

July 4, 1975
Soviet Ambassador to Angola E.I. Afanasenko,
Memorandum of Conversation with Angolan
President Neto

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Summary:

Soviet Ambassador to the People's Republic of Angola E.I. Afanasenko, Memorandum of Conversation with President of the MPLA Agostinho Neto where Neto elaborates on Angolan relations with other parties in neighboring countries and requests financial and military aid.

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From the diary of
E.I. Afanassenko

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Record of Conference with
President of MPLA Agostinho NETO
4 July 1975

We received a visit from President of the MPLA Agostinho Neto. I informed him that the Central Committee of the CPSU was closely following the development of circumstances in Angola. The Soviet people are interested in the victory of democratic forces in Angola. In 1975, significant aid has been provided to the MPLA. Pursuant to instructions from the Central Committee of the CPSU, we had a conference with the President of the PRC [People's Republic of the Congo] M. Nguabi, in which the issue of rendering aid to the MPLA was discussed.

Neto thanked the Central Committee of the CPSU for the rendering of assistance. He stated that the leadership of the MPLA had recently expanded its contacts with governments of the African countries. In the course of these discussions, the MPLA is attempting to increase the number of its supporters in Africa. One of the immediate objectives of the MPLA is to prevent the discussion of the issue of Cabinda at the upcoming assembly concerned about the fact that this year [Ugandan leader] Idi Amin, who collaborates closely with [Zairian leader] Mobutu [Sese Seko], will become the Chairman of the OAU [Organization of African Unity]. We anticipate, said Neto, that the president of Uganda will come forward at the OAU assembly with a proposal to discuss the issue of Cabinda. Our meetings in Nigeria and our ongoing negotiations in the Congo with president M. Nguabi, Member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the KPT [the Russian acronym for the Congolese Workers' Party] A. Lopez, member of the Central Committee of the KPT Obami-Itu, and Foreign Minister [Charles-David] Ganao, said Neto, are directed to this very question.

Negotiations between the MPLA and the KPT are proceeding successfully. An agreement has been reached to maintain ongoing consultations between the MPLA and KPT with the aim of developing a common policy and the conduct of joint efforts in Africa and Angola. In order to enhance propaganda efforts prior to the establishment of radio broadcasting facilities in the country, broadcast of the radio program "Struggle of Angola" will be resumed in Brazzaville.

The president of the MPLA stated that one of the main points in the negotiations with the KPT was the issue of Cabinda. The PRC made the decision not to support the demand of autonomy for Cabinda at the OAU assembly which had been advanced by the Congo and Zaire last February. As to the change of their position on the Cabinda question, the Congolese assured the MPLA delegation that they would terminate assistance to the nationalist Cabindi organization FLEC. Inasmuch as the parties had reached an agreement on the Cabinda issue, the PRC allowed the MPLA to use its territory for the transport of arms, military equipment and other cargo supplied to the Movement by the Soviet Union and other friendly countries. In addition, the Congolese confirmed their decision to close their land border with Cabinda for the MPLA. In order to export supplies to Angola, they allotted the port and airfield at Pointe-Noire. Transportation of cargo is to be carried out by the land and sea forces of the MPLA. Neto was outspoken in his appraisal of the results of the negotiations with the Congolese. He emphasized that the refusal of the Congo to support the Cabindi

demand for autonomy represented an important step forward in the normalization of relations between the MPLA and the KPT.

The president of the MPLA proceeded to characterize the domestic situation in Angola. He pointed out that the existence of three national liberation movements in the country was creating a favorable opportunity for reactionary forces in the country, which in turn was leading to a further intensification of political, social, and economic conflicts. Neto pointed to two groups of reactionary forces acting against Angola. The first group he attributed to domestic Portuguese reactionaries. This group is fomenting tensions in the country and provoking a mass emigration of the white population from Angola. The departure of large numbers of technical specialists has resulted in serious damage to the country's economy. The white reactionaries are capitalizing on the support of the present Supreme Commissar of Angola and a large portion of the Portuguese officers. The second group of reactionary forces consists of foreign reactionaries. Neto also included the FNLA in that group.

The president of the MPLA said that the military conflict which took place last June demonstrated the strength of the MPLA's military detachments. Notwithstanding the numerical superiority of the FNLA's forces, the MPLA is no weaker than the FNLA in military terms. Neto declared that the MPLA commands great political influence in the country which is continuing to grow. At the same time, he acknowledged that two northwest provinces of Angola have been controlled by the FNLA since last June. In addition, UNITA commands major influence in Bie and the surrounding regions, where a large portion of the country's population lives.

Neto characterized UNITA as an organization representing the interests of white farmers with reactionary leanings. However, UNITA does not command significant military forces and is attempting to play a role as an intermediary between the MPLA and the FNLA. The president of the MPLA spoke in favor of a tactical alliance with UNITA. The desirability of such an alliance was advocated to the leadership of the MPLA by numerous heads of African governments, first and foremost, by the PRC.

The president of the MPLA expressed doubts about fulfillment of all the agreements signed in Nakuru (Kenya). One of the reasons for the likely breakdown of those agreements is the aggression of the FNLA, which is unlikely to give up its armed provocations. All of this, Neto emphasized, requires the MPLA to continue the development of its armed forces. In this connection it is counting on aid from the Soviet Union. The MPLA has decided to address the Central Committee of the CPSU with a request to furnish additional military and financial aid. At the end of this July, an MPLA delegation will be dispatched to the USSR, headed by member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the MPLA Iko Kareira (commander in chief of the MPLA).

Neto reported that last June, a delegation of the MPLA visited the PRC [People's Republic of China] at the invitation of the Chinese government. Zambia, Tanzania, and the PRC [People's Republic of the Congo] also took part in the organization of that trip. In the course of negotiations in the PRC, the Chinese assured their delegation that they would terminate all forms of military aid to all three Angolan national liberation movements until the granting of independence to Angola.

I thanked the president of the MPLA for the interesting information. I promised to communicate to the Central Committee of the CPSU the request of the MPLA to furnish additional military and financial aid.

The conference was attended by members of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the MPLA Lucio Lara and Jose Eduardo, member of the governing council of the MPLA Pedro Van-Dunen, as well as the first Secretary of the Soviet Embassy in the PRC Comrade B. G. Putilin.

Ambassador of the USSR to the
People's Republic of the Congo
/s/ E. Afanasenko

[Source: TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 68, d. 1962, ll. 157-159.]