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WH file

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**CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
11 October 1961**

OCI No. 3988/61

Copy No.

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Holden Roberto

1. Holden Roberto is the leader of the Angolan Peoples' Union (UPA) which was formed in 1958 and is directing the current revolt against the Portuguese.
2. Born in 1925 in the Bakongo tribal area of Angola, Roberto's education was limited to the primary level, mostly in Leopoldville. He worked as a civil servant in the government of the former Belgian Congo, gradually devoting more time to politics until this became a full time occupation in 1958 when he became leader of the UPA.
3. Roberto is considered an intelligent, persuasive, ardent nationalist with pro-Western leanings. He appears to realize that Angola is not ready for immediate independence and that chaos can only be avoided if there

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is a period of five years under UN tutelage. He has made many contacts in Africa, Europe, the US and the UN and is generally accepted in these circles as being the foremost Angolan nationalist leader.

4. Roberto's present position is difficult. Having apparently ordered the violence which broke out last March, he is in danger of losing control of the rebellion. Although the UPA has a wide following in Northern Angola, particularly among Roberto's Bakongo tribe, Roberto himself has no personal following in Angola and the UPA has had little success in extending its influence or its operations to tribes farther south. Morale appears to be dropping in the northern area and Roberto's efforts are handicapped by the difficulty of supplying the rebels with arms, the lukewarm support of Congolese authorities, and the UPA's own military ineptitude.

5. The failure of the UPA-directed revolt to maintain momentum is threatening both Roberto's control over UPA as well as UPA's hold over the rebel movements in Angola. Extremists in the UPA are becoming increasingly disillusioned with Roberto's handling of the revolt, particularly his inability to supply sufficient arms to the rebels. In addition, the UPA itself is being challenged

with growing effectiveness by its Communist-backed rival, the National Movement for the Liberation of Angola (NPLA). It seems likely, therefore, that in order to retain his pre-eminence in the UPA Roberto will have to appease his activist cohorts by extreme measures in the prosecution of the revolt. Failure to do so could easily lead to the UPA activists' taking control or to the UPA's gradually losing influence to the Communist-backed NPLA.