elements. Such a strategy must be supported multilaterally. Fundamental elements of this new approach might include

- (1) quiet support for contacts between key actors on both sides (without Savimbi),
- (2) following through on commitments to vigorously enforce the multilateral sanctions against UNITA and completely isolate Savimbi,
- (3) support for institution building in government and civil society, and
- (4) robust engagement with the government on issues related to governance and human rights.

These are all elements of a strategy that won't stop the carnage immediately but will put the United States in a position to help end this destructive conflict once and for all in the near future.



MAP: Human Rights Watch, *Angola Unravels: The Rise and Fall of the Lusaka Peace Process*, 1999