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Namibia: SWAPO's Army— Organization, Tactics, and Prospects



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A Research Paper

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*ALA 84-10103
October 1984*

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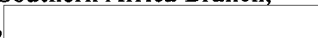

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Namibia: SWAPO's Army— Organization, Tactics, and Prospects



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A Research Paper

This paper was prepared by  Office
of African and Latin American Analysis. It was
coordinated with the Directorate of Operations.
Comments and queries are welcome and may be
directed to the Chief, Southern Africa Branch,
Africa Division, ALA, 


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**Namibia: SWAPO's Army-
Organization, Tactics,
and Prospects**

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Key Judgments

*Information available
as of 1 September 1984
was used in this report.*

Since 1966, the South-West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) has waged an externally based, low-intensity insurgent campaign designed to undermine South Africa's determination to control Namibia. Although SWAPO's guerrilla force—the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN)—has between 7,000 and 8,000 armed men, it commits only about 10 percent of them to combat operations in Namibia at any time. The annual cycle of insurgent activity usually begins with a major infiltration and hit-and-run attacks on the South African and Namibian forces during the rainy season that extends from November to April. With the onset of dry weather, the reduced concealment and dwindling stocks of ammunition force most of the guerrillas to return to Angola. Those who remain in Namibia generally disperse and conduct isolated terrorist attacks on civilian targets.

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Since PLAN relocated from Zambia to Angola in the mid-1970s, the Soviet Bloc has provided the vast majority of the insurgents' weapons, equipment, and training. Moscow has supplied infantry arms and ammunition, SA-7 missiles and anti-aircraft guns, trucks, and even a few armored vehicles. Cuban instructors provide SWAPO with military training in Angola, and insurgents are sent to the USSR, Eastern Europe, Cuba, and a number of African countries for training.

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The insurgents have never attempted to defeat the South Africans militarily—something we are confident they cannot do—but they have increased the costs to Pretoria of maintaining control of Namibia. They force Pretoria to maintain between 15,000 and 20,000 full-time troops there, have overcome South African raids on their bases in Angola, and have maintained their personnel strength despite suffering heavy casualties. With few exceptions, however, Pretoria has contained guerrilla operations in northern Namibia, away from the politically sensitive, white-populated areas farther south. Moreover, SWAPO's guerrillas have never overturned Pretoria's control of any portion of Namibian territory.

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The South Africans benefit from ethnic divisions and geographic obstacles that tend to contain the insurgency to north-central Namibia. They have also exploited tribal divisions among the insurgents to weaken PLAN. The release from prison last February of SWAPO cofounder Andimba (Herman) Toivo ja Toivo was intended to produce a challenge to SWAPO President Sam Nujoma's leadership and possibly split the insurgent group along tribal lines.

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SWAPO may now be facing its most serious challenge ever. The Angolan-South African troop disengagement agreement signed at Lusaka on 16 February 1984 commits Luanda to restrain SWAPO in exchange for a phased withdrawal of South African forces from southern Angola. The agreement has reduced the insurgents' infiltration and resupply, although Pretoria insists that Luanda is not meeting its commitment fully. [redacted]

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The real test of Angolan willingness to enforce the agreement could come during the rainy season beginning in late 1984 when conditions again favor a major infiltration of Namibia. If Luanda were to bar SWAPO from using its territory, the insurgents would have no suitable place from which to stage guerrilla operations. SWAPO has no bases within Namibia. While some installations do exist in Zambia, in our judgment, neither that country nor Botswana would risk South African retaliation by permitting large-scale insurgent infiltration of Namibia from its territory. Barring significant progress on the Namibian settlement negotiations, however, we believe the disengagement agreement will crumble gradually and the war will return to about the intensity of recent years. [redacted]

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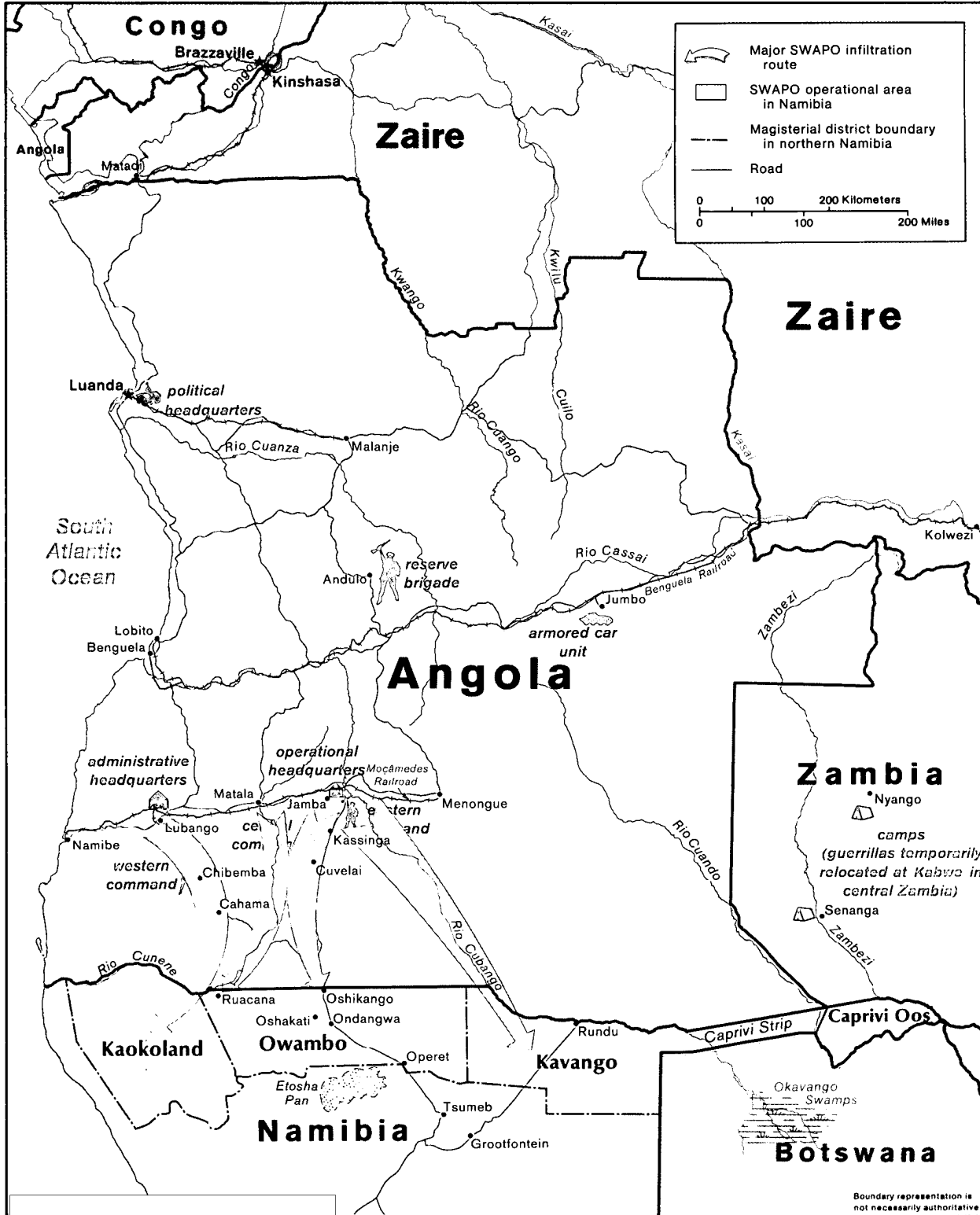
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Figure 1
SWAPO Operations



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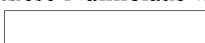
Namibia: SWAPO's Army— Organization, Tactics, and Prospects



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Introduction

SWAPO's long-exiled leaders have relied primarily on their externally based guerrilla force—the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN)—in their bid to force South Africa to cede control over Namibia. In our judgment, insurgent leaders recognized from the beginning that they could not defeat South Africa militarily, and they have consistently followed a strategy of protracted insurgency to increase the costs of Pretoria's occupation, eventually exhaust South Africa's will to fight, and intimidate those Namibians who might collaborate with Pretoria.



The Angolan–South African troop disengagement agreement of February 1984, which commits Angola to restrain SWAPO in exchange for a phased withdrawal of South African forces from southern Angola, has reduced—but not eliminated—guerrilla infiltration and supply. Because the insurgents depend upon their Angolan sanctuaries for recruitment, training, rest and recuperation, as well as for supporting operations in Namibia, a complete Angolan clampdown would cripple SWAPO's ability to wage war. The real test of Angola's willingness to continue to restrain SWAPO could come during the rainy season later this year when conditions are again favorable for a major infiltration of Namibia.



PLAN unit on the march



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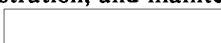
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The People's Liberation Army of Namibia

Strength and Organization

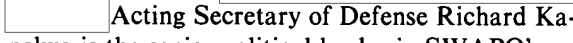
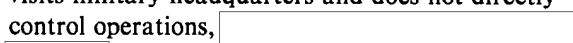
PLAN has 7,000 to 8,000 armed personnel, about half of whom are assigned to combat units, according to South African estimates.¹ Others are engaged in training, administration, and maintenance of equipment and bases.



SWAPO's political headquarters is in Luanda and its military headquarters is near Lubango in southern Angola (figure 1). SWAPO President Sam Nujoma is



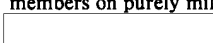
nominally the Commander in Chief of the armed forces and the Secretary of Defense, but he seldom visits military headquarters and does not directly control operations. Acting Secretary of Defense Richard Kapelwa is the senior political leader in SWAPO's



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² Relations between PLAN and SWAPO's political wing apparently are harmonious. The Secretary of Defense, the Military Commander, the Deputy Commander, and the Political Commissar—all members of PLAN—traditionally have been members of SWAPO's top political body, the 17-member National Executive Committee (NEC). They also serve in the NEC's military subcommittee. PLAN's representatives to these committees have acted more as observers than active participants during political strategy sessions, and the political leadership has deferred to the PLAN members on purely military matters.



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PLAN's Senior Leaders

Two key officials are rivals for PLAN's top post of Secretary of Defense, vacant since the death of Peter Nanyemba in April 1983. Richard Kapelwa is currently Acting Defense Secretary, although Nujoma formally holds the defense portfolio. Dimo Amambo is the Military Commander and should soon be returning from military training in Ghana. [redacted]

In our view, Kapelwa holds his prestigious position largely because he is a Caprivian—an ethnic group distrusted by the Owambos in control of SWAPO. He was selected to become Deputy Secretary of Defense in 1977 because the group's leaders wanted to monitor the activities of influential non-Owambos, as well as help to ensure the loyalty of SWAPO's Caprivian members. [redacted] Kapelwa solidified his position in 1980 when he denounced several senior Caprivians then being expelled from the group. He is respected by fellow members of the National Executive Committee—SWAPO's Politburo—as a bright, able administrator, [redacted]

Dimo Amambo is a professional soldier trained in the Soviet Union, Cuba, Libya, Tanzania, Algeria, Egypt, and Ghana, [redacted] he has been in command of PLAN since 1971. [redacted] in our view, he is a political moderate who focuses on military rather than political issues. [redacted]

[redacted] Amambo as a dedicated officer, having earned the respect of his troops by demonstrating personal leadership. His promotions have been due to personal popularity, heroism, and the support of fellow Kwanyamas. With only three or four years of civilian education, he speaks limited English, is inarticulate in debate, and is an indifferent organizer, [redacted]

military wing. He heads PLAN's administrative headquarters at Lubango and supervises military planning, training, recruitment, supply, and SWAPO's reserve units. He has no operational control over troops. [redacted]

PLAN maintains a complex of bases at Lubango that includes its principal training facilities (figure 2). The complex is located astride SWAPO's supply lifeline, the Mocamedes railway from the port at Namibe, and close to Angolan and Cuban garrisons. SWAPO recruits receive basic military training at the Ongulumbashe base and go on to more advanced instruction at the "THTC" camp, according to the US defense attache in Pretoria. SWAPO's Special Unit, which is assembled each year for a major infiltration into Namibia, receives its final three-to-six-months training in sabotage and minelaying techniques at the Volcano base. [redacted]

PLAN's Military Commander, Dimo Amambo, controls operations into Namibia from the operational headquarters near Jamba, 300 kilometers east of Lubango.³ His command post has a commander and deputy, a political commissar and deputy, a chief of staff, and staff sections with responsibilities for operations, intelligence, logistics, and communications. Four or five guerrilla battalions—some 1,200 to 1,500 personnel—guard the Jamba bases and the roads leading from them toward Namibia. [redacted]

The Jamba complex—which is near the Mocamedes railway—includes PLAN's Katanga logistics base, a medical facility, and the Typhoon base used to house guerrillas of the Special Unit who arrive there each year from Lubango prior to infiltrating Namibia, according to the US defense attache in Pretoria. Cuban instructors train the insurgents at Jamba, [redacted]

[redacted] two Cuban garrisons are nearby. [redacted] 25X1

PLAN divides responsibility for guerrilla operations in Namibia among three regional commands, [redacted] These commands move their headquarters periodically to enhance security. As of June 1984, the Western Command, which is responsible for infiltration and attacks in Kaoko-land and western Owambo, was located south of [redacted]

³ Military Commander Dimo Amambo has been attending a military staff course in Ghana since at least mid-1983, [redacted] and may be named permanent Defense Secretary upon his return. Deputy Commander Salomon Hawala probably has exercised temporary command of PLAN's forces in Amambo's absence. [redacted]

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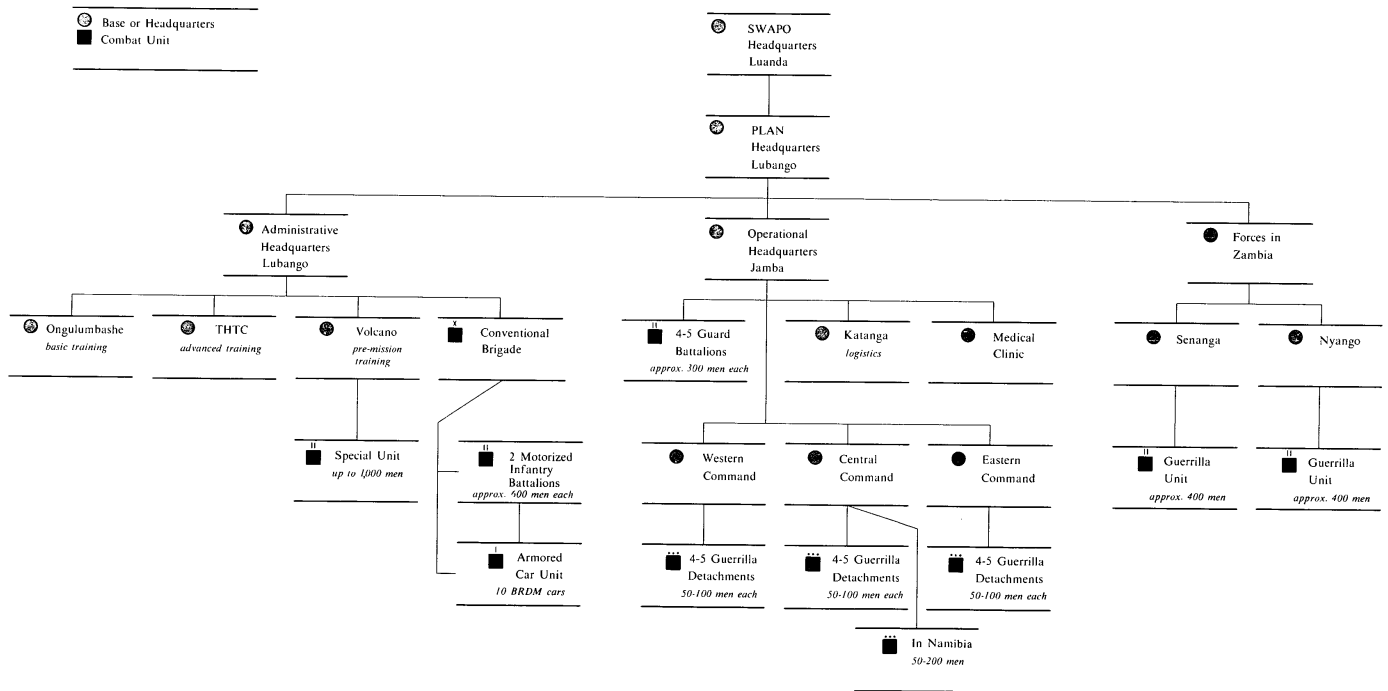
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Figure 2
The South-West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) and People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN)



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Lubango near Chibemba. The Central Command was south of Jamba near Kassinga and responsible for operations in central Owambo as well as deeper penetrations into central Namibia. The Eastern Command that oversees operations in Kavango and eastern Owambo was located north of Kassinga. [redacted]

Each of the regional commands supervises typically four mobile guerrilla detachments of 50 to 100 men each, according to reports from the US defense attache in Pretoria. These troops are separate from the Special Unit and available year round for missions in northern Namibia. They totaled about 900 guerrillas as of June 1984. [redacted] another 50 to 200 insurgents remain in Namibia throughout the year, most of them in Owamboland. [redacted]

Reserve Forces. SWAPO maintains one conventionally trained and organized brigade of 1,500 to 2,000 men in central Angola. The brigade is PLAN's most powerful unit and includes two partially motorized infantry battalions located about 500 kilometers southeast of Luanda and some 600 kilometers north of Namibia. The brigade also has an element of 10 Soviet-manufactured BRDM armored cars 400 kilometers farther east at Jumbo Base, [redacted]

PLAN officials maintain that the brigade is being held in reserve until the insurgents are capable of taking on the South Africans in conventional combat, [redacted] In practice, this reserve force has been committed to protecting Namibian refugee camps and nearby towns, bridges, and roads from attacks by Angolan insurgents of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). In January 1984, additional PLAN personnel were brought north from Lubango to reinforce the area southeast of Luanda, [redacted]

Another 400 to 800 PLAN personnel are held in reserve in Zambia—where SWAPO has had military bases since 1966—but these forces have conducted few if any operations into Namibia in recent years.

* The SWAPO battalions at Jamba also operate against UNITA. Some of their troops participated in an anti-UNITA operation with the Angolans just north of the Mocamedes rail line in June 1984, [redacted]

Table 1
PLAN's Manpower and Missions

Number of persons

Combat troops	3,000-5,000	25X1
Conventional Reserve (opposing UNITA)	1,500-2,000	
Guerrillas		
Available for Namibian operations (Special Unit and detachments)	1,000-2,000	
Opposing UNITA	600-900	
Training, support, and uncommitted reserves	2,000-5,000	
In Angola	1,500-4,000	25X1
In Zambia	400-800	
Abroad for training	400	
Total personnel ^a	7,000-8,000	25X1

^a PLAN's combat units probably are at their lowest strength at midyear when many personnel are in training and before new recruits arrive to replace casualties suffered during the just-ended rainy season. Combat units probably are at their greatest strength at yearend when ready for an imminent major infiltration. The estimate of PLAN's total personnel strength adjusts for these fluctuations by adding the low estimate for combat troops to the high estimate for trainees and vice versa. [redacted]

The insurgents are usually in camps near Senanga and Nyango in the southwest. In order to prevent them from launching any cross-border operations that might disrupt the delicate South African-Angolan negotiations earlier this year, however, the Zambians apparently moved the insurgents several hundred kilometers farther from the Namibian border. [redacted] Zambia was training a 400-man SWAPO battalion at Kabwe north of Lusaka. We expect the guerrillas to return to Senanga and Nyango when the training is finished. [redacted]

Recruitment. SWAPO recruits primarily in Angola's Namibian refugee camps and among the Kwanyama Owambos living on both sides of the Angola-Namibia border. The Angolan press claims that the refugee camps southeast of Luanda and near Lubango and Jamba contain 70,000 Namibian refugees. They produce about 1,000 youths of military age annually, [redacted]

[redacted] PLAN also

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recruits from among the several hundred youths who flee Namibia each year or are abducted by the insurgents. The implementation by South Africa of conscription in Namibia in 1981 resulted in a surge of new recruits for PLAN. PLAN's marginal growth over recent years in our view indicates that recruitment probably equals the group's annual losses of several hundred who are killed or captured or who desert. [redacted]

Tactics

A review of PLAN operations over the past several years shows that an annual cycle of guerrilla operations in Namibia begins about the midpoint of each rainy season—generally lasting from November to April—with large-scale infiltration along four primary routes from SWAPO's Angolan bases. At that time dense foliage and clouds provide good concealment, and the rains quickly wash away the guerrillas' tracks. The softened soil limits the mobility of the government's vehicles. From Lubango in the west, the insurgents travel by truck through Cahama to enter Kaokoland on foot. In the central region, there are two routes into Owamboland. The first extends from Matala on the Mocamedes rail line to the vicinity of Ruacana, and the second runs from Jamba to the border near Oshikango. The guerrillas also travel southeast from Jamba along the Cubango River to western Kavango.⁵ [redacted]

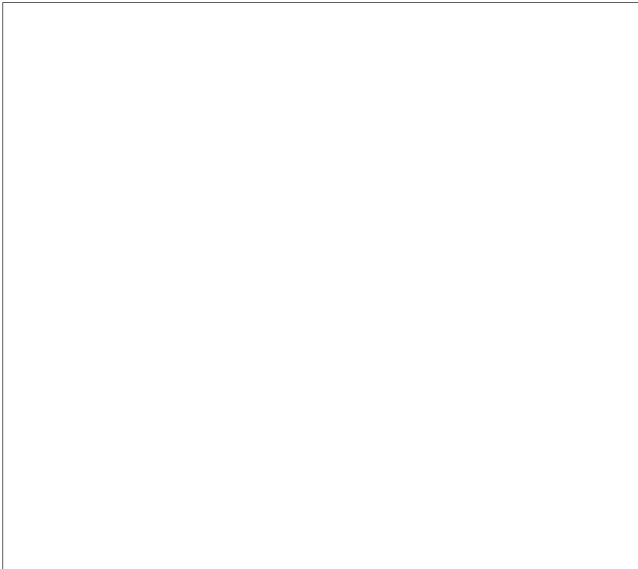
The guerrillas initially concentrate on hit-and-run assaults on the government forces. Attacks on military and police camps with mortars and rockets fired from a safe distance and indiscriminate mining of the roadways are common. PLAN typically avoids fire-fights and tries to be safely away from the scene of an attack before the government can react. [redacted]

PLAN's inability to resupply its units in Namibia limits the scope of operations each year. Although the South Africans claim that PLAN moves limited amounts of supplies across the border in the dry season to guerrillas already in Namibia, we believe that most of the insurgents carry all their weapons and ammunition when they infiltrate. By the onset of

⁵ South African occupation of a salient in south-central Angola after mid-1981 reduced the insurgents' heavy infiltration into Owamboland and diverted it to Kaokoland and especially Kavango, which previously experienced low levels of insurgent activity, according to the press. [redacted]

the dry season, their dwindling stocks of heavy-caliber ammunition and mines and the diminishing concealment as the foliage withers compel most of the guerrillas to return to Angola. Those who remain in Namibia disperse and turn gradually to terrorist attacks on civilian targets. [redacted]

Civilian targets have tended to be village headmen, teachers, other local symbols of authority, and black property owners accused of collaborating with the government. The South African Minister of Law and Order Louis Le Grange claims publicly that SWAPO has deliberately murdered nearly 400 Namibians since the mid-1970s. SWAPO also abducts nearly 300 Namibians each year, according to official statistics. [redacted]



This year PLAN began infiltrating in January; guerrilla contacts peaked in March; and the insurgents turned to urban bombings in mid-April, according to statistics the South Africans provided to the US defense attache. An attack on a police camp in February with 30 82-mm mortar rounds probably required a dozen or more guerrillas to carry the heavy



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Captured SWAPO weapons [redacted]

The South Africans assert—correctly in our view—that Soviet and Cuban officers also help direct PLAN's military operations. [redacted]

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weapon and ammunition. Increasingly short of supplies and forced to disperse, individuals or small teams exploded bombs in five northern towns and Windhoek in late April and May, and PLAN killed, injured, or abducted 52 civilians during that period, according to government announcements. [redacted]

Foreign Aid

PLAN is dependent on foreign aid for weapons, training, and even operational planning. Since SWAPO's relocation from Zambia to Angola in the mid-1970s, the Soviets have provided the vast majority of the insurgents' arms and equipment. According to the South Africans—who have publicly displayed equipment captured from PLAN—Moscow's deliveries have included small arms and ammunition, mortars, rocket launchers, anti-aircraft guns, SA-7 surface-to-air missiles, mines and explosives, communications equipment, some trucks, and a few armored vehicles. [redacted]

We believe that Cuban instructors provide most of the military training that PLAN does not do for itself.

[redacted] Cubans are present at both the Lubango and Jamba complexes, and over 400 SWAPO youths were undergoing weapons training on Cuba's Isle of Youth in 1983, [redacted]

[redacted] East Germans also help to train SWAPO in Angola, [redacted]

[redacted] and PLAN has sent a few people to the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and a number of African countries for training. [redacted]

China provided arms to the insurgents in 1983 for the first time in five years, [redacted]

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[redacted] We believe the Chinese acted to ensure some influence with a future Namibia under SWAPO rule. Nujoma had approached Chinese Foreign Minister Huang Hua at the Zimbabwe independence celebrations in 1980 to ask for a resumption of aid, [redacted] and two years later Nujoma visited Beijing. A Chinese ship delivered the arms to the Congo in July 1983, [redacted]

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Geographic and Societal Obstacles to Insurgency

Despite what appears to be adequate organization, manpower, weapons, and foreign support, SWAPO's army faces serious geographic and societal obstacles in Namibia that make effective insurgent operations extremely difficult (figure 3). Namibia is almost entirely surrounded by natural barriers. To the west, the treacherous waters of the Skeleton Coast and the towering sand dunes of the Namib Desert effectively prevent seaborne infiltration. In the east, the vast Kalahari Desert stretches hundreds of kilometers into Botswana and provides no water or concealment. Because southern Namibia borders on South Africa, only the northern boundary with Angola and Zambia offers potential for infiltration. [redacted]

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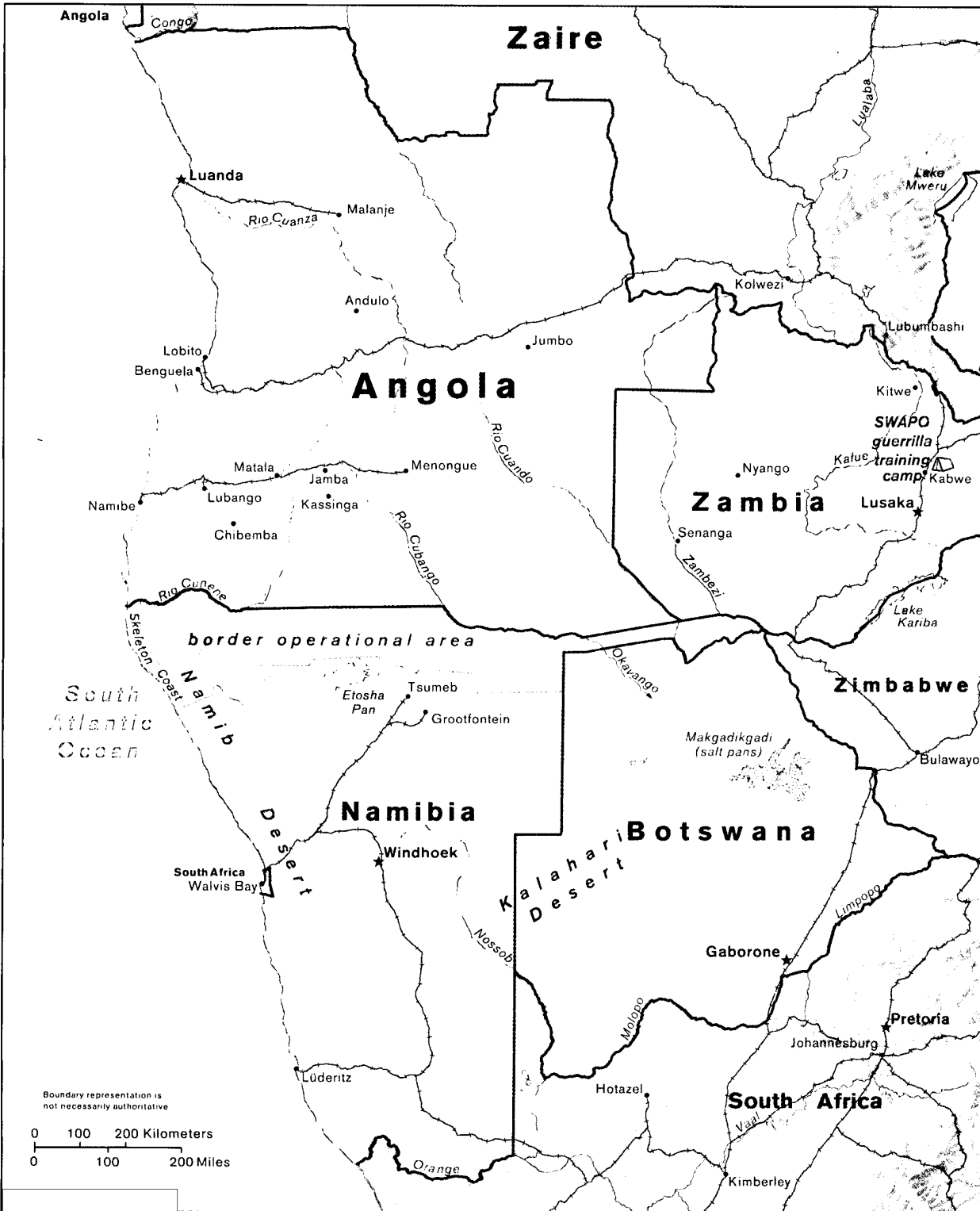
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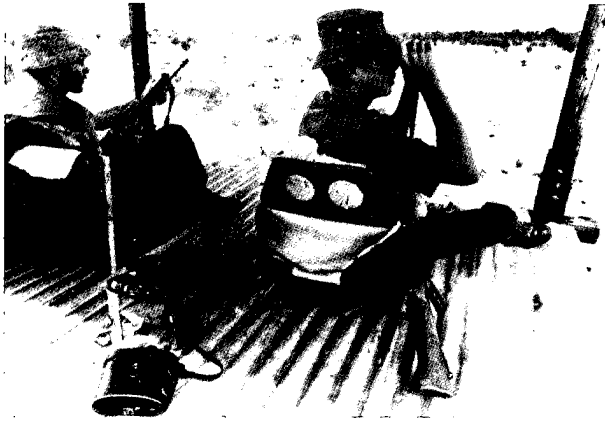
Figure 3
Southwestern Africa



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South African watchtower in northern Namibia [redacted]

Physical and other obstacles hinder access along much of the northern frontier. In the west, Kaokoland's barren and rugged mountains are difficult to traverse. To reach Kavango and western Caprivi Oos in the east, the insurgents must cross territory firmly controlled by UNITA. In the extreme east, the Caprivi Strip jutting between Botswana and Zambia is cut off from the remainder of Namibia by vast swamps that are virtually impassable for much of the year. [redacted]

Only the central portion of the Angolan-Namibian border favors infiltration. This 450-kilometer-long area north of Owambo is mostly flat grassland with brush and scattered forests that provide adequate concealment for guerrilla operations during the rainy season. Although there are no perennial rivers within Namibia, the insurgents find plentiful water during the rainy months in seasonal streams and pools. [redacted]

Ethnic divisions within Namibia reinforce the geographic obstacles that tend to contain the insurgency to north-central Namibia. SWAPO's popular support is greatest among the Owambos whose tribal area offers the most favorable terrain for guerrilla operations. Among the Owambos, the largest subtribe is the Kwanyamas, who make up the most numerous ethnically distinct group in SWAPO.⁷ Kwanyamas comprise a majority of the 100,000 or so Owambos in southern Angola, and within Namibia they are concentrated in Owamboland between the Angolan border and the military garrison towns of Oshakati and

[redacted]

The Border Operational Area (BOA)

The Border Operational Area is a South African-controlled military zone in Namibia, over 100 kilometers deep and extending the length of the northern border. [redacted]

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Manmade barriers mark the frontier. All along the Owambo border in the central area, the population and much of the vegetation has been removed from a kilometer-wide strip bounded by fences, laced with landmines, and overlooked by military watchtowers, [redacted]

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Inside the BOA, the South Africans have implemented strict physical security. They have set up vehicle checkpoints, cleared the brush away from main roads to make ambushes difficult, and organized traffic into convoys protected by well-armed troops in armored vehicles, according to US officials in Namibia. The paved surface of major roads is doubly thick in most places to discourage the guerrillas from emplacing landmines, and patrols frequently inspect the major routes. [redacted]

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South African soldiers control entry to the BOA from the south. A military checkpoint requires vehicles to stop and be searched, and a permit is required to enter the zone, according to officers of the US Liaison Office in Windhoek. Every car or truck that passes is recorded in a log book. The gate closes at 1800 hours daily when the BOA's nighttime curfew goes into effect. [redacted]

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Ondangwa. East and west of Owamboland, population densities and support for SWAPO diminish. The insurgents also lack solid support in the 80 percent of Namibia south of the northern homelands, which is sparsely populated and socially fragmented. [redacted]

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PLAN also is hampered by the distance from the northern border of their most lucrative targets—the white populace and their property. The capital and headquarters for the government's armed forces at Windhoek are 600 kilometers to the south, and the major port of Walvis Bay is slightly farther away. The railway ends 200 kilometers south of the border at

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Tsumeb and Grootfontein, an area of white-owned mines and farms. Targets close to the border are limited to well-armed military units and installations, government officials and offices, public utilities, and persons suspected of being government collaborators.

[redacted]

South African Response to the Insurgency

South Africa has responded to PLAN operations on several fronts. Pretoria has committed enough forces to check insurgent progress in Namibia while minimizing the risks to South African troops. Pretoria has tried to weaken SWAPO and PLAN internally by exploiting strong ethnic divisions and rivalries within the insurgent group. Finally, Pretoria has tried to prevent SWAPO's army from operating out of Angola, and this year was successful in getting Angola to agree to restrain its support for SWAPO.

Military Commitment

The SWAPO insurgency has forced South Africa to increase its military commitment in northern Namibia. From 8,500 in 1978, we estimate that there now are 15,000 to 20,000 full-time troops stationed in the territory.⁸ Several thousand more have been used during major incursions into Angola. Prime Minister Botha has complained publicly that South Africa spent about \$300 million in fiscal year 1985 to maintain these forces in Namibia. This represents about 10 percent of South Africa's defense budget.

[redacted]

From an organizational standpoint, all South African and territorial military units are under the command of a South African general in Windhoek.

[redacted] a forward command post is located in each of the four northern "homelands." The forces are organized in successive echelons and oriented to protect Namibia against SWAPO or conventional attack from the north:

- Three all-volunteer units led by South Africans and composed mostly of non-South African veterans of the Rhodesian Army, SWAPO, and other insurgent

⁸ This excludes the approximately 2,000 South African troops in Walvis Bay, which is administered as part of South Africa.

groups man the border and conduct hot pursuit and preemptive strikes into Angola.⁹

- Ten territorial battalions—six ethnically distinct Namibian units and four of mixed Namibian and South African troops—patrol northern Namibia and guard installations, convoys, and civil servants.

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- Forward elements of a South African mechanized infantry group at Operet and a Namibian brigade of reservists near Windhoek are the territory's strategic reserve.

- At least 24 territorial force units—part-time homeguards—perform counterinsurgency duties in most towns and white farming areas.

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Although SWAPO has forced South Africa to enlarge its military commitment in Namibia, Pretoria increasingly has relied on non-South African forces to minimize the political costs of the protracted war at home. Only one-third to one-half of the total security force manpower in Namibia consists of South African Defense Force and South African Police personnel,

[redacted] Moreover, the most dangerous counterinsurgency duties are usually performed by units of non-South Africans led by professional South African volunteers. Pretoria also has made heavy use of reservists to minimize the number of South Africans permanently stationed in Namibia. The skeleton-strength 61st Mechanized Infantry Group at Operet, for example, has its equipment prepositioned and flies in reservists to mobilize the unit whenever needed.¹⁰

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Pretoria's repeated attacks on SWAPO's Angolan bases have disrupted but not ended the infiltration.

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⁹ The South African Defense Force's 5th Reconnaissance Commandos and 32nd "Buffalo" Battalion and the South African Security Police Koevoet paramilitary unit account for an estimated 80 percent of SWAPO's casualties,

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[redacted]

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South African soldier in Namibia [redacted]

The South Africans destroyed PLAN's Command Headquarters in May 1978 and June 1980, and they bombed the Lubango bases several times, most recently in December 1983 during the Askari operation. A SWAPO official reported that Operation Protea in August 1981 destroyed 80 percent of the insurgents' Angolan installations, [redacted]

[redacted] South African troops thereafter continued to occupy a salient of Angolan territory north of Owamboland, which forced SWAPO to relocate its bases 200 kilometers farther north and to redirect most infiltration to avoid the occupied zone. [redacted]

South Africa's greatest success, in our view, has been its ability to confine most guerrilla attacks to areas away from the white South African and Namibian population. We also believe that South African statistics indicating reduced insurgent attacks on civilian targets since 1980 or 1981 accurately reflect the diminished intensity of the fighting in Namibia.¹¹

[redacted]

Exploiting Tribalism Within SWAPO

While confronting SWAPO's army militarily, South Africa also is working to weaken PLAN from within by exploiting the strong ethnic divisions that exist

¹¹ [redacted] landmine attacks by SWAPO have increased in 1984 despite this general trend. [redacted] 24 Namibian civilians have been killed and 41 injured in the first seven months of this year. [redacted]

Table 2
SWAPO Attacks on Civilians

Incident	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
Local population killed in landmine incidents	54	125	65	44	15
Local population injured in landmine incidents	98	173	144	70	30
Local population murdered	88	48	95	70	76
Local population abducted	474	308	113	171	278

[redacted]

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among the insurgents. Kwanyama Ovambos dominate the group and discriminate against both non-Ovambos and other Ovambo subtribes, [redacted]

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[redacted] They support President Nujoma even though he is a member of a minor Ovambo subgroup. Their greatest rivals are the Ndonga Ovambos, including SWAPO cofounder, Andimba (Herman) Toivo ja Toivo. [redacted]

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South Africa released Toivo from 16 years in prison last March in hopes that he would challenge Nujoma's leadership, [redacted]

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[redacted] Appointed Secretary General at a meeting of SWAPO's Central Committee in early August, he is now the party's second-ranking official. [redacted]

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[redacted]

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In our judgment, an open Nujoma-Toivo breach might split the guerrilla army. SWAPO has survived tribal-based upheavals in the past—including the ouster in 1980 of most of the minority Caprivians—but this time the dominant Ovambos would be divided. [redacted] the Kwanyama and Ndonga factions in PLAN support Military Commander Amambo (a Kwanyama) and Acting Secretary of Defense Kapelwa (a Caprivian), respectively—two powerful rivals for ultimate control of the

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military wing. Moreover, [redacted] SWAPO arrested hundreds of Owambo members of PLAN in July 1984 allegedly for spying on behalf of South Africa. [redacted] Kwanyama-Ndonga animosity might be the real cause of the arrests. [redacted]

PLAN has been contained in northern Namibia and with few exceptions prevented from reaching the politically sensitive white areas farther south. Pretoria, however, has failed in repeated attempts to eradicate the insurgents and their bases in southern Angola, and it cannot completely end the guerrilla infiltration and attacks. [redacted]

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Disengagement of Forces Agreement

SWAPO may have suffered its greatest setback when Angola and South Africa agreed at Lusaka on 16 February 1984 to disengage forces. The agreement committed Angola to restrain SWAPO in exchange for a phased withdrawal of South African forces in southern Angola. It established a joint headquarters and military patrols to prevent SWAPO from moving into the area vacated by the South Africans. [redacted]

PLAN has been hurt by the Angolan-South African disengagement of forces agreement, but the resilient guerrillas have recovered from setbacks in the past. Although Angola has cooperated somewhat in restraining SWAPO since the agreement was signed, the South Africans allege Angolan-SWAPO collusion and insist that Luanda has not moved forcefully to shut down guerrilla infiltration. In our view, Luanda does not want to be seen as the gendarmerie of the South Africans and will not seriously restrain SWAPO in the absence of progress on a Namibian settlement. [redacted]

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The Angolan-South African patrols initially engaged the insurgents in firefights, although more recently Luanda has done little more than turn a blind eye toward unilateral South African operations in southern Angola, [redacted]

The real test of Angola's willingness to restrain SWAPO could come during the rainy season beginning in late 1984 when conditions are again favorable for a major infiltration of Namibia. At that time SWAPO may try to send its guerrillas south to reinforce its claim as a legitimate participant in Namibian negotiations or to derail any Angolan-South African arrangement that does not appear to be leading toward implementation of the UN plan for Namibian independence. A major infiltration would set back Angolan-South African negotiations and could lead Pretoria to retaliate militarily against SWAPO's installations in Angola. [redacted]

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[redacted] Since then, the guerrillas have grown increasingly frustrated that SWAPO's political leaders cannot arrange a settlement and end the war. South African military headquarters in Windhoek in June went so far as to call PLAN a "spent force," and it said that dry weather was forcing those guerrillas already in Namibia to move toward populated areas and known waterholes where they became easier targets for the government forces. [redacted]

On the other hand, were Angola successfully to bar SWAPO from using its territory, we believe PLAN could not continue guerrilla operations in Namibia, and would be capable of little more than sporadic small-scale terrorist attacks. Only Angola provides direct access to Owambo, which provides favorable terrain and popular support to the insurgents. PLAN has no bases in Namibia, and the insurgents were crippled during the years they operated from Zambia by great distances, swamps, South African patrols,

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Nonetheless, some insurgents still manage to infiltrate northern Namibia and stage attacks. South African military officers have accused Angola of complicity, insisting that SWAPO prisoners have admitted being told by the Angolans to keep a low profile temporarily until the South African troop withdrawal is completed. [redacted]

Outlook

After 18 years of fighting, SWAPO's insurgency persists but without prospects for dramatic gains.

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and Zambian interference. Although PLAN has tested infiltration routes through Botswana and set up temporary camps there from time to time, Gaborone is unwilling to accept permanent guerrilla bases that would invite South African attacks.

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Unless there is significant progress on the Namibian settlement negotiations, we believe the Angolan-South African disengagement agreement will crumble gradually and the war will return to about the intensity of recent years. We believe that SWAPO is currently recruiting and training personnel and would be able to resume the offensive. Although the guerrillas want a cease-fire and a respite from the fighting, they probably will continue military operations at least until Pretoria agrees to Namibian independence.

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