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ANGOLA'S LONG-DELAYED ELECTION

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA, GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS

OF THE

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ANGOLA'S LONG-DELAYED ELECTION

THURSDAY, JULY 20, 2006

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA, GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS
AND INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS,
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:30 p.m., in room 2255, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Christopher H. Smith (Chairman of the Subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. SMITH. The Committee will come to order.

Let me begin by apologizing for the lateness of convening this hearing. We did have two votes that came up on the Floor, and obviously, they just finished. So, I apologize to our witnesses and to our guests for that rather lengthy delay of 40 minutes.

I also want to point out that there is a hearing occurring in the Full Committee on the proposed sale of F–16s to Pakistan.

So, some of our Members will be coming in and out.

That was not scheduled when we scheduled this hearing. So, there will be some competition there, and that is very, very controversial, but that was a rescheduled hearing of the Full Committee, and normally, we are not allowed to sit as a Subcommittee when the Full Committee meets so that we do not have conflicts, but that was a rescheduling issue.

So, good afternoon, everybody, and while international attention in the region of southern Africa often focuses on the HIV/AIDS pandemic or the blatantly undemocratic tactics of Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe, less attention is directed toward the institutionalization of democracy in Angola in the run-up to its long-awaited national elections, targeted to be held in September 2006.

Yet the outcome of this election is important, not only for Angola itself, and for the region, but also for the United States.

Angola is one of the world's largest diamond producers, and its Okavango river basin provides valuable water to Namibia and Botswana.

It is the second largest oil producer in sub-Saharan Africa, and in May 2006, Angola exported 356,000 barrels per day to the United States, making it one of the U.S.'s top 10 oil importers.

By way of background, during the 1970s, Angola was engaged in a 14-year armed struggle for freedom from Portugal, the colonial power.

The Portuguese gave up control of Angola in November 1975, but they did not resolve the question of who would form the government in Angola before leaving. As a result, three liberation move-

ments fought for control of the country for 2 years, until the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, or the MPLA, took control of the government in 1977.

However, the civil war, which began in the months before independence, and was fueled by superpower Cold War competition, raged on. There were a few cease-fire agreements over the next decade, but it wasn't until May 1991 that peace was sufficiently established to allow Angola to hold its first-ever election, scheduled for September 1992.

There were numerous obstacles along the way to these elections.

Uncertain disarmament of soldiers, problematic exchanges of prisoners, discoveries of hidden weapons, assassinations of political party officials and other crises threatened to derail Angola's elections, but the process continued to move forward.

Not even a brief controversy over an early end to the registration of voters in opposition areas could derail the process.

On September the 29th and 30th of 1999, Angola's first elections were held. President Jose Eduardo dos Santos won slightly less than 50 percent of the vote, while opposition leader Jonas Savimbi won 40 percent.

The MPLA won 129 seats in the 220-seat National Assembly, and Savimbi's National Union for the Total Independence of Angola, or UNITA, won 77 seats.

Savimbi had expected to win the election and seemed unprepared to accept defeat. However, Margaret Anstee, the United Nations Special Representative in Angola, declared the elections she helped to oversee to be essentially free and fair, despite irregularities.

In the post-election wrangling, an agreement was reached to hold the required presidential election run-off, since no candidate won a majority of the vote. Unfortunately, the hostile rhetoric continued to escalate, and warfare restarted just as Angola appeared ready to emerge from its long history of conflict.

The renewed warfare stopped and started, but it didn't finally end until the death of Savimbi in a shoot-out with government troops in February 2002. Since then, Angola has moved toward its long-delayed elections, again in fits and starts.

Two years ago, the Government of Angola set September 2006 as the target time-frame for elections.

Among the electoral assistance Angola will be receiving in preparation for the elections is technical assistance from three American organizations: The International Foundation for Electoral Assistance, which is represented at our hearing today by its president, Richard Soudriette; the International Republican Institute, or IRI; and the National Democratic Institute.

The purpose of today's hearing is to allow Congress to gain a better understanding of the challenges faced by the Angolan Government, the ruling party, and the political opposition.

If our Government is to be of assistance in preparing for these important elections, we need to know exactly what remains to be done and how we can make the next elections an effective means for the Angolan people to express their political will.

According to the current State Department Country Report on Human Rights Practices, the right of Angolan citizens to change their government at all levels has been compromised, largely due

to the continued delay in holding elections, but also because of other issues.

Angolan law provides for freedom of speech and assembly, but in practice, both rights have been restricted by the government.

Moreover, opposition parties have reported acts of political intolerance by supporters of the MPLA.

There were reports in March of last year that supporters of the Social Renovation Party were chased out of two municipalities in Moxico Province, and a few weeks later, MPLA activists reportedly burned down eight homes of UNITA supporters.

Since then, MPLA and opposition parties have met to discuss issues related to the election, including acts of harassment, and we hope to learn today from our witnesses whether those talks have resolved these problems.

I would like to now yield to my good friend and colleague, Ms. Lee, for any opening comments that she might have.

[The prepared statement of Chairman Smith follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY AND CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA, GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS

Good Afternoon. While international attention in the region of southern Africa often focuses on the HIV–AIDS pandemic or the blatantly undemocratic tactics of Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe, less attention is directed towards the institutionalization of democracy in Angola in the run-up to its long-awaited national elections, targeted to be held in September 2006.

Yet the outcome of this election is important not only for Angola itself and for the region, but also for the United States. Angola is one of the world's largest diamond producers and its Okavango river basin provides valuable water to Namibia and Botswana. It is the second biggest oil producer in sub-Saharan Africa, and in May 2006, Angola exported 356 thousand barrels per day to the United States, making it one of the US' top 10 oil importers.

During the 1970s, Angola was engaged in 14-year armed struggle for freedom from Portugal, the colonial power. The Portuguese gave up control of Angola in November 1975, but they did not resolve the question of who would form the government in Angola before leaving. As a result, three liberation movements fought for control of the country for two years until the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, or MPLA, took control of the government in 1977.

However, the civil war, which began in the months before independence and was fueled by superpower Cold War competition, raged on. There were a few cease-fire agreements over the next decade, but it wasn't until the Bicesse Accords signed in May 1991 that peace was sufficiently established to allow Angola to hold its first-ever elections—scheduled for September 1992.

There were numerous obstacles along the way to those elections. Uncertain disarmament of soldiers, problematic exchanges of prisoners, discoveries of hidden weapons, assassinations of political party officials and other crises threatened to derail Angola's elections, but the process continued to move forward. Not even a brief controversy over an early end to registration of voters in opposition areas could derail the process.

So on September 29th and 30th1999, Angola's first elections were held. President José Eduardo dos Santos won slightly less than 50% of the vote, while opposition leader Jonas Savimbi won 40%. The MPLA won 129 seats in the 220-seat National Assembly and Savimbi's National Union for the total Independence of Angola, or UNITA, won 77 seats.

Savimbi had expected to win the election and seemed unprepared to accept defeat. However, Margaret Anstee, the United Nations Special Representative in Angola declared the elections she helped oversee to be essentially free and fair, despite irregularities. In the post-election wrangling, an agreement was reached to hold the required Presidential election run-off, since no candidate won a majority of the vote. Unfortunately, the hostile rhetoric continued to escalate and warfare restarted just as Angola appeared ready to emerge from its long history of conflict.

The renewed warfare stopped and started, but didn't finally end until the death of Savimbi in a shoot-out with government troops in February 2002. Since then, Angola has moved toward its long-delayed elections—again in fits and starts.

Two years ago, the Government of Angola set September 2006 as the target timeframe for elections. Among the electoral assistance Angola will be receiving in preparation for the elections is technical assistance from three American organizations: the International Foundation for Electoral Assistance, which is represented at our hearing today by its President, Richard Soudriette; the International Republican Institute, and the National Democratic Institute.

The purpose of today's hearing is to allow Congress to gain a better understanding of the challenges faced by the Angolan government, the ruling party and the political opposition. If our government is to be of assistance in preparing for these important elections, we need to know exactly what remains to be done and how we can help make the next elections an effective means for the Angolan people to express their political will.

According to the current State Department Country Report on Human Rights Practices, the right of Angolan citizens to change their government at all levels has been compromised, largely due to the continued delay in holding elections, but also because of other issues. Angolan law provides for freedom of speech and assembly, but in practice, both rights have been restricted by the government.

Moreover, opposition parties have reported acts of political intolerance by supporters of the MPLA. There were reports in March of last year that supporters of the Social Renovation Party were chased out of two municipalities in Moxico Province, and a few weeks later, MPLA activists reportedly burned down eight homes of UNITA supporters. Since then, MPLA and opposition parties met to discuss issues related to the election, including acts of harassment. We will learn from our witnesses today whether those talks have resolved these problems.

There are some positive signs that this election may succeed. Among them are the passage of an electoral law by the National Assembly and the establishment of a national electoral commission. I regret that its chairman Dr. Caetano de Sousa, was unable to be with us today, but he said it was critical for him to continue working on the electoral schedule.

Congress was once divided between supporters of the MPLA and supporters of UNITA. Today, we are united in our interest in helping one of our major suppliers of oil to enjoy the lasting benefits of peace and to achieve the kind of economic development this nation, with so many natural and human resources, deserves after so many decades of war and suffering.

Ms. LEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I want to welcome our witnesses, and look forward to your testimony.

I guess one of the—and I remember very well the struggle for Angolan independence, and all of the issues surrounding the current circumstances, but I am puzzled and I have not figured out yet—and maybe this hearing will explain why the elections continue to be postponed, why—and do Angolans see their government as being responsive to their needs?

I guess, what, 70 percent of the population is living in poverty. Over 30 percent are illiterate, of course, the majority of whom are women.

There are about—and I was shocked to see this—about 320,000 people living with HIV and AIDS, and so, given the crisis, the humanitarian crisis, quite frankly, that Angola is faced with, what type of government is in place, and how is this government responding to the needs of the people?

So, I look forward to the testimony, and look forward to understanding a bit more about Angola's form of democracy and what this means in terms of participation by the people.

Thank you very much.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Ms. Lee.

I would like to now introduce our first panel, beginning with Mr. Dan Mozena, who became director of the Office of Southern African Affairs in the State Department on August 16th of 2004.

As director, he has established as his highest priority developing and supporting United States policies to help southern Africa fight and win the war against HIV/AIDS, strengthen democracy and improve governance, enhance regional stability, and promote economic growth to reduce poverty.

Before assuming his current position, he has had a long career in Africa, including deputy chief of the mission in Zambia, as well as serving as office-in-charge for South Africa during its historic transition from apartheid to democracy.

We will then hear from Dr. Paul Bonicelli, who is the deputy assistant administrator for USAID and has the primary responsibility for its democracy and governance programs, where he coordinates government foreign assistance for democracy promotion, working, in particular, with the State Department and the National Security Council.

Before joining USAID, Dr. Bonicelli was on the professional staff of the House International Relations Committee, where he focused on development, democratization, and on the drug war.

In 2001 and 2002, he served as an official delegate to the UN, and we worked together at the Summit for Children there, and also, obviously, when he worked right here, working with our staff.

So, please, Mr. Mozena.

STATEMENT OF MR. DAN MOZENA, DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN AFFAIRS, BUREAU OF AFRICAN AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. MOZENA. Mr. Chairman, Congresswoman Lee, thank you very much for inviting me to join you today to discuss Angola and its election prospects.

With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I would like to submit for the record my written statement.

Mr. SMITH. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. MOZENA. I would also like to recognize two individuals from my staff who have helped prepare me for this testimony, and that would be Ms. Jeanne Maloney and Mr. Saul Garlick, as well as Ms. Kathleen Moody from our legislative office.

I am very pleased to join USAID Deputy Assistant Administrator, Dr. Paul Bonicelli, in this discussion this afternoon.

Angola is a country with vast natural resources and great potential for economic development and prosperity.

Democracy is emerging in Angola, a country facing the challenges of building democratic institutions after centuries of colonial rule and a 27-year civil war.

The last election, as the Chairman just related, was held in 1992.

Now-President Jose Eduardo dos Santos won the plurality during the first round balloting in those elections, but there was no second round, as Jonas Sauimbi, who had finished second in that vote, alleged fraud, retreated to the bush, and resumed civil war.

Today, President dos Santos leads a stable and potentially prosperous country.

Angola is now working to address fundamental issues of democratization and corruption.

During my March 2006 visit to Angola, I emphasized how critically important elections are, not only to building a strong democ-

racy, but also to create a secure and stable business environment attractive to investors.

Although uncertainty remains regarding the date of elections, the Government of Angola continues to take important steps to prepare for them.

In 2005, Angola passed electoral laws establishing the framework for elections. The laws were the result of a consultative process involving civil society, as well as all political parties.

An independent national election commission consisting of 11 members was created to oversee the election process, including voter registration.

Technical work and preparations for voter registration are underway now.

Nonetheless, it is unlikely that elections will be held in 2006.

President dos Santos, in his New Year's address in January, urged the country to increase the pace of infrastructure improvements and emphasized that the risk of land mines must be addressed to ensure that voters have safe access to polling places.

He called for elections to be held no later than 2007, and we urge the Government of Angola to move expeditiously toward those elections.

United States foreign policy priorities in Angola are shifting from emergency humanitarian needs to supporting Angola's development and reconstruction.

We seek to strengthen democracy and governance, promote respect for human rights, support economic growth and development, improve health, and increase regional security.

On a personal note, and picking up on a comment made by Congresswoman Lee, and as a person who recently completed a 3-year tour in Zambia, where I witnessed firsthand the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS, I deeply hope that we and other donors are successful in helping Angola avoid the scourge of HIV/AIDS.

Surely it is better to prevent AIDS than fight the pandemic after it has taken root.

Other issues critical to solidifying a democratic and prosperous Angola include economic reform, good governance, and improved health care.

There are signs of progress on anti-corruption and transparency efforts.

We are encouraged by the Angolan Government's recent indication that it is taking steps to join the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, which would send a positive signal that the government is committed to transparency.

We also encourage investor nations—and I am including China, which is now Angola's biggest oil export market—to promote transparency in dealings with Angola.

Angola has been at peace for almost 4 years. The peace must now be consolidated through free and fair elections, increased investment in infrastructure, reduced corruption, and improved social programs that benefit all Angolans.

The United States will continue to encourage elections and democracy in Angola, as well as economic reform and transparency.

Both nations have much to gain from an ever-strengthening bilateral relationship in terms of peace and prosperity.

We will continue to assist Angola to reach its potential, and look forward to working with the Angolan Government in building a more democratic, transparent, and prosperous nation.

Mr. Chairman, Chairwoman Lee, I greatly appreciate this opportunity to share a few thoughts with you, and I look forward to your question and answers.

[The prepared statement of Dan Mozena follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MR. DAN MOZENA, DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN AFFAIRS, BUREAU OF AFRICAN AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

INTRODUCTION

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to join you today to discuss Angola and its election prospects. I am pleased to join USAID Deputy Assistant Administrator Dr. Paul Bonicelli in this exchange. Angola is a country with vast natural resources and great potential for economic development and prosperity. Now, almost four years after the end of a devastating civil war spanning nearly three decades, Angola is beginning to rebuild its tattered infrastructure and institutions.

Democracy is emerging in Angola, which is facing the challenges of building democratic institutions after a 27-year civil war. The country's first elections held in 1992 ended in violence when UNITA's Jonas Savimbi rejected the results of the first round of the presidential election and returned to war. The country's president, Jose Eduardo dos Santos, has been in power since the death in 1979 of Angola's first president, Agostinho Neto. Since the 1992 elections were not completed, dos Santos was never technically elected. The end of Angola's civil war in 2002, following the death of Jonas Savimbi, opened the door to lasting peace, and renewed hopes of democratic revitalization. President dos Santos is today the leader of a stable and potentially prosperous country, but Angola has a long road ahead as it works to address fundamental issues of democratization and corruption.

U.S. foreign policy priorities in Angola are shifting from emergency humanitarian needs to supporting Angola's development and reconstruction. Our goals are to strengthen democracy and governance, promote respect for human rights, support economic growth and development, improve health, and increase regional security. Angola has been at peace for almost four years. The peace must be consolidated through free and fair elections, increased investment on infrastructure, reduced corruption, and improved social programs that benefit all Angolan people. A democratic and economically progressive Angola would have a positive impact on the continent, and contribute to regional stability. With petroleum reserves yielding around 1.4 million barrels of oil per day, a rapidly decreasing inflation rate, and the highest economic growth rate in the world at nearly 20%, a democratic and economically progressive Angola will also have resounding effects in ensuring a strong business environment and serving as a source of stability in the global energy market. A healthy and stable Angolan economy will also energize the economies of the central and southern African region.

During my March 2006 visit to Angola, I emphasized how critically important elections are not only to building a strong democracy but also to the creation of a secure and stable business environment attractive to investors. President Bush noted at a recent White House event honoring four African recipients of the prestigious Democracy Award from the National Endowment for Democracy that "people everywhere desire to be free . . . freedom does not just belong to American citizens. Freedom belongs to everybody." The President's comments resonate for Angolans, too.

ELECTION PROSPECTS

While there remains uncertainty regarding the date of elections, the Government of Angola continues to take important steps to prepare for the process. In 2005, Angola passed electoral laws establishing the framework for elections. The laws were the result of a consultative process involving civil society as well as all political parties. An independent National Election Commission (NEC), consisting of 11 members, was created to oversee the election process, including voter registration. Although technical work and preparations for voter registration are underway, it appears unlikely that elections will be held in 2006. President dos Santos in his New Year's address in January 2006 urged the country to increase the pace of infrastructure improvements and emphasized that the risk of landmines must be addressed

in order to ensure that voters have safe access to polling places. He called for elections to be held no later than 2007.

The United States Government has consistently maintained the importance of holding parliamentary and presidential elections in a timely manner. We have contributed to strengthening democracy by providing training to all political parties and to civil society. My colleague from USAID, Dr. Bonicelli, will provide more details on this. Because of the 1992 election experience, some Angolans, especially those in the provinces, associate elections with violence and war. Our work is helping educate the population on elections and on conflict resolution through dialogue. We have helped support marginalized elements to discover their voice and participate effectively in the election preparation process. We have also maintained that independent media is crucial to free and fair elections. The USG has supported media freedom through funding and technical training with positive results. The Press Law passed this year provides the initial framework for the licensing of independent radio stations throughout the country to complement the energetic discussion of political issues by independent radio stations now reaching one-third of the population residing in Luanda and Bengo provinces.

We have consistently called for democratic elections in Angola, but the decision to move toward freedom and democracy lies with the Government and the people of Angola. As Assistant Secretary Frazer stated earlier this year, "The United States will support democratic movements in Africa."

OTHER ISSUES

Other issues critical to solidifying a democratic and prosperous Angola include economic reform and good governance, and improved health care. There are signs of progress on anti-corruption and transparency efforts. We welcome the increasingly transparent publishing of oil revenues and budgets, and are encouraged by Angola's movement toward ratification of the United Nations and African Union anticorruption conventions. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have noted positive steps by the Angolan government to eliminate off-budget expenditures and the international community witnessed a recent oil concession round praised for its unprecedented openness and transparency. The Angolan government has authorized the publication of IMF and World Bank reports on public websites and has itself published excerpts of the reports in government-controlled media. Such steps help make the government more directly accountable to the public.

The U.S. Government is providing technical assistance to help the Angolan Government staff and train a Fiscal Programming Unit, which strengthens the government's economic planning and fiscal programming capacity. This capacity is particularly important in a country such as Angola, where authorities must develop a plan to use volatile short-term oil gains in support of long-term poverty reduction objectives. We are encouraged by the Angolan Government's recent indication that it is taking steps to join the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), which would send a positive signal to the Angolan public that the government is committed to transparency. We also encourage investor nations, including China, now Angola's biggest oil export market, to promote transparency in dealings with Angola. We have promoted the benefits of economic diversification to help build employment in non-oil sectors, including agriculture, and have encouraged Angola to take greater advantage of the African Growth and Opportunity Act and increase its exports to the United States. We also welcome institutional support to improve the ability of the provincial and municipal governments to monitor expenditures.

American oil companies have actively participated in building and developing the Angolan economy by procuring more goods and services from local companies and supporting local entrepreneurs through a variety of capacity-building initiatives, strengthening Angola's private sector and forming productive linkages between the oil industry and the rest of Angola's economy. Angolan officials have called for greatly increased foreign and domestic investment to diversify its economy and provide additional jobs and prosperity for people throughout the country. Currently at least thirty US companies and 6000 US citizens operate and work in Angola. The overwhelming majority of these employees are associated with the oil sector. An improved business environment will attract further investment. The government has taken positive steps by passing an Investment Law, which provides incentives for private investment and setting up a "One-Stop Shop" to streamline business registration procedures.

Roughly 40% of Angolan oil comes from the Angolan enclave of Cabinda, separated from the rest of the country by the Congo River and a narrow strip of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Since Angola's independence in 1975 from Portugal, Cabinda has been the site of an armed conflict challenging the Angolan gov-

ernment's control over the province. Today, the Angolan Government and the Cabinda Forum for Dialogue are nearing a peace settlement, which will reinforce stability in the country and in the region. The United States supports this pursuit of peace and hopes that the agreement will encourage the full participation of voters in Cabinda in the election process.

Health concerns are, of course, also of grave importance in Angola. Though HIV/AIDS is not yet at epidemic levels in Angola, all of the indicators that preceded the crisis in other parts of sub-Saharan Africa are present. The population is currently just emerging from a cholera epidemic that has affected an estimated 45,000 people, killing more than two thousand Angolans. The Angolan Government needs to invest more of its own resources to address these health crises to ensure that all Angolans prosper as a result of the country's growing wealth. Additionally, malaria continues to plague the population as the primary killer. We are helping to fight malaria under the President's Malaria Initiative. This week an innovative vaccination program sponsored by the Government of Angola and supported by USAID, CDC, Exxon-Mobil, the American Red Cross, UNICEF, WHO, Rotary International, CORE, and our international partners, the Governments of Norway, Great Britain, Canada and Japan, will be launched that will protect more than 3 million children against polio, measles, malaria, vitamin A deficiency and parasites.

THE WAY FORWARD

The United States will continue to encourage elections and democracy in Angola, as well as economic reform and transparency. Both nations have much to gain from a lasting bilateral relationship in terms of peace and prosperity. We will continue to assist Angola to reach its potential and look forward to working with the Angolan government in building a more democratic, transparent and prosperous society, which will also have a positive impact on the region generally.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you so much.

Dr. Bonicelli.

STATEMENT OF PAUL BONICELLI, PH.D., DEPUTY ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR FOR DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE, U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. BONICELLI. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman and Congresswoman Lee, it is an honor to appear before you this afternoon, especially—as the Chairman noted, I used to work here.

It is a little more intimidating on this side of the dais.

I am glad we are not in the big room, but remember what a great staffer I was in the '90s.

I am pleased to join my State colleagues, our partners, representatives of the Angolan Government, to talk about this very important issue.

In addition to being deputy assistant administrator at USAID for our democracy programs at the agency, with Ambassador Tobias' arrival, I have a new role to play, as well, and that is chairing a committee called Governing Justly and Democratically for the Foreign Assistance Reform, and I just want to say that we continue to look forward to working with the Congress as we reform foreign assistance, and especially to make it more effective as we work on situations such as these that the Subcommittee looks at.

My task is to share USAID's view of Angola's emergent electoral system and to describe the central activities of USAID efforts to improve the inclusiveness and the credibility of those elections.

As Mr. Mozena noted in his remarks, the current political situation is heavily influenced by the history of protracted civil war and the fact that this should be a wealthy country, given all the resources that it has.

I will not repeat much of what he said about the reason that the country is in the position that it is in, but I want to address, specifically, our preparations at USAID, and the way that they work with State Department and the foreign policy as laid out by the President and the Secretary.

While there have been many delays in Angola's election preparations, there has been momentum over the past 18 months, and I would say this is encouraging.

A package of electoral laws that provide for expanded observation and voter rights was passed in August of last year.

Elections are overseen in Angola by two entities now.

The National Electoral Commission, which is responsible for ensuring electoral integrity, has been appointed, and its members enjoy widespread respect among Angolans.

The other body is the Inter-Ministerial Commission of Electoral Processes. This is responsible for administering the elections, and it has been constituted and begun its work.

However, while these are tangible steps toward elections and they are welcomed, there are still weaknesses in this electoral system.

The new laws did not create a truly independent election administration body in the form of the Inter-Ministerial Commission that I mentioned.

Also, we would like to see the National Election Commission be more energetic, be more pro-active, as it gets organized and begins its operations.

Also, the government's provision for public funding of political parties needs to be implemented transparently.

Moreover, Angolans still await a final decision on which elections will be held and in what order, which is the main impetus for this hearing.

Let me now speak more specifically about USAID's contributions that support our foreign policy priorities, as Mr. Mozena laid out.

In Angola, we want to strengthen democracy and governance. We want to support economic growth, development, improve health, and promote regional security, and to that end, USAID recently shifted its focus from humanitarian assistance to strengthening democracy and governance, and providing development assistance.

In addition to helping prepare for free and fair elections, we are helping the government develop the systems and human capacity that are essential to achieve these broad-based growth goals.

We support government decentralization efforts and strengthening the quality of dialogue between the Government of Angola and civil society.

USAID also promotes the emergence of a vibrant independent press and is helping to modernize the judiciary.

The objective of USAID elections assistance is to support inclusive and credible elections, as I said earlier. Given Angola's experience in having an election trigger a return to war, the degree to which civil society and political parties are included in all steps of the electoral process adds credibility to the process and builds confidence among Angolans that peaceful, credible elections can be held.

USAID supports civil society organizations and political parties to, first of all, ensure access to accurate information on electoral issues; two, to increase citizen participation in the electoral process; three, fill capacities for independent election monitoring; four, promote the management and mitigation of election-related conflict, about which I would like to say more; and five, support the development of issue-driven internally democratic political parties.

We have delivered most of this election assistance through the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening. This is a cooperative agreement known as CEPPS—for those who have been involved in this, you have heard that plenty of times—and it supports programs of the International Republican Institute, the National Democratic Institute, and IFES.

In Angola, IRI's work is focused on political parties, NDI's is focused on civil society, and IFES on election administration.

In addition, NDI has sub-granted funds to an organization called Search for Common Ground for work on election-related conflict mitigation.

Our partners' programs have made many notable achievements.

Civil society successfully advocated for observation of the voter registration process and for a more balanced system for appointing electoral officials and the new electoral laws.

These same groups are, right now, conducting vibrant voter education campaigns in six provinces. Multi-party forums that enable political parties to interact directly with citizens have been well received, and political parties are even using them in training and registering voters as a basis for their own voter registration drive.

It is important to note that USAID provides assistance to a wide range of political parties in Angola, including the five parties in the National Assembly and additional parties, as long as they have a nationwide basis.

It is important to note that the preparations for elections in anticipation of working with a newly elected democratic government must occur in the context of continued conflict even though the war has been over for some time. Angola is still torn, socially and politically, and that makes the job harder and more than about simply setting up—helping to set up a sound election process.

Mitigating election-related conflicts is critical. To this end, our partners are working provinces that experienced fierce fighting during the war.

Activities include multi-party meetings with local communities that have, in many cases, been the first time that MPLA and UNITA have sat together for a debate in these communities.

In addition, our partners are encouraging meetings of municipal elected stakeholders.

We work to get governors, political parties, and other local leaders to manage election conflict as it emerges, or prevent it, if possible, but USAID and its partners are not at full speed yet in Angola.

Given the continuing uncertainties about when and how the elections will take place, our assistance thus far has been limited.

We are currently in discussion with the National Elections Commission and other bilateral and multilateral donors to be ready when these uncertainties have been resolved.

Finally, let me close with a comment about the role that USAID understands elections to play in the process of democratization, and it goes to what Congresswoman Lee mentioned in her remarks.

In sum, elections are just one step in the process. USAID intends to maintain robust support for the Angolan electoral process throughout election day, and will support inclusive political competition and promote good governance at all levels of the government through the foreseeable future.

We will continue to support credible inclusive elections that will lead to the inauguration of an administration with the mandate and political will to accelerate the pace of reforms in support of broad-based growth in democratization.

USAID stands ready to support the elected government in strengthening decentralization, improving delivery of decentralized public services, increasing budgetary transparency to combat corruption, and strengthening the quality of the dialogue between the Government of the Republic of Angola and its citizens, and as to your comment, Congresswoman Lee, it seems to me that, as much as we can do regarding women's issues and AIDS and poverty, it is a democratic Angola that will ultimately make the difference there.

Those kinds of governments can fix those problems better than any other.

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to trying to answer any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Paul Bonicelli follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF PAUL BONICELLI, PH.D., DEPUTY ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR FOR DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE, U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

Mr. Chairman, and Members of the Subcommittee, it is an honor to appear before you this afternoon to speak about USG support for democratic electoral processes in Angola. We are very pleased that the Subcommittee has asked for the U.S. Agency for International Development's input, the views of the Department of State in the person of Dan Mozena, Director, Office of Southern African Affairs, the views of our implementing partners, and those of the invited Angolan participants. As the USAID Deputy Assistant Administrator for Democracy and Governance and the chair of the USG inter-agency Governing Justly and Democratically technical cone under the joint Department of State and USAID foreign assistance reform effort, I am particularly pleased to be able to address you today. My task is to share USAID's view of Angola's emergent electoral system and proto-democratic political situation and to describe USAID's central activities in support of the USG's efforts to improve the inclusiveness and credibility of Angola's anticipated elections, thereby building the confidence of the Angolan electorate and political parties in the new system.

ANGOLA COUNTRY BACKGROUND

The current political situation in Angola is heavily influenced by its recent history of protracted civil war and by the realities of enduring poverty in the midst of immense mineral and agricultural wealth. The personal histories of most Angolans are dominated by memories of war-associated insecurities and deprivations. An important part of this collective memory is having had expectations of peace dashed when the 1992 elections triggered a return to violence. Angolans, political leaders and average citizens alike, therefore regard the anticipated national elections with some degree of trepidation.

Decades of civil war have also left Angola in the position of being a relative latecomer to democratic electoral processes. With the exception of the 1992 elections, Angolan citizens and officials have had no experience of democracy and elections.

The long civil war, coupled with Angola's 500 years of colonial subjugation—which included the long rule of a Portuguese dictatorship in the years prior to independence—interfered with the development of a democratic culture.

As a result of a clear cut military victory, Angolan decision making is dominated by a small political, economic and military elite associated with a single political party. At the same time, despite a clear cut victory, the terms of the peace agreement provided for a unity government. Opposition parties exist and, in fact, the major opposition party is a part of the Government, holding ministerial positions in the cabinet and three of the country's eighteen governorships. Despite their role in the Government, it is fair to say that opposition parties have little ability to "check and balance" ruling party dominance.

The destruction wrought by Angola's war, both in terms of infrastructure and human capacity, add to the challenge of building a democracy and conducting free and fair elections. The state of transportation infrastructure remains poor, local capacity on the part of government and civil society to ensure open elections is weak and disparities in resources among political groups hamper political competition. Constraints on access to information remain, as there is no significant independent media outside the capitol.

GOVERNMENT ELECTION PREPARATIONS

Angolan government officials, political party representatives, and civil society advocates have debated the need for and timing of national elections since the signing of the 2002 peace agreement. The international diplomatic and donor community have exerted pressure in favor of elections, but pressure has also come internally in the form of demands from an initially weak, but strengthening, community of civil society organizations and from factions within the political parties, including the ruling party. Many Angolans see the elections as a path to global legitimacy and increased private sector investment.

Over the past eighteen months, the Angolan government has taken concrete steps in preparation for elections. A package of elections laws was promulgated in August of 2005. Initially based on Angola's electoral law for the 1992 elections, the new laws include important provisions for improving the credibility of the elections in the areas of observation, balance of appointments to electoral bodies, and expansion of voting rights. Civil society played a role in bringing about these latter provisions.

The National Electoral Commission (NEC) has been appointed and charged with monitoring the electoral process and ensuring its integrity. The NEC has 11 widely respected members, is chaired by a Supreme Court Justice and includes representatives from the ruling party, opposition parties, and the Government. Sub-units of the NEC have been set up in every province and most municipalities.

The Inter-ministerial Commission of Electoral Processes (CIPE, its acronym based on the Portuguese name) has also been constituted, is charged with administering elections, and will be overseen by the Ministry of Territorial Administration. CIPE has launched training for voter registration and contracted a consortium of companies to provide IT support for the elections. Although no official date has been set by the government, it is widely believed that voter registration may begin as early as September 2006 and will require approximately six months to implement.

While these tangible steps towards elections are welcomed, there remain weaknesses in the Angolan electoral system. The new electoral laws did not create a truly independent election administration body and the provision for public funding of political parties will require the establishment of a transparent implementation mechanism to prevent its use as a patronage tool. Further, the fundamental decision as to which elections to hold (presidential, legislative) has not yet been determined, nor has a date for elections been fixed. Given the projected minimum timeline for voter registration, national elections may be held sometime in calendar year 2007.

U.S. FOREIGN POLICY PRIORITIES AND USAID ASSISTANCE

U.S. foreign policy priorities in Angola are to strengthen democracy and governance, support economic growth and development, improve health, and promote regional security. Until recently, USAID programs focused on the delivery of food aid and other humanitarian assistance. Under a new program currently coming on stream, USAID focus has shifted to give high priority to strengthening democracy and governance. In addition to helping to prepare for free and fair elections, this includes helping the Government develop the systems and human capacity essential to locking the country onto a path of broad-based growth, supporting Government decentralization efforts, and strengthening the quality of dialogue between Government and civil society. USAID also supports smaller activities in promoting a vibrant independent press and helping modernize the judiciary.

USAID ELECTIONS ASSISTANCE

USAID activities are designed to support inclusive and credible elections. As mentioned earlier, in the minds of many Angolans, there is still a strong connection between elections and war. The last elections, held in 1992, were never completed as UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi rejected the results and re-initiated armed conflict. In this context, the degree to which civil society and political parties are included in all steps of the electoral process adds credibility to the process and builds confidence among Angolans that peaceful, credible elections can be held. USAID seeks to build the capacities of Angolan civil society organizations and political parties to (1) insure access to accurate information on electoral issues, (2) increase citizen participation in electoral processes, (3) build capacities for independent election monitoring, (4) promote the management and mitigation of election-related conflict, and (5) support the development of issue-driven, internally-democratic political parties.

USAID has delivered a significant portion of its Angola electoral support activities through the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS), a Cooperative Agreement between USAID's Office of Democracy and Governance and the CEPPS partners (International Republican Institute [IRI], National Democratic Institute [NDI] and IFES). IRI's work has focused on political parties, NDI's on civil society, including a sub-grant to Search for Common Ground to work on election-related conflict mitigation, and IFES has focused on election administration.

Activities to insure access to accurate information on electoral issues revolve around voter education conducted by civil society organizations. USAID partners have provided technical and project management training, as well as voter education materials, to six civil society electoral networks in the provinces of Luanda, Benguela, Huambo, Bié, Uíge, and Lunda-Sul. These electoral networks have conducted voter education on voter registration, democratic principles, citizen rights, and promoting political dialogue in each of their respective provinces. In addition, USAID supports multi-party workshops to inform parties on election topics and public multi-party forums that provide citizens an opportunity to engage directly with political parties.

Increased citizen participation is promoted through several activities. USAID partners provided technical assistance to civil society networks that advocated for reform of the electoral laws. These networks worked with the ruling MPLA and opposition parties throughout the legislative process and succeeded in having up to 80% of their recommendations included in the law on electoral observation. These advocacy efforts generated significant public debate in radio and television media. On the political party side, USAID has supported training on registering voters in ten provinces to most parties who hold seats in the national assembly and other parties with a nationwide base. The parties have used this assistance as the foundation for their voter registration initiatives.

The experience civil society networks have gained through civic education and advocacy lays a foundation for effective elections observation. USAID partners will provide additional technical assistance to civil society organizations and political parties that desire to monitor the various steps of the electoral process.

Management and mitigation of election-related conflict are critical elements of USAID programs. Activities particularly target provinces that experienced fierce fighting during the war. USAID has supported multi-party meetings with local communities. In many cases these have been the first time MPLA and UNITA have sat together for a debate in these communities. USAID partners are encouraging the establishment of municipal level electoral stakeholder meetings with governors, political parties, and other local leaders to manage election conflict as it arises. Training will be provided to political parties on developing a code of conduct and dispute resolution techniques.

Several of the activities cited above serve to strengthen democratic political parties. More specific activities include support for polling to enable political parties to develop party platforms informed by public opinion. Political party training and technical assistance is also provided on topics such as strategic communication, developing party platforms, and province-level party organization.

USG assistance on election administration has been limited, given the Government of the Republic of Angola's (GRA) substantial ability to directly fund electoral processes and the fact that the GRA is still in the process of determining what external support it might want to request from the donors. Discussions are on-going between USG representatives, the National Elections Council (NEC) and interested bilateral and multilateral donors regarding election administration assistance.

MOVING FORWARD—TO THE ELECTION DAY AND BEYOND

USAID intends to maintain robust support for the Angolan electoral process through election day and will support inclusive political competition and promote good governance at all levels of Angolan government through the foreseeable future. We will continue to support credible, inclusive elections that will lead to the inauguration of an administration with the mandate and will to accelerate the pace of reforms in support of broad-based growth and democratization. USAID stands ready to support the elected government in strengthening decentralization, improving delivery of decentralized public services, increasing budgetary transparency, and strengthening the quality of dialogue between the GRA and its citizens.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Dr. Bonicelli.

Let me begin with you, Mr. Mozena.

First, the postponement of the date for the elections, sometime in 2007, and if my memory is right, it was back in 2004 that the 2006 number was picked, and there has been slippage, obviously, but is that the beginning of 2007? Is there going to be a date certain in your view?

Dr. Bonicelli, you might want to speak to this, as well.

Do you construe the delay to be legitimate?

Are there reasons on the ground why the delay is warranted?

Secondly, on the NEC, argument is made in testimony from Mr. Sakala, from the president of UNITA parliamentary group, that the NEC is—he points out or suggests that 8 out of the 11-member body are from government-linked institutions. We know, having been in Congress for 26 years and worked elections myself for years, that if you have an election board that is truly transparent and independent, you are more likely to have a good outcome.

If not, when they get cases that have to be adjudicated, you could almost write the outcome before it happens, and I am wondering what your take is on the independence, or lack of it, of the NEC, given that composition, or are they made up of people of sufficiently independent caliber that you think they will deal with this election process openly and fairly?

You mentioned land mines, and we all know that Angola has a serious land mine problem.

How much of an impediment to elections do you suggest that is?

Are you fearful of that, as people make their way to election sites, that, you know, death or maiming might occur, and what is the response to try to mitigate that danger to those who will want to cast their ballots?

I would also ask you—again, Mr. Sakala points out that $200 million has been appropriated for elections in the 2005 and 2006 budgets. What was done with that money? Is that in escrow? Is it being used, drawn down from?

That is their money, obviously, not ours. How much are we spending on the election in terms of technical advise and support—Dr. Bonicelli might want to touch on that.

Finally, let me ask you with regards to the Angolan army, which is perhaps one of the most battle-test armies out there, in the region.

What is their role in the region? Are they being tapped for AU peacekeeping, for example, in a way that you think is consistent with their capabilities? We know that when Darfur and the word went out for troops to be deployed to Darfur, that there was a very concern whether or not, you know, the 7,700—and certainly more

are needed, and we know more will be provided, probably under the blue helmet, but there was this lack of capacity.

Does Angola have troops that might be meaningfully engaged, particularly in African peacekeeping?

Mr. MOZENA. That is quite a series of questions, Mr. Congressman.

I think I have got them.

The first question related to the timing of the election, and has there been a date certain? I am not aware of any date certain.

I am aware of the President of the country saying that they must be held no later than 2007, and I would not try to read more into that. I would have to take that at face value.

Mr. SMITH. That is not December 31, 2007.

Mr. MOZENA. It may well be. I do not know.

There are serious impediments to conducting elections in Angola, and I do not mean to apologize for anyone. I mean to just share the realities on the ground.

The fighting in Angola ended, as you rightly pointed out, Mr. Chairman, in February 2002, or shortly thereafter, when Mr. Savimbi was killed. Subsequent to that, more than 4 million internally displaced people and refugees from around the region came back into Angola and had to be resettled. Identification for these people is a major problem

You mentioned land mines, and we will come to that later, but that, in fact, is another obstacle for the election process.

In addition, there is a widespread fear among Angolans, and I can tell you, because I heard this myself from Angolans when I was there in March, they are afraid of the election process, because the only experience they have ever had with elections was in 1992, when elections, in fact, led to 10 years of horrible civil war. So, that needs to be overcome.

There is a very serious problem with the human capacity of the Government of Angola to actually conduct these elections. Only 7 percent of the civil service has any kind of education beyond secondary; 29 to 30 percent of the civil service has no education at all, or only a primary-level education. So, it does create serious impediments.

You raised a question about the National Election Commission. It consists of 11 people. It is chaired by a justice from the Supreme Court.

It has representatives from three parties—three from MPLA, two from UNITA, and one from another—and various other representatives, for a total of 11. Our own reading of the body, as shared to me by our Embassy, is that it is a respected body, and I would expect—we, the United States Government, would expect it to act impartially in conducting these elections.

You raised a question about the land mines and to what extent it is an impediment. Land mines are a serious problem in Angola.

As an American taxpayer, I am very proud of what my taxes have helped accomplish in Angola, along with other donors, in addressing this serious problem. All of the high-impact areas are fairly well addressed.

By the year 2011, one hopes the country will be what one can call mine-risk-free. I mean there will be many millions of land

mines still left but in areas where they will not impact people's lives.

To focus on your specific question, land mines are a very real problem.

I think the elections can, in fact, go ahead within a reasonable time period, even though that issue has not been fully addressed.

When I was in Bie Province, the governor of Bie told me that there are parts of his province he cannot get to overland because of mines. Okay. But there are also helicopters and other means to get around. So, I do not think it is necessarily a killer.

Your last question related to the Angolan military. You rightly noted that they are battle-tested. They are, in fact, quite battle-tested.

They offer great potential to assist in maintaining regional stability.

They have been very helpful in DRC, in training battalions of Congolese soldiers there.

We are working closely with the Angolan Government, and I am pleased to report that I expect very shortly we will have consummated a deal to undertake our ACOTA program. That's a peacekeeping operations training program.

We are very excited about that prospect, because once we can train Angolans on how to be effective peacekeepers, we think they will be very helpful, not only in DRC. You mentioned the need in Darfur. I suspect those needs are not going to go away right away. I think they will be helpful there.

I hope I touched on all of——

Mr. SMITH. Yes.

Dr. Bonicelli, if you could touch on some of those, and add to that, both Greg Simpkins and I visited Ethiopia soon after the elections, in August of last year, and met with the president and many other people, but met with their election commission leader, as well, and others on the commission, and obviously, that was a flawed election in Ethiopia, but when word went out to adjudicate contested elections, the outcome, you could have predicted, and we did, all came down in a certain direction. If you do not have a totally independent, transparent commission, and the rules and procedures that are established to conduct such, there will be contested elections. It is a given.

So, what is in place, and perhaps you could speak to some of the particulars, because I am concerned that we may have "deja vu all over again," despite best intentions, unless we get the process right. That means good bureaucracy, as well, not just the 11 that sit, but also the investigators, those who look over the data or the allegations of fraud and the like. That, to me, is one of the most crucial aspects of this whole deal, and that also gives a sense of predictability, I would suggest, on the part of those who are casting their votes, that it is all real, that there is a contest.

Mr. BONICELLI. I was remiss in not thanking Wendy Marshall and Ed Connarley, who are with me from USAID, who have been of the utmost help with me.

I agree with Mr. Mozena on the points he made and would add a couple of things.

One is what we understand is a hyper sense of perfectionism.

The Angolan Government wants to demonstrate that it can do this, that it is sufficient as a sovereign entity to hold elections and to have a good report on them, equal to or better than in '92, when the UN essentially blessed them as mostly fair and free, and I think that does play into it. There are other questions, though, about, for example, the National Elections Commission. Its job is to adjudicate complaints, and so, it is supposed to be the—sort of the watch dog and the monitor, the judge, while the Inter-Ministerial runs them.

The question we have, though, that is open, is when will the elections commission start operating, start asking for money from its government, put into operation all that it can?

I agree with Mr. Mozena about the view of that commission. Whether or not members are appointed with government relationships, they are widely respected, and so, the question is will they, even now, begin to play the role that they should play, which is that of watch dog and that of guarantor on the side.

You asked about spending, and I want to get to that. I would just say one thing about the military, not about their role in the AU or anything like that, but there is a question about the security forces and what role they play in elections, and that needs to be settled and determined, and those who are assisting in this need to know, are they there to facilitate or just to keep order? What is their role?

As far as spending, you asked that. To date, since 2001, USAID has obligated $7,786,000, and roughly that much has gone in assistance. We are anticipating in 2006, $1.8 million; in 2007, $1.5 million.

Much of that is the work, as I mentioned earlier—the work before an election—it is not just election day and the process.

It is what has gone into getting civil society involved and getting—this is not a democratic country, they have not been one, and so, there is no—there is a big learning curve, and there is no history of understanding even within the parties, and that is something else we encourage with the work of our partners, that the parties themselves need to be democratic.

Mr. SMITH. Could you finally touch on the difference between the prospects for a good election and full participation by individuals in the capital versus in the outlying areas, and you did say, Dr. Bonicelli, that the capacity of local government in civil society to ensure open elections is weak. I mean you do not want to have two election, one that is relatively good in the capital, and then everywhere else it is far less.

Mr. BONICELLI. I think it requires a lot of attention and focus of the resources, because just like with media, things look worse in the rural areas, because it is just harder to have the communication, and there will be somewhat of that, I think, and that just needs to be the attention. That is, again, something else that the National Election Commission can focus on and begin to now raise concerns about it and focus on it.

Mr. MOZENA. My understanding is that the National Election Commission has, in fact, organized itself at the provincial level, and most of the municipal levels. So, they are making progress.

Mr. SMITH. Are clergymen being brought into this, as well?

You know, it is thought that a freer and more democratic Angola obviously leads to a potentially higher standard of living. There is no panacea, obviously, in any of this, but as we all know, it is the best of all means of providing for economic growth and freedom.

Are they being brought into this so that they will encourage parishioners and others to participate, to know how to be a good citizen?

Mr. MOZENA. I think the Catholic church, for example—over two-thirds of the population of Angola is Roman Catholic—has been involved.

For example, one of the major media—a radio network called Radio Ecclesia—has played an important role in disseminating information.

Mr. SMITH. Does our USAID program work with them as a direct program, or is it just left to chance?

Mr. BONICELLI. We do support Radio Ecclesia, and we have been for years.

They are part of the media program that comes out of USAID Democracy and Governance.

Mr. SMITH. Okay.

For the record, could you provide any other instances to us on how the church, of all types, including the Catholic church, might be interfacing with our money or being beneficiaries of it?

Ms. Lee.

Ms. LEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You did leave a few questions for me to ask, but I have got to come at it a different way, okay?

First of all, let me just say the Voting Rights Act is being debated today in the Senate. Hopefully, it will pass. The Voting Rights Act passed 1 year after I graduated from high school.

Prior to that, for the most part, we remember very clearly the obstacles to voting and full participation by African-Americans in this country, and so, I, for one, am deeply committed to see democracy and the participation of people throughout the world in this whole electoral process, because one vote, one person, one person, one vote, exercising that basic right, I think, that all people should have is fundamental to any democracy.

Now, having said that, let me just say, Angola—what was it, 500 years of colonial rule, 27 years of civil war? My gosh.

It is amazing that it has gotten this far, and you know, it is amazing, and like I say, the history of Angola—I vividly remember many of the milestones in that history, and so, I guess what I want to ask you is—you lay out some of these impediments to voting.

Now, I want to find out, are these real in your mind? I mean you said that the land mine issue could be overcome by helicopters and what have you, but I know people are very fearful, though, in many parts of the country, of voting because of prior history, and what have you, of violence, and so, are these impediments 50 percent of the problem, or do you see the government engaging in stalling actions as it relates to elections?

I mean what is your take on that?

Mr. MOZENA. I think the impediments are real. I think they can be overcome.

They are being overcome, to be more precise, and I would urge the Government of Angola, as I said in my oral statement, to move ahead very expeditiously with these elections.

It never will be perfect.

I mean I don't think anyone would argue we wait till 2011, when we are in a mine-risk-free era. I mean that is 5 years from now.

Ms. LEE. Sure.

Mr. MOZENA. I think progress is being made.

I think these elections can move ahead. They can happen.

Ms. LEE. I know we will hear from Angolan representatives later, but do you think that they are moving expeditiously or not?

Mr. MOZENA. I think they are moving ahead.

I think they have set a very high standard for themselves, and Paul made reference to that, and maybe the standard is too high. They want them to be as good as the '92 elections that were conducted by the UN. They want them to be better than——

Ms. LEE. Well, maybe if we had had those standards in 2000 and 2004, we would have had freer and fairer elections in America, if our standards had been a little more, you know, streamlined.

Mr. MOZENA. I take your point.

Ms. LEE. Okay.

I am just saying, you know, how much of this is real or how much is part of any kind of undercurrents that you see taking place that—such as maybe in Uganda, when they tried to, you know—and the elections, changing the constitution so he could, you know, do another term, how, you know, Zimbabwe—I mean when you look at other countries and then put Angola in the scheme of things, what do you think?

Mr. MOZENA. It is a difficult one to answer, because obviously one cannot read what President dos Santos is thinking in his mind, but my own thought would be—I would come at the question from a little bit different perspective.

What would be the incentive for stalling on these elections?

The opposition is divided; there are over 100 political parties.

I had a 2½-hour meeting in March with the president of UNITA, the largest opposition party, and out of that, I drew the conclusion that the delay in these elections wasn't necessarily bad from their perspective, because they needed time to generate resources, to strengthen their own party.

In fact, at the very moment I was talking with Mr. Samakuva, his party was dealing with a very serious internal problem.

So, I ask myself what is in this for President dos Santos?

Why would he want to delay and stall these elections forever, and I do not see anything in it.

Most people I spoke to—and this is not my personal opinion, but when I travel, I talk to a lot of people.

They told me that the MPLA would win more seats in parliament.

Ms. LEE. So, then maybe the impediments, as the Angolans see it, are real, real enough. Maybe it is not a real—a stalling tactic, but maybe they do want to have the fairest and freest and most transparent election. I am just asking, and I do not want to see us get caught up into a real—you know, it is almost—we push so hard. I mean elections are part of—one part of democracy building,

only one part, and so, as we push so hard on the electoral—in many parts of the world, we see elections take place, and parties elected that we do not quite necessarily want elected, and so, all I am saying is I think we need to see this and understand it a little more deeper, and as we move forward, help——

Mr. MOZENA. I think that is a very valid point.

I think it is a balance.

The conditions will never be perfect for elections in Angola, in America, or anyplace else, as far as that goes. So, if you take the argument to the extreme, you will never have elections, because the conditions will never be absolutely——

Ms. LEE. I am talking about the history, what has transpired during the dos Santos presidency, the progress that is being made, and where we are now. Are the impediments—is all I am saying—real, and should we try to help in a more, you know, aggressive way to overcome them, and then move forward?

Mr. MOZENA. I think the impediments are real. I am very proud of what we are doing to help them overcome those impediments, the land mines, the working with civil society that Paul was talking about, and strengthening the electoral process.

I think we are doing a lot, but could we do more? I will let Paul speak to that, but I think we are doing the right thing.

That said, I think the exercise of the right to choose one's own government is a basic human right, as the Chairman made reference to the annual human rights report. So, it is a balance there.

Ms. LEE. I agree with that.

Okay.

Finally, on the whole HIV and AIDS strategy for Angola, is the global fund participating in the whole effort to prevent and address HIV and AIDS, or what do we have going there?

Mr. MOZENA. I cannot speak to the global fund. Maybe Paul can add to that, but I know that we in the U.S. Government are very much involved.

We have a program of just a little under $3 million, mainly focused on voluntary counseling and testing, working with many other donors.

You know, I do not pretend to be a rocket scientist when I suggest that it is cheaper to prevent HIV/AIDS than it is to cure it after it is full-fledged, like in Zambia, where I have buried way too many of my——

Ms. LEE. The prevalence rate, at least reported, is, what, 3.5 percent in Angola?

Mr. MOZENA. 3.6.

Ms. LEE. Yes. A prevention strategy certainly makes sense.

Mr. MOZENA. Yes.

Ms. LEE. You have got to have comprehensive, though, because you have got to treat people, also, who are infected. You know, there has got to be that balance. The anti-retro viral drugs—are they there? Do they cost a lot of money?

Mr. MOZENA. Our focus has been on the VCT side, and I do not know where the ARU's are with other donors, but we are working very hard, especially in those areas along the borders with Namibia, which has a very high rate, as you know, trying to help prevent the pandemic from washing over the border.

It is going to be a very hard struggle, I will be honest, because the disadvantage of opening up these roads, by removing land mines—I am not telling you anything you do not know better than I do, but the trucks and the conveyors of the disease, in fact, are rolling.

Ms. LEE. Okay.

The global fund——

Mr. BONICELLI. The incidence is low relative to other countries, but there are activities. 2007, there is a plan being worked that would be interagency from the U.S. Government's perspective, and there have been—has been a program—a prevention program with voluntary counseling and that kind of thing, some linked up with Drew University. Several corporations are involved, Exxon-Mobil.

Could I go back a little bit just about the notion of elections?

I agree with Dan.

I would maybe answer a little more wishy-washy, like a social scientist, which I used to be, and say—I am recovering—and say that there is nothing—there is no trip wire crossed yet by the Angolan Government from the perspective of United States foreign policy that looks like they are not serious, they do not want to have elections. There is every reason to believe it is in their interest, as Dan said, and that is why I think that there can be some hope, but there remains, as I mentioned, the need to get with it, have the National Election Commission really start to do the things that it can do to get itself funded to do those kinds of things.

You mentioned voter registration, and I just wanted to note another encouraging sign is that there is an effort to do that, and this is a country where it's, of course, very much unlike ours, where the technology and the things are not available that make it—people do not even have their documentation the way it is common for us to.

Therefore, voter registration is not based on a civil registry.

People can vote, can register by testimonial, they can identify themselves that way.

So there are steps taken to take into account the fact that people cannot register normally, whether their location or what documentation they have.

One other thing about the timing of it, and that is the—some discussion is that it is in the interest of this president and the ruling party and that they are following the letter of the law all the way, and so that the announcement of voter registration beginning its 6-month window and then elections do not actually have to be called until 90 days before that day, and following the letter, there are all kinds of reasons to look for people's interests, what is to their advantage, and what makes the overall advantage for the people of Angola.

Ms. LEE. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SMITH. Ranking Member Payne?

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much.

I apologize for missing the testimony. I was attending the swearing-in of the new Ambassador to Brazil, from my district in New Jersey, Pat Sobol, and so, I apologize for missing it. So, I will just be very brief.

I imagine you did go over the prospects of the election. I just might ask for a quick answer.

Do you see the elections being pulled off in the near future and what type of success would you find if they were held?

Mr. BONICELLI. As I was saying, I think all the signs are that they will be held according to the requirement, according to what the president has said.

That is no guarantee, but right now, I just do not see anything that is an obvious reason why that is not going to happen, either by lack of political will or some obstacle that cannot be overcome.

Dan is exactly right.

The obstacles are real, but they can be dealt with, and partners are standing ready to help.

Mr. PAYNE. Is the UNITA party as strong as it once was, and are the other opposition—are there any other opposition parties that have any strength?

Mr. MOZENA. I mentioned before you came in that I had an opportunity when I was in Angola in March to meet with the president of UNITA, Mr. Samakuva, and he was sharing with me some of the challenges that his party is facing in terms of building its strength, and I know they are working very hard to bolster their party. You are very fortunate, because you have a representative of UNITA on the next panel that can go in much greater depth in responding to that question.

There are other opposition parties that have representation in parliament, but—and I do not mean to disparage them, but you really have two elephants here that are involved, and they would be UNITA and the MPLA.

Mr. PAYNE. I recall, in the last election, it was a close election, but MPLA won, and was disappointed that UNITA decided not to participate in the government. Is there—I mean is it, if I win, I will participate, but if I lose, I will not—maybe I need to ask the UNITA representative when they come up.

Is there an MPLA representative in the panel? Do you know?

I have not looked at the agenda.

Mr. SMITH. We are going to have the Ambassador, and we invited the head of the NEC to testify on the panel, too, but he could not make it.

Mr. MOZENA. I think the situation, if I could share a view on that question, I think the situation in Angola is very different today than it what it was in 1992, and I would not envision that the loser would take to the bush and resume a civil war.

I think the people of Angola have bled enough, and I think they are ready and eager to move forward toward a peaceful way of resolving their differences.

Mr. BONICELLI. And we do, Mr. Payne, have a few years of UNITA serving in this government at all levels. So, it is in their interest to continue that.

Mr. PAYNE. Finally, is the Kimberly process moving in Angola?

Mr. MOZENA. Yes. They are participants in the Kimberly process.

Angola, as the Chairman pointed out in his remarks, is a major diamond producer.

Mr. PAYNE. Yes, I know that.

We know that diamonds, unfortunately, was, in a number of countries, used for the wrong reasons to fuel the conflict.

I will not hold the panel up anymore. I am browsing through the material right now, and look forward to the other witnesses' testimony.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Payne.

Let me just thank our distinguished witnesses. If you have anything else you would like to add—thank you so much.

Mr. PAYNE. In Liberia, you know, there has been an agreement that the government—of course, Liberia is receiving substantial United States assistance, but the government and the donor parties have made an agreement that there will be close working relations working on the expenditures of the funds to ensure transparency and to prevent corruption, and I wonder, has there been any discussions with the Government of Angola?

Is there anything similar to that in Angola, to your knowledge?

Mr. BONICELLI. In testimony to their commitment to that is their desire to be a part of the Extracted Industries Transparency Initiative, which Dan mentioned earlier, and I think it is real.

Of course, there are a lot of steps that have to be made.

Mr. MOZENA. There have been other steps, as well, which I must say are encouraging.

For example, they have put on the Web charts that show the flow of their oil revenue, so the public can watch it. Anyone can go out and watch it on the Web site.

Mr. PAYNE. Even in the Chad-Cameroon pipeline, the World Bank installed some measures that would, you know, sign off that funds would be going to health care and to poverty elimination and education.

So, I would hope that we could possibly move into some real formal kind of an agreement if we are able to get U.S. assistance and other World Bank and other donor countries.

Mr. BONICELLI. USAID's programs in good governance, once we are beyond elections, are—that is very much a part of it, is to encourage those—joining those initiatives and having their own, as well.

Mr. MOZENA. We are already working with the Government of Angola with a fiscal programming unit, the purpose of which is to create the mechanism so you can watch—just what you are saying, Congressman—watch and account for the resources.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, gentlemen.

I would like, without objection, to include in the record, "Angola: A Chronology of Major Political Developments from February 1961 to September 1996," that was written by Greg Simpkins, who is our staff specialist on the Majority side for the Subcommittee, and I would just note it is a very good time-line of those years.

One of the things that I have always been very grateful for is that this Subcommittee and the Full Committee attracts some very, very high-caliber people who serve in staff positions.

Greg Simpkins was the associate director for the Angola Peace Fund, and that goes back to 1987, and he also served as senior associate at the Institute for Democratic Strategies, and also co-

chaired the Democracy and Human Rights Advocacy Group for the Constituency for Africa.

So, without objection, this booklet will be made a part of the record.

[The information referred to follows:]

June 22, 1989 - The heads of 18 African nations meet with President dos Santos and UNITA leader Savimbi in Gbadolite, Zaire. The two Angolan leaders shake hands and agree to a cease-fire and the start of peace talks on a government of national reconciliation.

late June 1989 - The Angolan cease-fire breaks down almost immediately after the Gbadolite meeting. UNITA and the Angolan government disagree over the focus of peace talks. The government wants to concentrate on reintegration of UNITA members into Angolan society, while UNITA wants to continue dialogue on a government of national reconciliation. Moreover, confusion reigns over agreed upon terms. Zambia President Kenneth Kaunda claims Savimbi is to go into exile, but Zaire President Mobutu Sese Seko says no such agreement was discussed.

late December 1989 - Angolan government forces begin the so-called "final assault" against UNITA.

January 1, 1990 - President dos Santos presents a peace plan under which UNITA could participate as a social or cultural body, but not a political party. UNITA rejects the offer.

February 3, 1990 - The Angolan government announces its occupation of the strategic town of Mavinga, considered a gateway to UNITA headquarters in Jamba.

"The MPLA's attempt to crush UNITA militarily is futile and make it increasingly difficult to reach the negotiated settlement necessary to conclude this tragic conflict."
Margaret Tutwiler, U.S. State Department spokesperson at the February 5, 1990, daily briefing

February 12, 1990 - The presidents of Zaire, Congo and Gabon meet in Zaire to discuss strategies for restarting the stalled Angolan peace initiatives. Angolan President dos Santos fails to attend.

mid-March 1990 - A Namibian news service reports that Angolan planes have bombed Oshakati and other Namibian border towns over a three-month period.

March 21, 1990 - Namibia becomes an independence nation.

April 27, 1990 - The US Department of State confirms that the international effort to repatriate an estimated 316,000 Angolan refugees from Zaire and another 97,000 refugees from Zambia is put on hold due to the heavy fighting in northern and central Angola.

May 7, 1990 - UNITA stops the government assault on Mavinga and forces a retreat by FAPLA forces.

late May 1990 - A group calling itself "Flaming Machete" distributes pamphlets throughout Luanda threatening to kidnap and kill government officials, journalists and foreign workers supporting the continuation of one-party rule.

late May 1990 - Leaders of an alleged coup plot against the Dos Santos government are jailed, including Santana Andre Pitra, commander of the northern front. Meanwhile, a source in Luanda reports automatic gunfire at the home of Defense Minister Pedro Maria Tonha.

May 30, 1990 - The Angolan charges d'affaires in Zimbabwe gives an interview in which he distributes a document purporting that "foreign agents" are plotting to overthrow President dos Santos. According to the document, the secret services of the US, South Africa, Israel, Zaire and "some Brazilian Jews" are involved in the plot.

June 2, 1990 - UNITA challenges the government military by conducting military activities in and around Luanda and holding political rallies in Cacuaco, a town only eight miles from the capital.

early June 1990 - Zaire President Mobutu Sese Seko is phased out as mediator between the MPLA government and UNITA after Angolan government officials accuse the Zairians of active involvement in the civil war on behalf of UNITA.

late summer 1990 - Two high-level UN delegations fail to convince the Angolan government to allow relief shipments to UNITA areas. The International Committee of the Red Cross halts shipments on government orders because of allegations of weapons transport to UNITA.

September 2, 1990 - The third round of talks between the Angolan government and UNITA ends in stalemate over the issue of the timing of MPLA's recognition of UNITA as a political party.

October 1990 - Dr. Savimbi visits the U.S. and meets with U.S. President Bush.

December 11, 1990 - Dr. Savimbi meets Soviet Foreign Minister Edward Schevardnadze in Washington. Meanwhile, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker meets with Angolan Foreign Minister Pedro de Castro Van Dunem. The meetings are designed to familiarize the two superpowers with the opponents of the factions they support in the war.

December 13, 1990 - A meeting is held in Washington between the MPLA government (Lopo do Nascimento), UNITA (Jeremias Chitunda), the United States (Herman Cohen), the Soviet Union (Yuri Yukalov) and Portugal (Antonio Monteiro). An agreement is reached on the principles for a peace accord.

May 20, 1991 - The last Cuban troops are withdrawn from Angola.

May 30, 1991 - The second UN Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II) is created to verify tasks expected to arise from the Estoril Accords.

May 31, 1991 - Angolan President dos Santos and UNITA leader Savimbi sign a peace agreement known as the Estoril (or Bicesse) Accords, ending the 16-year civil war. The agreement provides for a cease-fire, formation of a single national army and multiparty elections to be held in the fall of 1992. Under the agreement, the UN would put in place a cease-fire monitoring force by June 30. Furthermore, both sides agree not to purchase arms from either the US, the USSR or any other foreign source. Under the Triple Zero Option, these nations also are expected to have stopped supplying lethal aid to the respective parties as of this date.

June 16, 1991 - A UNITA delegation arrives in Luanda — the first time UNITA representatives are received officially in the capital.

June 17, 1991 - The Joint Political Military Commission (JPMC) holds its first meeting at the Hotel Presidente in Luanda to discuss the transitional panel's functioning.

June 29, 1991 - Members of the JPMC and UNAVEM II visit Jamba. A key point of discussion is the release of all political prisoners by the middle of August.

"This clearly and unequivocally marks the Angolan government's recognition of UNITA. It signals to the Angolan people that the war has truly ended."
Jeremias Chitunda, UNITA Vice President, in Jamba on June 29, 1991

late June - early July 1991 - Joint UNITA-MPLA teams open roads in Cabinda, Moxico, Lunda Sul, Huila, Benguela and Cuando Cubango provinces. However, the impending campaign seems to strain the cooperative spirit as UNITA supporters are blocked from attending a Luanda rally, and party posters are torn down.

early July 1991 - UNITA officials encounter large crowds of supporters in Angolan cities as the political campaign gets underway.

early July 1991 - The Democratic Renewal Party becomes the first political party to begin political activity throughout Angola, but the Angolan Democratic Party is actually the first party to become registered.

July 29, 1991 - Despite last-minute wrangling, 107 UNITA and 60 government prisoners of war are released.

August 1, 1991 - The deadline for the quartering of MPLA government and UNITA troops passes without completion of the process due to logistics and supply problems. It is estimated that 85% of UNITA troops and 37% of government troops are confined in 48 cantonment areas.

early August 1991 - President dos Santos appoints França van Dunem to the reinstituted post of Prime Minister as part of a major cabinet reshuffle aimed at providing appeal for the party among the Umbundu and Kikongo peoples.

August 13, 1991 - An FNLA military leader confirms the existence of 6,000 armed men loyal to his party at a base near the Cuanza Norte province town of Bolongongo. Controversy over this revelation briefly derails FNLA's registration as a political party.

mid-August 1991 - Manuel dos Santos Lima, president of the Angolan Democratic Unity Movement for Reconstruction, becomes the first announced candidate for the presidency.

August 25, 1991 - Angolan government troops take receipt of heavy artillery and assault vehicles at the port of Luanda in violation of the Estoril Accords. The troops briefly threaten a JPMC force, including UNITA and MPLA representatives and international observers, which confront them.

late September 1991 - President dos Santos meets with US President George Bush during a Washington visit. Bush urges the Angolan leader to hold elections in September 1992 to avoid the rainy season instead of the November date favored by MPLA.

late September 1991 - FNLA founder Holden Roberto returns to Luanda after a 16-year exile.

September 24, 1991 - Fernando Makanga, the UNITA representative in Malange is shot to death while en route to Luanda. He is the latest in a series of shootings of UNITA officials, reportedly at the hands of uniformed men, since the signing of the Estoril Accords.

October 31, 1991 - Frederick Chiluba wins 80% of the votes in Zambia's presidential race and his Movement for Multiparty Democracy captures 90% of the parliamentary seats in an election considered a harbinger for Angola.

October 31, 1991 - A UNAVEM report on troop cantonment reveals that 30,000 government troops are unaccounted for.

December 6, 1991 - Police units backed by MI-8 helicopters fire on unarmed demonstrators in Lobito who are attempting to reclaim a building that had been UNITA property before the civil war started in 1975. A two-week standoff is ended peacefully two weeks later.

late December 1991 - Government troops stage a country-wide revolt as a response to what they consider neglect of their welfare, especially unpaid salary and poor living conditions.

January 14-25, 1992 - The government meets with representatives from emerging political parties. There is widespread disagreement on such issues as a firm election date, the timing of presidential and legislative elections and the voting eligibility of Angolans living abroad.

January 30, 1992 - The JPMC agrees to reschedule the deadline for cantonment of troops to February 15.

early February 1992 - Months of deadlock on electoral questions ends with the JPMC's announcement of agreement between MPLA and UNITA on several items, such as the total number of deputies in the National Assembly (223), the management of voter registration by the Ministry for Territorial Administration and the use of a proportional representation system.

"The (MPLA) government must fully commit its resources to the (election) process, and a firm and unshakable date for the elections in September 1992 should be set as soon as possible."
A US Government statement issued on February 5, 1992

March 5, 1992 - UNITA party leaders General Miguel Nzau Puna and Tony da Costa Fernandes announce their resignation from the party "to search for a solution to the Cabinda problem."

March 24, 1992 - The UN Security Council enlarges the UNAVEM II mandate to include observation of the upcoming elections.

April 5, 1992 - In a Luanda news conference, Dr. Savimbi confirms the deaths of party leaders Tito Chingunji and Wilson dos Santos. He later releases to the U.S. State Department the results of a UNITA investigation into the deaths that implicate Puna in the killings. Puna and

April 5, 1992 - In a Luanda news conference, Dr. Savimbi confirms the deaths of party leaders Tito Chingunji and Wilson dos Santos. He later releases to the U.S. State Department the results of a UNITA investigation into the deaths that implicate Puna in the killings. Puna and Fernandes subsequently describe the killings as having been ordered by Dr. Savimbi.

early April 1992 - President dos Santos announces that elections will be held on September 29-30.

April 15, 1992 - Government troops reportedly fire on their commanding officers at the Umlati assembly area near Lucapa in Lunda province.

May 11, 1992 - Onofre dos Santos, a former FNLA leader, is named director-general of the newly-installed Election Commission. A deadline of July 31 is set for the registration of more than five million estimated eligible voters.

June 4-10, 1992 - Pope John Paul II visits Luanda, Benguela, Huambo, Lubango, Cabinda and Mbanza Congo during his tour of Angola in which he calls for reconciliation.

September 1992 - Government special forces units are transferred to Malange reportedly to prevent UNITA armed forces drom infiltrating the city and to stir up anti-Un sentiments.

September 7, 1992 - President dos Santos and UNITA leader Savimbi meet and agree to form a government of national reconciliation after the elections.

September 27, 1992 - The new integrated armed forces of Angola is symbolically installed even though fewer than 10,000 members are in place.

September 29-30, 1992 - Elections are held for the first time in Angola's history. An estimated 4.4million voters (more than 91% of registered voters) take part in the elections.

early October 1992 - Despite protests by the Election Commission, the Angolan government releases unofficial reports claiming a huge electoral victory. Western nations quietly push for a recount of the presidential results and a delay in the release of all official results past the agreed upon October 10 date.

"The observers present had no way to evaluate the (Fairness of) the elections. There were few regions of Angola where people could freely express their points of view."
Former US Assistant Secretary of State Chester Crocker in an August 21, 1993 interview in the Portuguese newspaper Expresso

October 5, 1992 - UNITA, joined by seven other opposition parties, accuses the government of election fraud. UNITA then withdraws its generals and troops from the united armed forces and threatens to return to civil war.

October 9, 1992 - The UN gives the eight protesting political parties 48 hours to prove their claims of election fraud. The two days in question are weekend days when the Election Commission and government offices are closed.

October 16, 1992 - UNITA agrees to accept the results of the legislative elections and take part in the second round of presidential elections.

October 17, 1992 - The Election Commission confirms that President Dos Santos won 49.57% of the vote and Dr. Savimbi won 40.07%, forcing a second round of balloting. MPLA wins 120 seats in the National Assembly (223 seats total) to UNITA's 70. UN Special Representative Margaret Anstee acknowledges "irregularities in the electoral process, "but asserts that they did not have a "significant effect on the results."

mid-October 1992 - South African Foreign Minister Pik Botha acts as point man in the Western and UN effort to bring about face-to-face talks between dos Santos and Savimbi.

October 17-18, 1992 - UNITA and government troops begin fighting in Huambo, which spreads by the end of the month to Luanda.

October 21, 1992 - UNITA and Angolan government representatives hold talks on the technical aspects of a presidential runoff election.

October 31, 1992 - Government special forces and armed citizens begin attacks on UNITA residences, hotels, offices and clinics in Luanda. More than 20,000 persons are killed in the massacres that continue through November.

November 2, 1992 - UNITA Vice President Jeremias Chitunda and UNITA's JPMC negotiator Elias Salupeto Pena are murdered while attempting to escape the capital. Alicerces Mango, the party's secretary general, also is among those killed.

November 4-5, 1992 - UNITA captures Bengo and Porto Quipiri, which is less than 30 miles from Luanda.

November 9, 1992 - The Angolan government declares Pik Botha persona non grata, ending the South African peace initiative.

mid-November 1992 - The UN reports that UNITA is in control of 57 of Angola's 164 municipalities and maintains an advantage in 40 others.

November 26, 1992 - UN-sponsored peace talks between UNITA and MPLA result in a declaration signed by both sides that they would fully implement the Estoril Accords, observe a nationwide cease-fire, terminate offensive troop movements and allow a widened presence by UN forces.

December 2, 1992 - President dos Santos installs a new government, including 11 officials affiliated with other political parties that won seats in the September elections.

December 15, 1992 - UNITA issues an eleven-point plan to get the peace process back on track.

January 3, 1993 - The Angolan government launches a counter-offensive that restarts the civil war in earnest. In what is later called the War of the Cities, the government captures Lubango, Benguela, Lobito, Namibe and other cities.

January 24, 1993 - On so-called "Bloody Friday" in Luanda, an estimated 100 members of the Bakongo tribe are killed after the government radio announces a Zairian invasion of Angola.

January 28, 1993 - Despite its forces being pushed back in many locations, the UN estimates that UNITA controls 105 of Angola's 164 municipalities.

January 28-30, 1993 - UN-sponsored peace talks in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, between the Angolan government and UNITA achieve little beyond identifying key issues to be resolved. UNITA cancels the second round of talks.

February 14, 1993 - Portugal, the United States and Russia -- the three observers of the Estoril Accords -- issue an ultimatum to UNITA to return to the peace talks in three days. UNITA agrees to meet with the Angolan government in Addis, but later declines to attend the meeting.

March 8, 1993 - UNITA captures the city of Huambo after an intense 55-day battle. Approximately 10,000 persons are reportedly killed in the fighting.

March 10, 1993 - UNITA leader Savimbi complains about UN partisanship in favor of MPLA and pledges not to participate in any further negotiations until the alleged bias is ended.

March 25-29, 1993 - US and UNITA representatives hold talks on finding a peaceful solution to the situation in Angola. An Angolan government delegation is on hand but participates only in talks with US officials.

April 12, 1993 - UNITA and the Angolan government return to UN-sponsored peace talks in Abidjan.

April 27, 1993 - Following several mutual delays caused by political maneuvering on the part of UNITA and the Angolan government, UNITA leader Savimbi announces that he has agreed to a cease-fire.

May 19, 1993 -The Clinton Administration recognizes the government of Angola.

May 21, 1993 - Disagreements over the modality of commencing a "cessation of hostilities" or a formal cease-fire and the timing of the arrival of the UN peacekeeping force lead to a collapse of the Abidjan peace talks.

"There might have been agreement on a new cease-fire during the six weeks of negotiation at Abidjan, Ivory Coast, if I had been able to commit the U.N to providing a small, symbolic force of 'Blue Helmets' to oversee (the cease-fire) from the outset..."

UN Special Representative Margaret Anstee in a letter to the editor in the September 7, 1993, edition of the London Daily Telegraph newspaper.

June 7, 1993 - General Joao de Matos, Chief of Staff of the Angolan armed forces, announces in Lisbon that his government has revoked the Triple Zero Option arms embargo clause of the Estoril Accords.

June 28, 1993 - Malian Foreign Minister Alioune Blondin Beye is appointed to replace the retiring Margaret Anstee as the UN's Angola representative.

July 15, 1993 - UNITA Secretary of Foreign Affairs Abel Chivukuvuku appeals to the government in a letter to be allowed to join the seven-member UNITA group in the Angolan National Assembly. Chivukuvuku and the rest of the UNITA legislators are described by MPLA officials as being "in government custody."

August 2, 1993 - The Clinton Administration is reported by the *Wall Street Journal* to be considering aid to the MPLA government.

August 11, 1993 - UNITA leader Savimbi issues a call for unconditional peace talks with the Angolan government and subsequently calls for an "immediate cease-fire without conditions."

late summer 1993 - An initiative by Morocco's King Hassan, Zaire President Mobutu and South Africa President Nelson Mandela to produce face-to-face peace talks between Dos Santos and Savimbi is blocked by the Angolan government. Meanwhile, the OAU Ad Hoc Committee on Southern Africa peace talks with Savimbi fall through when the group refuses to meet with the UNITA leader in Huambo.

early September 1993 - The Angolan government denies permission for the UN to deploy peacekeeping troops to help humanitarian initiatives.

September 15, 1993 - The UN Security Council imposes sanctions on the sale of petroleum and weapons to UNITA.

September 20, 1993 - UNITA commences a unilateral cease-fire and agrees to accept the 1992 election results and relevant UN resolutions in a bid to provoke peace talks.

"The MPLA government still seems to be the best place where an opposition plays its constructive role in the building of democracy in Angola. There is an opposition to the government, but which operates within the MPLA."

President José Eduardo dos Santos during an interview on Television Popular de Angola on August 13, 1993

Mr. SMITH. I would like to now introduce our second panel, beginning with Angola's Ambassador to the United States, Her Excellency Josefina Diakite, who has formally presented her credentials to President Bush on June 20, 2001.

Prior to that, she served as Ambassador to Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Finland, a joint ambassadorship, and she resided in Stockholm, Sweden, from 1993 to 2000, and we are very grateful that the Ambassador has come. We had invited the chairman of the National Election Commission, Dr. Caetano De Sousa, to be here. He could not. I understand he may be ill or is ill.

So, thank you for—it is more than pinch hitting, though. We are very, very grateful to have you here.

We will then hear from Alcides Sakala, who is—joined UNITA and quickly rose through its ranks until he joined its overseas diplomatic mission in 1980. At different times in his career, Mr. Sakala served in Washington, West Germany, Portugal, Belgium, and the European Community.

In 1995, Mr. Sakala was appointed secretary for foreign affairs of UNITA, until 2002, when he moved into the bush to stay with Dr. Savimbi.

Currently, Mr. Sakala is a member of parliament and the president of the UNITA parliament group in the National Assembly.

Finally, we will hear from Mr. Richard Soudriette, who has served as president of the International Foundation for Election Systems since 1988.

Under Mr. Soudriette's leadership, IFES has grown into one of the premier organizations offering technical assistance in the areas of elections, civil society, rule of law, and governance.

He has played a key role in launching networks of elections officials in Latin America, central and eastern Europe, Africa, and Asia, and has overseen the tremendous growth of IFES, which has worked in over 100 countries around the world.

Thank you, as well, for being here.

Madam Ambassador, please proceed.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE JOSEFINA PITRA DIAKITE, AMBASSADOR, THE EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA

Ms. DIAKITE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I was not supposed to be here. The president of National Electoral Commission was invited.

Unfortunately, although he had confirmed his participation, he was not feeling well, so he could not come. I am glad to be here, making my statement on behalf of the Government of Angola.

Mr. Chairman Smith, Congressman Donald Payne, Congresswoman Lee, Members of the Subcommittee, United States and Angolan officials present, good afternoon to all.

It is a pleasure to be here this afternoon, at the invitation of Chairman Smith, to discuss the electoral process in Angola.

The Government of Angola appreciates the interest expressed by the United States Congress and United States Administration in the post-war milestone in Angolan history. We are fully aware of the importance to the Angolan citizens, and those encouraging the strengthening of democratic processes in Africa, of the process of

preparing for the elections, as well as the actual event that will take place on election day.

Angola held its first elections in 1992, during a period of relative clam in our decades-long civil war conflict. Regrettably, the country returned to war shortly thereafter, and it was not until peace was restored definitively in 2002 that we as a nation could even begin to contemplate the next general election.

As we began to put together a plan that would lead to national elections, we became painfully aware of a number of serious obstacles lying in our path. As we assessed these obstacles, President Jose Eduardo dos Santos was clear in his guidance that it was essential to prepare well, regardless of the time required, in order to ensure free, fair, and inclusive elections. He said that the people of Angola deserved that.

There have been questions regarding the lengthy planning and the preparation timeline.

Let me state that the government succeeded in reintegration of 100,000 former UNITA soldiers and more than 300,000 families. Also, 360,000 of the 450,000 Angolan refugees have been repatriated.

Mr. Chairman, the destruction of many public records is one of the big challenges for us.

The war caused considerable destruction of communication infrastructures, including roads, bridges, railways, health care and education centers.

The hold of elections is closely linked to the circulation of people and goods under absolute security conditions.

With this aim, and in order to ensure the resettlement of the population, my government is rehabilitating 72,000 kilometers of roads and recovering 1,300 bridges from the previously existing 6,300.

The government started rehabilitating the entire national railway network.

This will greatly improve access to significant parts of the country.

The issue of land mines has been the government's top priority in the post-conflict era, since they hinder the movement of people across the country. As proof of its commitment, an executive commission for de-mining was established, and organizations such as CNIDAH have assisted in the process.

An important electoral legislation package was passed by the Angolan National Assembly, which includes the electoral law, the law on political parties, the political parties funding law, the electoral registration law, and the law of electoral observer.

The issues I have just outlined illustrate my government's belief that the mistakes made in 1992 elections must not be repeated and lessons must be learned.

The lessons learned have led us to implement technical visits to and from electoral officials in other countries, due to limited experience of election officials throughout the country; training programs are under implementation. Hundreds of electoral officials required by province and town are being trained.

The Angolan Government has learned of the negative associations of elections with the tragic return to war in 1992.

Government is aware of this concern, and that is why it is currently monitoring election awareness and civic education programs, as well as providing accurate information with the assistance of local traditional and religious authorities and other social partners.

Another important point that has often been overlooked is the lack of party representation in many parts of the country. So, political parties have been advised to establish presence in various parts of the country.

Mr. Chairman, while elections play a crucial role in the country's democratic process, good planning for ballot security and accountability is essential so that possible disputes and misunderstandings can be avoided.

Let me affirm that Angola has made great progress, politically, economically, and socially, since the Luena Accords since in 2002 returned the country to the road map begun at Bicesse in 1991 and refined by the Lusaka Protocol in 1994.

I have referred specifically to elections-related areas of progress, but there is much more. The growth of the economy and the reconstruction efforts are success stories in their own right.

However, we recognize that we still have much to accomplish before Angolan citizens go to the polls. The registration process is scheduled to begin shortly, and will take approximately 6 months to complete. The purchase of electronic balloting equipment is on track, and the training for its utilization has already begun.

I must stress that progress achieved to date has been facilitated by several international organizations that have maintained a presence in the country and have worked closely with political parties. We do hope that assistance provided to these parties be extended to improve the Angolan Government's institutional capacity to respond adequately to the current challenge.

Let me conclude by saying that the Government of Angola is committed to national elections. It considers elections as an important step in the strengthening of democracy but also recognize the wisdom in moving with deliberate and measured speed to the elections date that will ensure a complete confidence of the Angolan people in the final results, and reflect positively on their present and future government.

I would be happy to respond to the questions that you may have, and I thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Hon. Josefina Pitra Diakite follows:]

Remarks by Madam Josefina Pitra Diakité

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the

Republic of Angola to the United States of America

at

Hearing on Elections in Angola

House Subcommittee on Africa,

Global Human Rights and International Operations

20 July 2006

Mr. Chairman Smith

Members of the Subcommittee

U.S. and Angolan Officials present

Good Afternoon,

It is a pleasure to be here this afternoon at the invitation of Chairman Smith to discuss the electoral process in Angola.

The Government of Angola appreciates the interest expressed by the U.S. Congress and the U.S. Administration in this post-war milestone in Angolan history. We are fully aware of the importance to Angolan citizens -- and those encouraging the strengthening of democratic processes in Africa -- of the process of preparing for elections, as well as the actual event that will take place on election day.

Angola held its first elections in 1992 during a period of relative calm in our decades-long civil conflict. Regrettably, the country returned to war shortly thereafter and it was not until peace was restored definitively in 2002 that we as a nation could even begin to contemplate the next general elections.

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As we began to put together a plan that would lead us to national elections, we became painfully aware of a number of serious obstacles lying in our path. As we assessed these obstacles, President José Eduardo dos Santos was clear in his guidance that it was essential to prepare well, regardless of the time required, in order to ensure free, fair, and inclusive elections. He said that the people of Angola deserved that.

There have been questions regarding the lengthy planning and preparation timeline. Let me state that Government succeeded in reintegrating one hundred thousand former Unita-soldiers and more than three thousand families. Also, three hundred and sixty thousand, of the four hundred and fifty thousand Angolan refugees, were repatriated. This represents 92% of the total Angolan refugees who sought refuge abroad.

Ninety nine projects, designed to benefit close to seventy six thousand former-soldiers, are being implemented.

Mr. Chairman,

The destruction of many public records is one other big challenge for us. The war caused considerable destruction of communication infrastructure, including roads, bridges, railways, health and education centers. The holding of elections is closely linked to the circulation of people and goods under absolute security conditions. With this aim, and in order to ensure the resettlement of the population, my Government plans to rehabilitate seventy two thousand Kilometers of roads and recover one thousand and three hundred bridges, from the previously existing six thousand and three hundred. The Government started rehabilitating the entire national railway network.

This will greatly improve access to significant parts of the country.

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- The Electoral Law
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- The Political Party Funding Law
- The Electoral Registration Law
- The Electoral Observer Law.

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Let me conclude by saying that, the Government of Angola is committed to national elections as an important step in the strengthening of democracy, but also recognizes the wisdom in moving with deliberate and measured speed to an election date that will ensure the complete confidence of the Angolan people in the final results -- and reflect positively on their present and future government.

I would be happy to respond to questions that you may have.

Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. Madam Ambassador, thank you very much for your testimony.

We will go now to Mr. Sakala.

STATEMENT OF MR. ALCIDES SAKALA SIMOES, PRESIDENT, PARLIAMENTARY GROUP OF UNITA, NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, LUANDA, ANGOLA

Mr. SIMOES. Yes, Mr. Chairman. I will read slowly.

Mr. SMITH. Let me make clear, no one is under a time restraint, so take your time.

Mr. SIMOES. Thank you.

On behalf of UNITA leadership, I want to commend the Chairman for holding this timely hearing on Angola, and thank the Committee for inviting me to be a part of this.

Mr. Chairman, as you remember well, in April 2002, we signed an agreement with the government known as the Luena memorandum of understanding.

It was a social contract whereby UNITA agreed to demobilize in exchange for a full democratic process. Among other things, this social contract entails addressing the fate of thousands of demobilized soldiers and veterans of all wars; de-politicizing the country's public services, including the national police and armed forces; abolishing all state security organs reminiscent of the one-party rule era; and consolidating work toward reconciliation, promoting equal opportunities and economic development, and protecting citizenship rights, including the right to elect the government.

Mr. Chairman, 4 years after the signing of this memorandum, we have witnessed, indeed, positive developments we must be proud of, as well as shortcomings we must rightly be concerned about.

In June 2003, 1 year after the death of Jonas Savimbi, the incumbent, UNITA held the most transparent and democratic congress ever held in Angola, which elected the current leadership that I am representing here today.

Since then, UNITA strove to improve democracy within its own ranks, and worked to be a real player in democracy. It is our strong belief that a non-democratic party cannot promote democracy in society.

On the bright side, we have maintained peace in the country.

That is a reality today.

There are encouraging signs about the potential disciplined resolution of the conflict in Cabinda, as well as increasingly debating today the need to strengthen democracy and economic reform.

There is a growing civil society and important internal movement of goods and people which have increased dramatically.

Despite all these positive developments, we still face the following challenges.

The majority of veterans are left to their own fate, without benefits or pension.

Democracy is still moving at two speeds one for Luanda, the capital, and another for the provinces, away from international scrutiny, where citizens are still subject to political discrimination and intolerance, limitation of their rights and repression.

The economic boom resulting from the oil windfall remains an exclusive affair of a few. It has not produced, indeed, improvements

in living conditions of the average citizen or equal access to credit. The job market remains weak and consumer prices too high, increasing the pain of the majority of citizens.

Finally, the government is wavering in its commitment to hold free and fair elections.

Mr. Chairman, this uncertainty about the political future of the country is really the dark side of the peace process and holding back potential investors.

Regarding the electoral process, in 2004, the Council of the Republic, a national consulting body, under the leadership of the Federal Republic, recommended that elections be held in 2006.

Soon after, President dos Santos visited Washington and promised during a White House meeting in 2004 that he would call for elections no later than 2006. The president of the National Elections Commission and the Speaker of the National Assembly have both indicated in 2005 that Angola was capable of holding elections in 2006.

Indeed, the National Assembly has appropriate over 200 million U.S. dollars for elections in the 2005 and 2006 budgets.

We are now in July 2006, and we still have no date for elections.

Mr. Chairman, a broad segment of Angolans believe that there is a violation of the—a breach of the social contract which calls into question the legitimacy of the current governing institutions.

This breach, Mr. Chairman, is best demonstrating by quoting President dos Santos, who on November 11, 2005, stated that "democracy has been imposed upon us by the West."

He went on to say that "democracy does not fill our stomachs."

Following these statements, we have witnessed a substantial slow-down of the institutional efforts to organize elections.

Meanwhile, the government managed to secure absolute control of the National Election Commission through disproportional representation. Eight out of an 11-member body are from the government-linked institutions, and only three from the opposition party.

In addition, it is a matter of public record that the Sino-Angolan relations have increased considerably. In fact, we welcome efforts to improve the country infrastructure, but we are extremely concerned with the temptation to view China as a model of political and economic development.

Several projects are financed with oil-backed loans from China.

This practice is likely to fuel corruption and undermine fair competition.

Where do you go from here, Mr. Chairman?

Angolans must not be given a choice between political freedom and economic development.

They deserve both.

Four years after the war ended, it is time to bring this uncertainty to an end.

We call on the international community and the United States, in particular, to join the majority of Angolans in urging the government to set a definite date for elections in 2007; double efforts in civil society for capacity-building; assist the private press in broadening its reach throughout the country; assist the National Elections Commission with the resources and expertise in order to discharge its duties in an even-handed manner.

We believe, Mr. Chairman, in UNITA, that elections are an important instrument to renew the trust between the government and the people, and a process which the country's suppressed energy can be released to realize individual and collective dreams. We need to begin a new era in the history of Angola after years of war.

We have got a clear mandate from the people in order to normalize the institutions of the country within a process of regular democratic general elections. We need transparent economic development that resists corruption, holds accountability, and encourages domestic and international investment.

A democratic Angola is more likely, in our view, to promote regional democracy and secure a safe political environment conducive to a continued development of energy and other resources.

It is therefore in the interest of Angola, in the interest of the region and the United States that democracy prevails in our country.

We have come a long way from Africa to reaffirm UNITA's gratitude for all the United States assistance already provided to Angola in the field of public health and democracy building. Lasting stability implies positive attitudes, but it rests on the ability of all players to promote freedom and to share the peace dividend.

I urge you, once again, Mr. Chairman, to assist Angola in achieving these noble goals, starting with holding elections in 2007.

Mr. Chairman, I wish to submit the full text of my testimony for the record.

Thank you for the time.

[The prepared statement of Alcides Sakala Simoes follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MR. ALCIDES SAKALA SIMOES, PRESIDENT, PARLIAMENTARY GROUP OF UNITA, NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, LUANDA, ANGOLA

Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of the Committee, I want to thank the Chair for inviting my colleagues and I to be part of this important hearing.

On April of 2002, we signed the Luena Memorandum of Understanding, to conclude the implementation of the Angolan Peace Accords. It was a Social Contract whereby, UNITA agreed to demobilize its army in exchange for a full democratic process. Among other things, this Social Contract entails:

- Addressing the fate of thousands of demobilized soldiers and veterans of all wars;
- De-politicizing the country's public service, including the National Police and the Armed Forces;
- Abolishing all State Security Organs reminiscent of the One-Party Rule era;
- Working toward reconciliation, equal opportunities and economic development;
- Protecting and promoting citizenship rights, including the right to elect the government.

Mr. Chairman, four years after the signing of the Luena Memorandum, we have witnessed developments we must be proud of and shortcomings we must, rightly, be concerned about.

In June 2003, UNITA held a transparent and democratic congress, which elected the current leadership. Since then, we strove to improve democracy within our ranks. We strongly believe that a non-democratic party cannot promote democracy in the society.

On the bright side, we have maintained peace in the mainland; there are tentative steps to deal with the conflict in Cabinda through dialogue; Angolans are increasingly debating the need to strengthen democracy and economic reform; there is a growing civil society; the beginning of economic recovery; and an increased movement of goods and people.

On the dark side, a) The majority of veterans are left to their own fate without benefits or pensions; b) Democracy is still moving at two speeds. One for Luanda, the capital, and another for the provinces, away from international scrutiny, where

citizens are still subject to political discrimination, repression and limitation of their rights; c) The economic boom resulting from the oil windfall, remains an exclusive affair of a few. General living conditions are deteriorating in an environment of unequal access to credit, unemployment and poverty continue to raise and so do basic prices, increasing the pain of most citizens. d) Finally, the government is wavering in its commitment to hold free and fair elections.

ELECTIONS DEFERRED

In 2004 The Council of Republic, recommended the holding of elections in 2006. Soon after, President Dos Santos, visited Washington and promised during a (2004) White House meeting, that he would call for elections no latter than 2006. The president of the National Elections Commission and the Speaker of the National Assembly, have both indicated, in 2005, that Angola was capable of holding elections in 2006. Indeed, the National Assembly has appropriated over $200 million for elections, in the 2005 and 2006 budgets. We are now in July of 2006 and we still have no date for elections.

Mr. Chairman, a broad segment of Angolans believes that there is a breach of the Social Contract, which calls into question the legitimacy of the governing institutions. This breach is best illustrated by quoting President Dos Santos who, on November 11, 2005, stated that, *"Democracy has been imposed upon us by the West."* He went on to say that, *"Democracy does not fill our stomachs."* Following these statements, we have witnessed a substantial slow down of the institutional efforts to organize elections.

Meanwhile, the government managed to secure absolute control of the National Election Commission (NEC), through disproportional representation. Eight out of an 11-member body are from government-linked institutions and three from the opposition.

It is a matter of public record that Angolan relations with China have increased considerably. Thousands of unemployed Angolans watched astonished as waves of Chinese cheap labor came into the country following the concession of Chinese oil-backed loans to Angola. All these activities are beyond scrutiny and likely to fuel corruption.

While we welcome steps to improve the country's infrastructure, we are extremely concerned with the temptation to view *China as a model of development*. Angola needs a transparent, diversified and job-generating economic development. We need, above all, to invest in our human capital and stop loosing thousands of our best citizens every year to curable diseases.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Angolans must not be given a choice between political freedom and economic development. They deserve both. Economic development must take place in an environment of democratic institutions. Four years after the war ended, it is time to bring this uncertainty to an end.

We call on the international community and the United States in particular, to:

- Join the majority of Angolans in urging the government of Angola to commit to a binding date for elections in 2007.
- Double efforts to assist the emerging civil society strengthen its capacity;
- Assist the private press in broadening its reach throughout the country;
- Assist the NEC with resources and expertise in order to discharge its duties in an even-handed manner.

Elections are an important instrument to renew the trust between the government and the people, and a process through which the country's suppressed energy can be released to realize individual and collective dreams. A democratic Angola is more likely to promote regional democracy and secure a safe political environment conducive to a mutually beneficial development of energy and other resources. *It is, therefore, in the interest of Angolans, the region and the United States, that democracy prevails*. I urge you, once again, to assist Angola in achieving these noble goals.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you for your attention.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Sakala, thank you very much for your testimony and for traveling here. You do not look jet-lagged at all.

Thank you for your testimony.

Mr. Soudriette.

STATEMENT OF MR. RICHARD W. SOUDRIETTE, PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR ELECTION SYSTEMS

Mr. SOUDRIETTE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Congressman Payne.

I do have a copy of my prepared remarks, and I will submit those for the record, and I will try to summarize——

Mr. SMITH. Without objection, your full statement will be made a part of the record.

Mr. SOUDRIETTE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It is a pleasure for me to be here on behalf of my colleagues, two of whom who are joining me here today, Chris Hennemeyer and Nathan Van Dusen, from our Africa division at IFES (International Foundation for Election Systems).

IFES is an organization that is almost 20 years old. We have worked in close partnership with USAID, the State Department, as well as a number of international and bilateral development agencies from around the world. We were especially pleased to have the opportunity to participate in this hearing this afternoon, and I congratulate you and the Committee Members for the initiative of putting this issue—bringing it to the forefront. For us, it is one that is especially important.

We played a major role in the '92 elections in Angola. We provided technical assistance, as well as the UN, to the National Election Commission, and we have some real perspective on that process and the lessons learned that were gathered as a result of what happened, and I think that the lessons—the primary lesson that we gleaned—and I think it is one we should all focus on here today—goes to the point that you made, Mr. Chairman, in your opening remarks.

Election administration is the key to integrity. We are seeing a period around the world of close elections. We saw one in Italy. We have seen one or two here in the United States, in Washington State and even in Florida, as well as other places.

The Mexican election, as well, underscores the importance of the integrity of the electoral institution, and that is one of the lessons learned from '92.

Although there were a lot of resources that were mobilized on the international side for that election, in reality the institutions themselves were more or less side-lined, because there was an alliance on the actual organization of the election on a private contract, and they proved that it was possible to organize an election in a logistically challenging country like Angola, but what it also proved was the lack of institutions that had the capacity to address and investigate and adjudicate election grievances set the stage for the country to return to civil war, and this, in particular, is especially meaningful for our organization, because shortly after we evacuated the last of our team—and we actually organized an observer team that participated in observing the election around the country—as we evacuated our team, shortly thereafter, our headquarters was actually destroyed in a tank battle, and we had global staff members that we have not heard from since then.

So, it is especially important to us that these elections proceed.

IFES has been monitoring the situation in Angola for a number of years.

As a result of the cessation of hostilities in 2002, we began to reengage, and as Dr. Bonicelli mentioned earlier, IFES has participated in a joint effort with our other institutions, the RIR and the NDI, to provide—in Angola. Specifically, IFES has focused on the electoral process. However, one of the issues that has—that we all have faced is limited resources, and this is one where we are going to be sitting down and working with our colleagues from AID, both here in Washington and also in country, in Angola.

IFES has developed a relationship with the chairman of the National Election Commission.

In fact, we hosted the chairman here to observe our own election in 2004, and we have done a number of assessments and provided these assessments to the election commission. These relate to all the different aspects of the process, from voter registration, voter education, vote counting, methods of voting, and so, we have already established a relationship, but unfortunately, one of the problems that we have had is the funds have been insufficient for us to be able to actually maintain an on-site, ongoing presence. This has been the key for us to be able to really help and have an impact in countries like Ghana and Kenya and Mali, and so, it is our hope that we may be able—and not only IFES, but there is other international organizations—the UN itself has an election assistance unit.

We think that it is very important that that element be introduced here.

It has been discouraging that the process has seemed to be somewhat slow, and we are very hopeful that these elections will take place, hopefully sometime in 2007. At this point, I would stress that, given the lessons learned, it is important to take note that these elections should not just be slapped together, that great care must be taken in the organization and establishment of an electoral calendar that all of the parties and civil society, that all the players in Angola all buy into, and hopefully, that will take place, the election itself, in 2007.

In order for that to occur, it requires two things.

The first, obviously, political will, political will on the part of the government, on the part of the political parties, civil society, and other actors involved, the political will.

The second is in terms of resources.

In terms of the actual funding and financing for the National Election Commission, as well as the Inter-Ministerial Commission, it is important that the government move forward quickly to put in place the resources that are necessary to accomplish.

It is our view that elections can and will hopefully proceed by 2007.

Again, our organization stands ready and committed to do whatever we can to provide assistance.

We also have linkages with election commissions from South Africa and all around the world. On Monday, I will be meeting with the Brazilian election commission to explore the possible engagement of their assistance, but the point is that Angolans have suffered more than 27 years of civil war, and the fact that people are

apprehensive and afraid about this election, because of what happened the last time, is all the more important why we, the international community must stand together, and also why the Angolan Government and all the players involved must have the political will to make sure that this election comes off, is a success, and gives the people of Angola a voice.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Richard W. Soudriette follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MR. RICHARD W. SOUDRIETTE, PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR ELECTION SYSTEMS

BACKGROUND

On behalf of my organization, the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES), I wish to thank you for taking the initiative to hold this hearing to focus attention on the important question of elections in Angola.

The 27-year Angolan Civil War, which followed the collapse of the Portuguese colonial regime, claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of Angolans and disrupted the lives of millions more. It tore the country apart and created divisions that have hampered the economic and social development of this potentially prosperous country.

In 1991 following signing of the Bicesse Accords in Lisbon, the leadership of the two warring factions—the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA)—agreed to end hostilities and embrace multi-party democracy. The United Nations Security Council approved the establishment of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission, which was charged with providing security and overseeing the first multi-party elections in the country's history.

The elections were conducted on September 29 and 30, 1992, and resulted in a return to civil war after the competing UNITA and MPLA parties were unable to resolve electoral disputes that arose. In that election President José Eduardo dos Santos garnered 49 percent of the vote against 40 percent for Jonas Savimbi, the leader of UNITA and a candidate for president. Neither achieved the 50 percent threshold required to be declared the winner. Therefore, according to the electoral law, there should have been a second round.

As we contemplate the next elections, it is vital that we examine what happened in 1992 and learn the important lessons. Angola in 1992 teaches us two crucial ones. First, that without sufficient political will on the part of a nation's leaders, no amount of international support will result in acceptable elections. Second, I conclude that technical assistance to elections must be conducted in a transparent and effective manner. This is best achieved by building independent and professional electoral management bodies. The United States can assist the upcoming Angolan electoral process by strengthening the National Electoral Commission in organizing independent, impartial and honest elections.

IFES IN ANGOLA

IFES' engagement in the Angolan electoral process began in 1992, with a small pre-election civic education campaign and an observer mission to the September 29–30 legislative and presidential elections. The IFES Mission concluded that—despite sporadic procedural violations, ballot design flaws, and a cumbersome vote count and tabulation process—the irregularities identified would not have had a material impact on the outcome of the elections. However, the failure of the Bicesse Accords to produce an environment conducive to the acceptance of electoral outcomes, as well as real and lasting disarmament and demobilization of armed factions, precluded the possibility of elections yielding a result endorsed by all sides.

Following the 1992 elections, the 1994 Lusaka Protocol failed to secure peace in Angola. Nevertheless, in 1999, President José Eduardo dos Santos announced that elections would take place in 2001. These were subsequently postponed and, in late 2001, IFES—along with the International Republican Institute (IRI) and the National Democratic Institute (NDI)—conducted a pre-election assessment mission to determine the prospects for holding general elections. The resulting report provided benchmarks from which to gauge Angola's readiness for elections and detailed assistance that could facilitate progress toward those benchmarks.

In 2002, IFES launched a series of technical assessment and short-term assistance missions, with the government making tepid progress toward fulfilling the

commitments made in 1999 along the way. Since 2002, IFES has sent four teams to advise emerging electoral authorities on how to proceed with preparations, the most recent of which was a November 2005 consultative mission to assess the:

- election framework;
- mandate of the National Election Commission (CNE);
- voter registration process;
- strengths, weaknesses and challenges envisioned by the current election timeline;
- role of the other Angolan government entities; and
- donor funding for elections.

On the part of the Angolan authorities, efforts have been made to establish an election administration infrastructure that comes closer to international standards. However, beyond providing newly created electoral institutions with a legal mandate, little real progress has been made.

THE FUTURE

Each IFES mission to Angola has been followed by detailed recommendations for how to proceed, both on the part of international assistance providers and local actors. Follow through on these recommendations, however, has been disappointing, particularly with respect to honoring timetables for election preparations. In the future, real commitment to moving the electoral process forward on schedule and a sustained, onsite technical assistance program are needed to capitalize on the establishment of electoral institutions and all of the assessment work that has been done.

As noted above, only one national election has been held in Angola—in 1992, during a hiatus in the war—but the results were rejected and civil conflict resumed. This time, although a return to war is not seen as a serious threat, there are a number of obstacles that must be overcome before credible elections can be held. First of all, a calendar for presidential and parliamentary elections must be agreed upon by all relevant actors: political parties, civil society and government. Although President Dos Santos has hinted that the polls may not occur before 2007, no official announcement has been made. People speak blithely of "upcoming elections," but very little of the hard, organizational work has been done. This is worrisome as the law only requires that the president give 90 days notice before calling elections, allowing for little time to prepare properly. Above all, clarity must be reached on actual dates for the various steps involved in elections, such as party and candidate registration, ballot design, polling place designation, materials procurement, training of poll workers and electoral officials, campaign financing, observation and accreditation, etc. Another major hurdle facing Angolans is voter registration, which is said to be proceeding at a glacial pace. These are all tasks that will fall to the National Electoral Commission, assuming that body is fully empowered and adequately funded by the Angolan government and international assistance bodies, such as USAID.

IFES stands ready to work with the Angolan government, political parties of all stripes, and civil society to carry out credible elections that will lay the foundation for a better future for all Angolans.

Thank you very much.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you so very much.

Let me just begin the questioning with Ambassador Diakite.

President dos Santos promised to hold elections in 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2006, and now 2007.

I think there is an expectation that this will be the year, the 2007 year, but I am wondering if you can tell us what progress has been made to overcome the reason for delay, so delay does not become denial in 2007, and then obviously, there would be a loss of credibility, I think, if that happened again, and if you could, the $200 million in 2005 and 2006 that were—I think those were the years, 2005 and 2006—that Mr. Sakala, our colleague in the parliament, has said has been appropriated—is there a breakdown as to how that money has been used? I mean, that is a rather large amount of cash.

Is that for the National Election Commission, the 11-member board?

Is it sitting in escrow somewhere, or is it actually being deployed to make sure that this election gets underway?

In answering that, could you—is there a sense when there might be a date certain?

Mr. Soudriette, you might even want to answer the question, as well.

From your vast experience, do you find that, just like justice delayed is justice denied, elections delayed leads to a loss of belief in the democracy?

Should this slip again, to 2008 or beyond, what would be the impact, but is there a date?

Ms. DIAKITE. Sure, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much. I would like just to make a clarification related to the figures that you mentioned, because peace was just achieved in Angola in 2002, and indeed, the first indication for elections were for 2006—and then it was not possible to, indeed, define and realize elections in 2006, because indeed, the magnitude of the problems were not, you know, being assessed properly before.

So, the government, for example, realized that we have to be able to rehabilitate the roads, main roads. We have also to de-mine certain areas of the country, not all areas, but at least the areas where the—electoral officials will be circulating.

You have also to assure that the population looking to participate in elections will not suffer again from land mines. So, having encountered the reality that we faced—the government just decided it would be better to prepare—so we will avoid any kind of misunderstanding after the elections.

Now, the President, which is Eduardo dos Santos, indicate that elections will take place no later than 2007 and—I would tell you, Mr. Chairman that the National Electoral Commission has already studied his work. We have also the Inter-Ministerial Commission for the preparation of elections that is working in very good cooperation with the National Electoral Commission.

So, now, as somebody mentioned here—I think it was the representative of the State Department—the National Electoral Commission already started its work in Luanda and in province—it has been established in the province and in community level.

So, it is important to also start—by the perception of the Electoral Commission—will take about 6 months.

I can reflect to you that the president of the National Electoral Commission already suggested that the electoral—should start to be filled in the months of September and October. So, the government is analyzing that, and I believe that we will be able to agree with that suggestion, so the electoral—and as soon as all the conditions will be in place for the elections, the president will consult the competent organizations, which is the National Electoral Commission, and be able to define the date for elections.

I should also mention that, by our electoral law, the elections should be called 3 months before its date, so ensure that we still in time to see the elections take place as the president, Jose Eduardo dos Santos, indicated.

So, I am sorry, Mr. Chairman. I did not get well your questions related to funds.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Sakala mentioned that, in fiscal year 2005 and 2006, the National Assembly appropriated $200 million per year for election activities, and I was wondering how that is being used. That seems to be a sizeable amount of money that could propel this process forward.

Ms. DIAKITE. Yes, Mr. Chairman. The problems of the elections is not, indeed, the funding. The funding has been kept for the task, and I should also mentioned to you that the activity of our National Electoral Commission has been funded based at the, you know, location of the National Assembly, but as soon as all the conditions will be in place, I think that all the political parties will be able, also, to benefit from that money in time to be able to organize themselves for the elections.

Thank you very much.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

Mr. Sakala?

Mr. SAKALA. Yes, Mr. Chairman.

I think we are very happy, because the Ambassador—she has reconfirmed what the president said, elections for 2007.

Our problem is that most of the time—lack of political will to go—with reforms in Angola. Our view is that Angola has a great opportunity, with the end of war, to begin a new era.

In this process of national reconciliation, we do not have an agenda yet.

Elections are an important to begin with this process of getting together finally.

We feel that there is an agenda for—to have reconstruction, with help of the Chinese, we can see in Angola today.

We used to say that we have now new—the Chinese—to help Angola, to reconstruct the country. There is a clear agenda for that, but for the political process, there is this hesitation that has been seen since Mr. dos Santos announced the dates for election is postponed. What is astonishing, during the war, it is said that the elections could have been done in certain parts of the country, and today, we are in this kind of indefinition.

Another positive—negative sign is the fact that the government has refused to—is asked to talk, to share views, you know, to reflect on the political process of our country.

As the Ambassador said, she was caught by surprise, but she is here.

I think that is quite good that she is participating in this debate.

Just look for and find ways to get Angola—can begin a new era now, reconstructing the country.

The electoral process is going to begin. We have met Mr. dos Santos, I think 2 months, with Samakuva. He reconfirmed his will to keep on with the process by this year, which is a good sign, but in our count, we have—does not move properly, so that—to keep on continuing to talk to the government, to make—understand that a democracy is a better solution to consolidate the peace process in our country.

I believe that there is a climate in Angola—in the region, as well—that the democracy is the way that can help sustainable, you know, development for our country, and also to encourage investment to the country. If we keep this definition, people will not

think two times, you know, but if you begin now with reforms, I believe that we can speed up the alternative—which leads, necessarily, to more transparency, you know, accountability, and less corruptions. That is one of our problems in our country. We begin with this debate in the National Assembly.

I think it is nice, because all the—even some of the MPLA group—they have been responding positively. I feel that the people are willing to begin a new era, but the leadership of the system should be more open, should be more courageous, because—change in our country, but we want that all these should be done in a very responsible manner, within the law, within the peace process, so that we can begin really working decently from now on, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Soudriette?

Mr. SOUDRIETTE. Mr. Chairman, you asked an important question in terms of timing and what we have seen in other countries.

The recent case of Haiti is a very good example. This is a country that has undergone tremendous upheavals, and so, the whole issue of trying to rebuild the belief of the Haitian people in the democratic process and the electoral process was really on the line.

Unfortunately, last year, we wound up seeing several delays that took place before the elections were actually held in February.

I think it is absolutely critical that the government move forward and set a date.

I do not think that it is unrealistic to think that a practical timeframe would be 12 to 14 months. I think that, when the government does this, they need to do it in close consultation with both the National Election Commission and the Inter-Ministerial Commission, but frankly, it will probably take that long, not only to organize the mechanics but also to really help to develop the structures, the institutions that hopefully will be able to endure beyond this election, and put a process in place that will be sustainable.

Mr. SMITH. Let me ask a couple of final questions before we go to Mr. Payne.

I usually make it my business to try to meet with election commission chairmen or presidents everywhere I go, especially when there is an upcoming election—which is one of the main reasons why we wanted Dr. De Sousa to be here—and very often they are eminent and well-meaning persons, but they are often poorly staffed.

They very often have people on the commission making up a majority, which disproportionately tilts things toward the ruling party. Mr. Sakala has made that concern known in his testimony today, that 8 of the 11 have government affiliations, and only 3 are affiliated with the opposition.

Even in our system, as we know, when one goes to vote, there's a Democrat and a Republican there as challengers, one of each, to make sure that there is a check and a balance.

I mentioned Ethiopia earlier.

I met with the commission head in Ethiopia, right before the reballoting occurred in a number of the constituencies, where there were allegations of fraud, and when all was said and done, virtually all or most—it was almost all of those contested elections went to the majority.

Those that the minority had said that they wanted were thrown into the trash bin.

So, my question is, getting it right early seems to me to be one of the most important questions of all, because there will be contested elections and ballots. The independence, the integrity, and the transparency of this board—what is your assessment, Mr. Soudriette, and I know this is a delicate question, but it is a very important question, and all of you, if you could speak to it, because this is one of the most all important questions I think there is.

Mr. SOUDRIETTE. Thank you very much.

Well, I can personally only speak to Dr. Caetano. I have had the opportunity to meet him on several occasions, and as I mentioned, we hosted him here in Washington and facilitated the opportunity for him to observe in the Washington area last—the November 4th election.

I think you put your finger right on it. It is very important that we just—we think beyond just the organization of the ballot boxes and where polling station—those are critical elements, but I also think that we need to think in terms of putting the processes in place.

The rules and procedures have to be clear. All of the representatives of the political parties need to be informed and basically sign off on the basic rules in terms of how disputes are adjudicated, and I think it is very important that, when the commission really gets up and running, that they consider some of the examples that we have seen in other countries.

Ghana, for example—the election commission there turned a situation around where the elections were viewed as a joke to now it is one of the most respected elected commissions in the world, and they placed high priority on making sure that they worked closely with all the political parties, so they created an inter-party working group. So, whenever any kind of decision, procedural change, rule was implemented or was even going to be contemplated, they went to this group and they made sure that, at the very least, all of the parties were aware, so that there were no surprises, and I think—we like to say that an election official is like the Maytag repairman.

It is the loneliest job in town, because if you are doing your job the right way, not everybody is going to like you, and in the case of Ghana, the former president does not particularly like the current chairman of the election commission, and the current president does not like him. That shows, to me, he is probably doing his job.

Mr. SMITH. Madam Ambassador?

Ms. DIAKITE. Yes, Mr. Chairman. As the representative of the State Department mentioned, indeed the National Electoral Commission is a very under-represented body in Angola, and you know that—I am sure that the diplomatic corps in various country and also in Angola, in this case, they're used, really, to work in very proactive way in terms of assisting and observing, you know, the behavior of the national institutions.

The commission was set basing—looking to how to have some balance, and indeed, although the commission has members from the MPLA, the MPLA is the part in the government, and of course

have MPLA and they have also representatives from the government.

I think that this will be the reality in, you know, any given situation, but also have representatives from UNITA, from the other parties in the parliament, also the national communication body, which used to be very, very active and very independent body.

I think that what is important is really to follow, you know, this work in a very positive way and manner, and of course, the parties of the opposition within the commission are there, really, to work and to support and to really point, you know, fingers in terms of looking out to see this commission working appropriately.

For the time being, this is not a concern for the political parties in general, in general terms.

I would like to say that—and I will take that opportunity, also, to clarify some other issues.

I would like to say that it is very unfortunate that the president of the National Electoral Commission could not come.

He will be more than glad to come, you know, any other time, when he will feel good to come, but indeed, there is not any kind of political will for the government. What happened, actually, is that the government has learned from the past elections.

The first general elections that the country faced were organized—of the international community. So, I think that everybody was not ready, really, to dispute the elections, and we saw the result, who brought the worst war that the country ever faced, and I mentioned, too, in my remarks that, actually, the population in the countryside are kind of traumatized with the results of the very first general elections.

You know that about 60 percent of the Angolan population is illiterate, and when they saw that, okay, we had elections, it was for the first time that they heard about that. After elections, they felt the war, the worst war that ever the country faced.

So, it is important, also, to work with the population in terms of really de-mystifying that, and the government is aware of that, is working on that.

It is, indeed, not a lack of political will, but as also, I think, what the Department of—representative of Department of State mentioned, the government is trying to do the maximum in terms of the organization of the process, so we will have less misunderstanding and contestation of the elections.

Indeed, I am here not because the government refused. I think there was also some lack of understanding related to the invitation, because the perception—and I have to go to Angola—the perception I feel there was, that the invitation was only for the chief, the president of the National Electoral Commission, and when we clarified, we start looking how to have the minister of the territorial administration participating, too, which unfortunately, could not come, because he is in the negotiation process with—in the northern province of Cabenda.

So, that is the reality. We knew from the beginning—we have been working quite well with your office, your staff. We knew the nature of this hearing, and of course, it will be of all interests of the government to be represented here.

I would like, also, to say that some of the questions that have been addressed that certainly we could not answer will be addressed later with the support of the National Electoral Commission, but if you allow me, Mr. Chairman, I would like just to give you some comments about the information that Madam Congresswoman Lee made related to HIV/AIDS, just to clarify that, indeed, there is—although the rate of the contamination in Angola is relatively low—we are having a rate of less than 5 percent, actually 3.6 percent all over the country.

Even in that situation, the government is really working in terms of tackling the disease, so we will not—instead of progressing, it will reduce.

So, the government have created an Inter-Ministerial Commission, chaired by President dos Santos, to address the issue of HIV/AIDS in Angola.

There was a national institute of combatting HIV/AIDS that was inaugurated last year, so one hospital dedicated just to deal with the patients of HIV/AIDS, where they can go, have the testing, the counsel, and I am told that is free of charge.

The government just put, also, a national—defined a national strategy for reduction and have discussed or defined that strategy with the support of—with the institution, after broad consultation with all national organizations and civil society, so is what I would like just to add for the record, and of course, I will be, as my colleagues, glad to deliver my written remarks for the record. Thank you very much.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Madam Ambassador.

Mr. SAKALA. Mr. Chairman, I think I would like just to clarify one of the issues.

That is to say that, while we were discussing the election package, we have adopted the principle of consensus so that we could have a more balanced law on the electoral process, but when we got to the most important point there, which is the constitution of this electoral body, which is quite important, we did not have a consensus. We could not do anything.

It is our main concern, because we need to have—we would like to have a more balanced body that can, you know, help to check—the process that may occur during these activities.

On the other side, we do not have yet the constitutional court in our country, which can deal directly with all these issues.

So, there is a couple of definitions that might not really help.

The dialogue—has now restarted within this mechanism of electoral consultation recently, and I am sure that you are going to address all these issues. As the Ambassador said, it is true, we need to do something differently and better than 2002, and we have to work together, but we do not have to—keep postponing dates, and I think if you define a period of time, everybody would be more obliged to work toward that period.

That is what is missing in the country. We do not have a clear horizon.

Elections in 2007 will be good. So, a date is necessary, so that we can oblige all our resources to go ahead with this process.

On the other side, I think the Ambassador, that I respect a lot—she may have a distant view of the realities in the country.

She is in Washington, and we are in Luanda, and you can see that the levels of intolerance are increasing, you know, throughout the country, especially in Bengala, where there are still people dying today, because of the attitude of some MPLA militants.

All these issues we raised with the president. We spoke about this, but—the minister for public works—he is the one that is now leading on the side of the government, the negotiating team of the government—probably we can get consensus on much of these issues.

We have to stop violence, because the war is robbing the country. We have a new reality, the world of change today. We have to work together.

On the other side, we still have a very serious problem there.

There are still people in the population with arms in our country, the so-called MPLA militias. It is well known about this, and we have been insisting that now we have the need to disarm the people with arms and also disarm our mentalities so that we can begin a new era. That is a big concern that we have.

In any case, we are optimists that the country should move ahead.

That is our point of view.

We are going to insist—we are going to force it whenever we can.

We have to talk all the time, because if people, they do not talk, you know, things will be just like they used to, and that is very—for building process of a nation. So, as I said in my statement, we came here to work—as a partner on the peace process.

The war is over, and the contest of the war was quite different.

Everyone knows the history of Angola. Since 1975, we are victims of the Cold War. In South Africa, there is a new nation, in South Africa.

I think the conditions are created now to begin working together.

So, we are appealing to the government, really, to have this vision on a new nation.

So, we need to take into practice what we agreed upon. Otherwise, we have been playing against the bush, which is negative for our country. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Payne?

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much.

It seems relatively positive to hear some of your statements, principles of consensus, listening to the Ambassador indicating that the country is ready to move forward.

I think that you certainly hit the nail on the head when you talk about the fact that, you know, the Cold War is over. You know, I do not know if all the parties in Angola realize it, but the Berlin Wall is down, and everyone else is moving around.

As a matter of fact, the only semblance of the Berlin Wall was more room for the people at the World Cup to celebrate, and we still find remnants of the Cold War, which is simply holding progress back for countries, and so, I would hope that the country could come together with sort of a movement of national unity, because if you look at Mozambique, Mozambique had the same—basically the same kind of a background, Portuguese rule through the '70s, civil war, but you know, MPLA decided they were tired. Matter of fact, they just decided to go to Rome, just were tired of fight-

ing, and were able to work out an agreement and actually move forward, and moving the country forward in Mozambique certainly does not come close to the resources that Angola has—diamonds, gold, and fertile land—and so, for them to, in the past 7 or 8 years, have a GDP growth of 3 to 5 to 6 percent annually, and Angola is still borrowing money, and starting to pay back the old debts, it is, I believe, going, you know, in the wrong direction. So, I think there certainly—it seems to me that if the two main parties decided that enough is enough and we are going to move forward, I think that would be good.

I just wonder if—Mr. Soudriette—if you could sort of give your view of where Angola—the readiness of an election at this time and what—and I only ask you—and I know that the people from Angola certainly would know better, but I am asking you for a comparative, as you did elections in Nigeria recently or the elections coming up in the DRC or the elections just recently held in Burundi, how do you see the NEC, its composition, the readiness, whether there are any other organizations being invited in that IRI or NDI or any of the—you know, in Liberia, there was the recent election, and it was probably one of the most well-run elections that I have ever seen.

I was there during the election, observing, and—but it took a lot of preparation, took a lot of intensive work, and of course, Liberia, with 3 million people—you have twice that number, probably, in the principle city in Angola, and so, there is certainly comparing different—many different—the countries are not similar, but I just wonder about the preparation in your opinion.

Mr. SOUDRIETTE. Thank you very much. I think you have raised an actual question on the elements. I think they are more or less there.

I think the most important thing, at this point, now, is to move forward to pull them together, to really get the National Election Commission and the Inter-Ministerial Commission, in particular, moving forward, and the primary—the biggest task ahead of them at the moment is the voter registration.

That is going to be a very daunting task, but just in organizing all aspects of the election.

I think it is not unrealistic to think that a minimum of 12 to 14 months would probably be recommended, because just from where we are today to where they need to get it, I think it is very important that there be sufficient time, rather than what we saw back in '91 and '92, when the international community imposed a very rigid time-table. Obviously, there were reasons for that, but it is important that when the president and when the government sets the date, that they do so together with the election commission.

In terms of your comparison with Liberia, I think that is an excellent one, I mean a country that, 2 years ago, nobody would have given any chance of being able to organize a credible election.

IFES had the honor to work side by side with the National Election Commission there, as well as the UN, and I think that was an example of, by working together—and they were the ones that were driving the process, and I think that is the important thing here in Angola.

It has got to be the Angolans that are driving the process, but I do think the international community can engage.

The IRI is involved and is doing some work in the area of political party development. I know NDI is doing some work in civil society development.

Our role has been primarily to work with the election commission.

As I mentioned previously, the resources have been limited in order to be able to really have the kind of on-site presence that we had in Liberia, that we have in Nigeria right now.

I think that kind of presence is important to really be able to provide the kind of assistance—and I think it is important to emphasize assistance, because it has to be the Angolans that are really driving this process, but I am quite confident that, once the date is set, then we all basically just need to come forward and do whatever we can to support them and make sure that the electoral calendar is established and then that it is respected.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much.

I could not agree with you more that to rush the election, even though it seems like time has elapsed, as it was going to happen in Haiti—I appealed to the authorities there not to have the election when they were going to previously have it.

Registration had not been completed in all parts of the country.

If you start out flawed, then you are going to have losers saying we lost because it was flawed, and they would have a very good argument, and so, finally, after several postponements, an election was held, and I think it was relatively fair and free, and so, I would hope that we do not rush it so that it is not—that you have people who, therefore, will have complaints.

Your Excellency, how much time do you think, in your opinion, even though you are here and you sit in Washington and you do not know anything that is going on in Angola, you heard it was, you know, moving along fairly well, but do you have any idea of how long it might take or what situation the government is in currently in order to move the voter registration, to have NEC working properly, whether the roads are passable enough, with, we know, the tremendous land mine problem, and how much time do you think to clarify the problem of the date previously, but what would you expect would be a reasonable date in the future?

Ms. DIAKITE. Thank you very much, Congressman Payne.

I think that if the government succeeds to start the electoral registration by September–October, and the National Electoral Commission has made clear that 6 months is enough time, I think that it will be possible to see the elections taking place in 2007, and the works that the government started, of course, is—the government is not looking out to finish all the works.

There is a lot of work to be done, but at least to create the minimum conditions to allow—to allow free circulation of people and—because the work has been started, the rehabilitation of the main road, the rehabilitation of some bridges, I believe that 2007 will be possible to organize the election.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you.

Mr. Sakala, what is your opinion of the freedom of the political parties? Do you feel that your party and other opposition parties

are having freedom to meet and to assemble and things of that nature?

Mr. SAKALA. We still have a lot of problems in the country.

As I said in my statement, we have a democracy in our country in two speeds.

In Luanda, everything seems to be nice, people can talk, we can discuss, there is a lot of political initiatives from the political parties—but our problem is within the country, from the international scrutiny. That is the big problem that we have today.

The acts of intolerance are increasing in the country. You know, that is a worry that we have today, because we think that it is not necessary—to destroy infrastructure, and some of—this kind of behavior of intimidating people is to force the people to—on the government, because you say whoever beats you—you know, acts in that way, people will be afraid.

That is the logic behind this, but as I said, this mechanism, bilateral mechanism—will lead the government to discuss—I think it is important that we discuss all these problems that can inflame the country, not war, because war is—belongs to the past, but create some stability in certain areas of our country.

Today we can move freely in the country. Even the issue of land mines as a matter to postpone elections is a false problem, because in the country, we know where mines are. Fortunately, we have the maps, you know.

You know that Angola has mines from the Cubans, the Soviets, the South Africans, the Portuguese, UNITA, MPLA—but we know where they are, and it makes it easier to de-mine this area, and there is a tremendous support from the international community to help Angolans to speed up with the mining process.

But we have two ways of democracy. In Luanda, that is okay. In the province, things are terrible.

So, we have to change this perception rapidly, and from the conversation with the president, we felt that he might be willing to do something about this, because this meeting—Mr. Samakuva requested this meeting some time ago, and finally the meeting took place, and we said that, in the past, we had problems in the past, that belong to the past. Now we have to look to the future.

So, the importance now is how we can put the ideas together so that we can do something important for the present.

We have a proposal that we call a pact of national convergence.

The MPLA has what we call a pact of national—agenda of national consensus.

That is good ideas.

Now we have to have some kind of pact so that the day after elections, it seems to be the problem—the worries of the people, as the Ambassador say, what is going to happen after elections?

If you have an agreement between us, I think it will be much better to overcome, you know, the worries that people have.

The idea of change itself—it can worry people, but if we can put our worries on the table to say my worry is this and that and this and that, our worries are this and that, we come in agreement, and when you see, at the end, most of the time the worries are quite—because people—they are not talking.

So, we have to talk about our worries so that we can exercise this, you know, and I believe there is a climate which permits, you know, to begin with this kind of disarming our consciences.

The war has divided the society deeply, and we know it. Now we have to reconcile all the society—and sometimes I think that the MPLA has its interests above the necessity of reconciling the society.

So, we are in a good way. That is what I would like to ensure you.

We are going to force this kind of dialogue, so that we can have the democratic process begin with responsibility and a sense of people accepting that democracy is part of our life from now on.

If the MPLA is the one in power, UNITA is not the real problem, and we have been saying that whoever the next election, it is good for the next country, because you know that, if you do not work well, you are not going to be elected.

You know, we can begin an era of a society. So, that is essentially our message.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much, and I just hope that we can continue to have the dialogue. I think dialogue is always good, and I appreciate hearing what both of you had to say.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask that my opening statement be included in the record.

Mr. SMITH. Without objection, so ordered.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Payne follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE DONALD M. PAYNE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

I commend Chairman Smith for calling this very important and timely hearing on "Angola's long-delayed elections".

As a country emerging from one of the worst and longest periods of conflict which have plagued Africa in recent times, Angola faces great humanitarian, social, economic and political challenges today. A 14-year long independence struggle, followed by three decades of civil war, have left Angola's infrastructure in ruins and its people crippled. While it ranks among the world's poorest nations today, Angola is, in fact, a country rich in natural resources, with vast oil reserves and significant wealth in diamonds and other valuable minerals, as well as an agricultural sector that was previously highly productive.

But as in most African countries, both peace and democracy have long eluded the people of Angola. The country has seen two significant attempts at forging peace disintegrate. The last ceasefire signed following the death of UNITA's founder and long-time leader Mr. Jonas Savimbi in April 2002, led to the establishment of the current Angolan Government of Unity and National Reconciliation (GURN). This last peace accord appears to have finally ushered in a new era of relative calm and stability. Peace appears to have been consolidated in most areas with the exception of the Cabinda enclave (the source of some 70% of Angola's oil reserves) where sporadic violence reportedly still persists.

The first and only presidential and legislative elections held in Angola since independence took place in September, 1992. Although the contested presidential race resulted in the eruption of violence and resumption of war shortly afterwards, the election process itself had been deemed relatively peaceful and fair by international observers. Hence, there may be room for some optimism about the forthcoming elections given this earlier precedence.

The much anticipated forthcoming elections—the focus of our discussions here today—have been repeatedly delayed over the last decade. It appears now that they will not take place until late 2007 at the earliest. Many reasons have been cited by the MPLA government for this delay. Legal structures and procedures still need to be put in place. Registering 8 million voters, it is said, will require improvements to the country's transportation and communication infrastructure which will take at least six months. The government has made modest progress in preparation (including, by finally allowing private media ownership) but its efforts to date, as well as

the reasons it has given for the delays, are viewed skeptically by the opposition and many observers.

But in some sense, the delay may also offer an opportunity. We must learn from the past and work hard in the time that we have to prevent the country from succumbing to conflict and violence again. All efforts must be aimed at avoiding the type of post-election conflicts previously seen both in Angola as well as in several other parts of Africa in recent years.

I want to just briefly highlight three critical concerns which have been raised by observers of the current situation in Angola, which I expect will be addressed at length in this hearing.

First, with regard to the dominant position of MPLA government: Many believe that bolstered by oil revenues, President de Santos' ruling MPLA, is positioned to win the next elections, and will likely continue to marginalize and co-opt its weakened opponents. Unlike other post-conflict African countries, given its vast oil wealth and rising oil prices, Angola is expected to continue experiencing a relatively rapid and significant growth in real GDP. But this is happening in the absence of much needed reforms of the country's public institutions and fiscal system, which can only be further delayed by increasing access to credit and investment from China. Increasing oil revenues in the face of the abject poverty of the large majority is leading to a situation of extreme inequalities, which poses further uncertainties, especially given the absence of effective mechanisms to prevent corruption. It is also vital that Angola look into ways of diversifying its currently oil-revenue dominated economy as a means of addressing growing inequities and ensuring a more sustainable path towards poverty alleviation and development.

Secondly, there is concern about recent and possibly, ongoing human rights abuses that this hearing should also address, and particularly reports by the State Department, about abuses committed by government security forces as recently as last year in the oil-rich Cabinda enclave.

Finally there is the issue of landmines: The challenge of reconstructing this sizeable country is made even more difficult by the innumerable land mines which still litter its countryside. Angola ranks among post-conflict countries known to be most severely contaminated by land mines. In addition to the scores of lives claimed by war (estimated over 1 million) countless innocent victims have suffered appalling land mine injuries and lost their livelihoods. Land mines wreak environmental havoc hamper reconstruction, humanitarian aid and rehabilitation efforts. We need a more strategic approach to this problem which is also faced by many other post-conflict countries worldwide.

In concluding, the MPLA government should recognize that escalating concerns over repeatedly delayed elections could lead to a return to conflict and instability, as can discord in the electoral procedures. The government must thus be encouraged to announce—and commit to—a firm election schedule, to protect the human rights, fight corruption, and diversify its economy.

I look forward to a fruitful discussion and to learning from our witnesses how the US in general, the House of Reps. in particular, as well as the international community at large, can support Angola in its efforts to ensure a level playing field for all involved in the upcoming elections. Their timely, free and fair implementation is key to lasting peace in Angola and the future prosperity of its people.

Mr. PAYNE. Ms. Lee left several questions that she asked if they could be included in the record.

Mr. SMITH. Without objection. For this panel?

Ms. LEE. Yes, for this panel.

Mr. SMITH. We will get them a copy, too.

[The information referred to was not received by the Subcommittee prior to printing.]

Mr. SMITH. I would ask you if you could get back to us as soon as possible so it can be made a part of the record.

Let me just ask a couple of final questions.

Very often we find, you know—I should say free and fair on the day of the election can be pretty much authenticated by the election observers, but the problem is all the days that preceded it, and usually it is the barring of opposition parties to media that determines an outcome that keeps the opposition from having any reasonable chance of having their message heard.

What is the situation in Angola with regards to the press?

We hear, at times, that there is self-censorship on the part of some of the journalists. Is that true?

Is there a robust free media that allows the opposition to get their message out, not to judge its legitimacy or not, but whether or not they can talk to the people.

Mr. Soudriette, on the issue of election observers, how many election observers from the AU, EU, U.S., and anyone else do you think might be needed to help to ensure that at least the day of the election is free and fair?

Mr. SOUDRIETTE. Well, with regard to your last question—and actually, I think it relates to the first question you asked in terms of what is the best safeguard in terms of the election process.

Our founder always used to say only amateurs steal elections on election day.

Actually, it is very important to work—view it as an entire process.

So, I think one of the keys is the international organizations that are involved in doing election observation, the Carter Center, the UN, IRI, NDI, others, the EU, whatever.

There recently was a protocol that was signed at the UN in October on international election observation. One of the tenets of the protocol is that any organization signing on to undertake such a mission has to accept the importance of doing their homework, so actually going in an advance.

In the case of Haiti, we sent a team of long-term observers—IFES did—for this last election—who were on-site, and they were all throughout the country, basically providing information and providing reports on a continuous basis, and these reports, we made available to the election commission and the UN and other players.

So, having an ongoing monitoring role is important, and not necessarily just to detect fraud, also actually to also serve as an early warning system, if there is a problem on voter registration, people are either not showing up or with supplies or some breakdown in the process.

It is also very important that the organizations that do commit—and I would encourage the Government of Angola to encourage international observation.

It is important that they also commit to sufficient time on the ground afterward and not just issue a statement as they get ready to go wheels up, which has happened in the past.

I think we are seeing much less of that, but in terms of numbers of observers, it is a huge country. It is difficult to really say, but I think if we saw somewhere in the neighborhood of two to three hundred observers, even, it would—I mean that is not enough to cover the entire country, but what would be important is to also encourage the participation and develop a domestic observer, and this is where you can actually really amplify the international presence by also plugging in with the local observer groups. So, this is what we have done and other groups have done in the past.

So, I think the observation, though, is very important, and not only just from the standpoint of trying to discover problems or fraud, but also from the standpoint of moral support. It emboldens

the population to see the observers there in support of the process, and that, I think, is going to be a key of helping people to overcome the fears that perhaps linger from the last election.

Ms. DIAKITE. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I think that what our colleague from—the representative from IFES said is very true, I agree, but I have to say, also, that the national electoral law also has a provision for electoral—international electoral observation, which is prerogative of both the National Electoral Commission, the government, and also from some political parties.

This new electoral law brings also the possibility of having national or local observers which will really reinforce the work done by the international electoral observations.

So, what I can tell you now is that when, indeed, it will be the moment of really addressing the invitations to the—to our international partners and friends in terms of enable them to prepare in time, but I will resist that question and, of course, come back to you as a matter of the dialogue that we have.

Related to the press, Angola has made quite substantive relevant progress in terms of having free and private press. In the past, we just have, you know, state press. Today, we are having several private—and the majority of the newspapers in Angola are private ones, very strong, very critical ones to the system, but what is important to say, more than that, is that the government has adopted a new law for the media, which is a very, very broad and progressive law, I should say, that was really adopted in the parliament by consensus.

Previously of the adoption of this law, there was also a quite wide movement of consultations with the civil society, with the parties, with all the bodies related to press. So, we are quite happy and proud of this law, and for the time being, we do not have any records of problems with the media and the government. Thank you.

Mr. SAKALA. We have a new law in the country, press, you know, freedom, and we have adopted the law in the National Assembly, but the promulgation of the law is taking months.

We have to make a lot of pressure, and then President dos Santos, finally he accepted this law.

We did work against neither in favor of this law. We sent—abstain some—to abstain in our parliamentary group, because we think that it is important that we correct in Angola what we call the high authority of social communication, which modeled after an independent body, which can lead—you know, the press liberties, how to do it. We have a body which leads this law of communication, which is to link it to the system, it is not a balanced one, but it is a debate that we are going to continue in the National Assembly, until we found a body which will present all the segments of the society in the top so that it can work in a more balanced way.

So, censorship exists in the country. We have so many newspapers—but if you go to the country to find these newspapers, they do not get them in the province. We do not know why, and we have daily planes, you know, taking people throughout the provinces, but the newspapers are not arriving, and also, there is a debate now for the Radio Ecclesia to spread the signal of the radio through

local radios, FM radios, but the government is still reluctant to give the freedom to the church to expand the signal of the radio of the church.

Ecclesia has been, I think, important in Luanda, because we have the television, the national radio link to the government, and Ecclesia tries to play, you know, a balanced way of communicating. It has been very useful in the country, but so far, it bound to the Luanda province.

I can give you an example.

We did an agreement, the memorandum of Luena. The radio of UNITA was—a local FM radio—that was done in the course of the agreement. We have the machines in Luanda for a couple of months, they are there, but the technicians that should come—to help to set up machines—they are not yet in business.

Probably the Ambassador, she is going to help us to have the technicians, passing through Washington.

It is small things like that. We wait months and months for technicians to come to set this radio, which is what was agreed upon with the government, so that we begin working in Luanda.

There are small things like that which make us think, really, is there the political will to go ahead with reforms? Since it is our view that the press liberty is an instrumental—fundamental instrument for democracy in the country, is the right for people to express themselves, you know, to pass their views, to debate differences and so on, but it seems we still have some small problems that we have to overcome, to overcome them.

So, that is my point on this particular issue.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you so much.

Mr. Payne?

Mr. PAYNE. Once again, I think that, you know, I appreciate all of you, your testimony.

Certainly, there is a difference of point of view on issues, but we would be very surprised if there was total harmony in the views. It appears, though, that—I think the main thing is that—that, by and large, guns are down, and it is better to have differences verbally and even in a joking way at times, than the barrel of the gun, which we saw for so many decades in your country, and so many of the problems, there is no question that minority parties tend to not have the same exposure.

I could give you a lot of song and verse about some of my feelings here about not being able to have a president to come to your town and talk about how great things are going, because he has Air Force One and we do not.

So, I mean there are certainly advantages of being in the leadership, I mean wherever you are, and so, I do know that that is the way, and some radio stations we look at, we wonder, or TV stations, wonder where did that happen, when you hear the spin.

However, I do think that, as long as we are working toward a better system, as long as we are working toward having these limits removed, as long as they can be discussed, as long as they can, you know, not allow them to stop the progress going, I think that, you know, you are on the right track, and we certainly feel that Angola is too important a country to continue to languish in the problems.

The amputees that are there need attention. There is more amputees in the country, as you know, than any other country in the world. Back when I was a member of the municipal council in the City of Newark in the '80s, we brought a number of children to our Newark hospital, the University of Medicine and Dentistry in Newark, and we worked with them, and fitted them with prostheses, and so, you know, we have to try to, you know, overcome the past.

As I indicated, your country is endowed with resources, and if they are used more efficiently for the benefit of the people, I think that will go along way, but my point is at least there is discussion going on.

When I first got involved, UNITA and MPLA certainly could not sit down at a table.

So, I thank the Chairman for having this meeting, and we will certainly continue to monitor and question whether the Ambassador has been home or not.

Mr. SMITH. If you have any final comment you would like to make, any of you, please do.

Mr. SAKALA. Well, just to thank you very much for this opportunity, which is a great opportunity, and to stress that we are available any time you think that we have to, you know, give our reflections, we are available to come to Washington.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

Ms. DIAKITE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I did appreciate your availability in thinking about my country and looking how to be more informed about what is going on for the election, and of course, I appreciate your remarks and your colleagues' remarks, as well. I just want to assure you that my government is really serious in this endeavor of really changing the pace of the political situation in Angola, looking, really, how to achieve good and mature democracy for the benefit of all the Angolan people and mainly to the ordinary people.

We will keep discussing with you as we already have been doing this.

Thank you very much.

Mr. SMITH. Ambassador, thank you.

Mr. Soudriette?

Mr. SOUDRIETTE. I just wanted to actually add on to what Congressman Payne mentioned in terms of the people who have suffered, amputees.

One of the areas that we would encourage the National Election Commission and all the electoral authorities to pay special attention to is to make sure that people with disabilities are fully enfranchised and given every opportunity to fully participate in the process. IFES looks forward to doing anything that we can in order to help make that possible.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you and Congressman Payne and Members of the Committee, very important, and we all look forward to the elections in 2007 to make sure that Angola is on the right path to democracy.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you so very much. On those very positive notes, this has been an extraordinarily helpful and informative hearing.

There is an enormous amount of good will, and I think that is obvious, and we want to work with you. Whatever the Subcommittee can do, I can assure we will do. Let us know. Do not be a stranger.

The hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 5:40 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING RECORD

RESPONSES FROM MR. DAN MOZENA, DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN AFFAIRS, BUREAU OF AFRICAN AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY AND CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA, GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS

Question:

It is widely believed that unlike the situation in 1992, there is little danger of a return to war if the next elections are problematic. However, localized violence is considered more likely and banditry is a continuing problem. What steps is the Administration taking to work with the Angolan government to eliminate these residual threats to peace in Angola?

Response:

There were isolated cases of political violence in early 2005 that largely ceased after the party in power initiated inter-party discussions in May 2005. Much of the violence in the past was instigated by members of youth wings of several parties. Stronger party leadership can reinforce non-violent campaigning. Also, increased police capacity will help Angolan authorities respond appropriately and responsibly to incidents. While sporadic violence may pick back up again as elections draw near, the USG does not anticipate a wide-scale increase in political violence prior to the elections.

The Government of Angola (GRA) has begun a campaign of civil disarmament and destruction of small weapons. The USG is a part of this campaign by funding non-governmental organization (NGO) HALO Trust to work with the GRA in small weapons destruction. The USG also supports Catholic Relief Services and Search for Common Ground's programs in Angola that are directly focused on conflict resolution. USG support to international NGOs, such as the National Democratic Institute and the International Republican Institute, also indirectly works to reduce conflict by helping the government, political parties, and civil society engage in meaningful and frank discussions on important political and social issues, including preparations for the upcoming elections. The Embassy is also directly engaged with the Ministry of the Interior to increase police professionalism, especially in the provinces.

Question:

Angola has experienced significant problems with corruption over the years, with hundred of millions of dollars discovered missing from the oil and diamond parastatals. What concrete developments are the World Bank and International Monetary Fund citing when they praise the Angolan government for its progress on transparency?

Response:

Corruption and lack of transparency remain serious problems; there are signs of progress, but much remains to be done. The International Monetary Fund has noted that the government of Angola took important steps to improve fiscal management by reducing fuel subsidies, unifying the national budget, publishing oil revenue information on the Internet, and conducting external audits on Sonangol (the state-run petroleum company) and the Central Bank. The latest round of bidding on oil concessions was recognized for its transparency. The World Bank notes that it has worked productively with the Ministry of Finance to implement the State's Integrated System of Financial Management (SIGFE), which controls government expenditure transactions and prevents extra-budgetary spending. The Government of

Angola has approved both the United Nations and African Union corruption conventions.

We nonetheless recognize that much remains to be done to improve transparency. The USG assisted in the creation and continues to support a Financial Programming Unit within the Ministry of Finance, which complements the World Bank's SIGFE program and augments the government's ability to plan expenditures with specific social objectives in mind. This will ensure that the government can transparently translate oil revenues into concrete benefits for the Angolan people. Though the government is already publicizing oil revenue data, we are encouraging Angola to join the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, which will establish benchmarks and a formal structure for the government's transparency activities.

Question:

Chinese loans to Angola are backed by oil. What impact does this oil, presumably held in escrow, have on the world oil market, and is there reason to be confident that the Angolan government intends to repay these loans and release this oil to the market at some point? How transparent is the Chinese loan-oil escrow process?

Response:

Oil is not being held in escrow. China is being repaid by proceeds from oil deliveries to Unipec, a subsidiary of the Chinese oil firm Sinopec. The specific terms and structure of the financing agreement are not public. That said, the Government of Angola (GRA) has taken steps to improve good governance that directly affects management of the Chinese credit line. In early 2006, the Ministry of Finance issued and now enforces a decree that established strict credit line release procedures for all projects over $10 million. Sinopec is the majority shareholder in an Angolan-based joint oil venture with Sonangol.

Question:

U.S. trade with Angola is largely based on American oil purchases, and the 30 American companies operating in Angola are mostly in the energy sector. Several years ago, Angolan President Dos Santos told U.S. officials that his country lacked a private sector. What steps have been taken or are anticipated to be taken to enhance the creation of small and medium business in Angola to create the jobs necessary to reduce the level of poverty in Angola?

Response:

It is important to note that Angola's non-oil sector is predicted to grow at around 10 percent per annum for the short to medium-term. The Government of Angola predicts non-oil sector growth to outstrip oil sector growth in 2006. The government has announced plans to direct 5 percent of oil revenues toward a new Angolan Development Bank with the mission to provide credit to small and medium-sized enterprises. In late 2005, the Angolan Parliament promulgated new banking sector legislation that facilitates the creation of microfinance institutions. The largest Angolan state bank, BPC, is currently designing three microfinance programs to benefit small farmers and other small and medium-sized enterprises.

Agriculture holds the strongest export potential outside the extractive industries, and the sector's recovery is a major priority for the Angolan government. In 2004/2005, the agricultural sector grew by 24 percent, aided by returning refugees and internally displaced persons, increased cultivation per family, and good rains.

To improve the business environment, the GRA has taken positive steps by passing an Investment Law, which provides incentives for private investment, and by setting up a "One-Stop Shop" to streamline business registration procedures.

The USG is providing assistance through an agricultural recovery program in Huambo, ongoing rural micro credit programs, assistance to municipal and provincial grassroots farming associations, and support to the Huambo agricultural research lab and university. Through the USAID-funded Regional Hub for Global Competitiveness in Gaborone, Botswana, we provide assistance in export business development and information exchange and outreach, so that Angolan businesses can take fuller advantage of the African Growth and Opportunity Act.

Question:

The Administration has recommended efforts to help safeguard energy supplies from West African nations such as Nigeria and Sao Tome. Are any similar efforts being contemplated to protect the supply of Angolan oil, especially since Angola is the seventh largest suppliers of oil to the United States?

Response:

Angola's oil production is offshore and considered relatively secure. The new LNG facility and possibly new fields will be onshore, but international operators are generally confident that security is adequate. The USG liaises with the Angolan Navy, General Staff and Ministry of Defense and encourage participation in International Military Education and Training programs to train Angolan Naval officers in modern maritime security management. The Angolan Navy has expressed interest in engagement with the U.S. Coast Guard for ship visits and training, as Angolan naval forces use patrol craft type ships.

In April 2005, the Angolan Council of Ministers approved a decree that created a national committee for the application of the International Maritime Organization's International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS Code). The national committee will be an inter-ministerial organ led by the National Director of Merchant Marine and Ports. Other participants in the committee are the National Director of Customs and Public Health, the National Air Force, the Fire Brigade, the Fish Inspection services, and Migration and Immigration Information services. The Angolan government has actively cooperated with the U.S. Coast Guard in implementation of the ISPS Code.

