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## ANGOLA: From military peace to social peace(Special Feature)

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## Special Feature

# ANGOLA: From military peace to social peace

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## Abstract

Angola was one of the five former Portuguese colonies in Africa since the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Shortly after its independence in 1975, on the backdrop of the cold war, the country fell into a long civil war that caused immense human suffering and destruction of its productive and social infrastructure. Achieving peace became a precious asset that kept being delayed due to ideological and political antagonism. We pretend to analyze the circumstances and context of peace processes in Angola since 1991 to 2002 and the main challenges for building and preserving social peace. The paper aims at contributing to a reflection on the necessity to transform the concept of peacebuilding underlying Angola's past peace processes into a paradigm of peacebuilding outside the logic of war, and on how to transform a military peace into a social peace. This paradigm should be held from 2002 when the civil war ended in Angola.

**Keywords:** Angola – military peace – social peace – peacebuilding

## Introduction

With the achievement of its independence, there was hope that Angola would have a sustainable peace for its development. Unfortunately, internal and external interests took over the course of the country. An internationalized war raged in Angola for decades. In addition to the destruction of economic and productive infrastructure, the war caused thousands of deaths and displaced persons, as well as moral and psychological suffering for the populations who lived directly with the military conflict. In this context, the achievement of negative peace, understood as the absence of war, became in the context a political priority for our domestic policy makers.

The search for peace from the perspective of conflict resolution opened the door for several negotiation processes between the belligerents and several agreements were signed that culminated in the ceasefire. But the fragility of these agreements, given the interests of the main actors in the conflict, has more than once compromised the post-conflict peacebuilding process. The war came several times again during the implementation of the agreements. The reasons for this failure of the peace process could be several. If, on the one hand, the actors of the conflict misused the “bona fide” principle, on the other hand there are some imperfections of the instruments at their disposal to protect peace and make it grow.

The paradigm for the resolution of the Angolan conflict was in the logic of post-conflict peacebuilding and peacekeeping used in United Nations Missions after the Second World War. This paradigm was built on accords or treaties, where the interests of the warring parts are preserved. The experience has shown the fragility of this paradigm. From Bicesse Accord (1991) to Lusaka Protocol (1994) new conflicts were always born after each signed agreement. Only on 2002, for the first time after the independence, Angola experienced an extensive term of military peace (twenty years), i.e. without war, although in the oil region of Cabinda there is still military instability with the guerrilla warfare carried out by the independence fighters of FLEC (Liberation Front of Cabinda Enclave).<sup>1</sup> The experience accumulated with the failures and the death of the rebel leader Jonas Savimbi in combat were decisive for the preservation of this military peace. In this article, we intend to take this last period (2002-2022) as a great opportunity for the transformation from military peace to social peace. We assume in the article the idea of positive peace as an ideal to be built “from grassroots level up and in many different colours”.<sup>2</sup> To achieve our goal we have chosen a social science analysis method combining empirical analysis with theory from a deductive perspective.

## 1. The concept of peace

Peace studies are recent as an autonomous and distinct field of research. «Although the thought and numerous proposals on how to achieve peace go back to ancient times and have always been throughout history, these initiatives were, however, too isolated or autonomous to constitute themselves as a conceptually coherent, organized discipline from the point of view of teaching and research and with a significant impact at the academic and political level.»<sup>3</sup>

The concept of peace was first introduced into academic literature by the Norwegian pioneer of peace research Johan Galtung (1969), who distinguished between two types of peace: positive peace and negative peace. Positive peace is defined by more lasting peace or the integration of human society, which has been enriched by progressive definitions of its meanings and by ever-evolving methodologies for its implementation. Negative peace, instead, is defined by the absence of war and violence.<sup>4</sup>

«This definition is based on two empirical findings: first, that human beings identify with other human beings, towards whom they show empathy and solidarity; second, that human beings demonstrate the capacity to restrain and limit the use of force. These observations reveal two important tendencies in human communities: that of integration (...) and that of controlling violence (...). The first would then consist in positive peace and the second in negative peace. Both, in articulation, would produce what Galtung calls “general and complete peace”.»<sup>5</sup>

According to Galtung, peace should be built after the problems caused by structural violence are eliminated, so positive peace should be targeted, not negative peace.<sup>6</sup> While the quest to define peace as a concept and set of values is old as recorded history, the effort to provide a systemic definition of peace within a rational and human paradigm, informed by best-practice methodologies for research and analysis is a more modern enterprise. Nonetheless, it has become common to the culture and religious worldwide and recent developments the urgency of the quest for peace.<sup>7</sup>

Since the end of the Cold War, we have had a change of context in the world order. This fact will also cause a break with the previous paradigm of post-conflict peacebuilding in force since the Second World War in relation to UN Peace Missions with three interrelated processes of peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.<sup>8</sup> The fact that contributed to this rupture was the **An Agenda for Peace** presented by former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in 1992.<sup>9</sup>

«Drawing attention of the Security Council to the “changing context” of our world order, where the conventional peace efforts that characterized UN peace missions since the Second World War would not work anymore, he appealed to the urgency of “post-conflict peacebuilding” strategies in order to break the chain of ongoing causes and effects of violence during wars and to allow the development of peace building process.»<sup>10</sup>

What is the innovative thinking of this new paradigm? Diaz answers this question as follows:

«As witnessed in the old saying that “more important than winning a war is winning is winning peace”, the *Agenda* focuses not merely on the effort of keeping up a peace treaty, but even more on building fair and just conditions for peace to grow. Beyond this idea we can find a new paradigm of peace: peace as a comprehensive task that cannot be “made” but must develop out of a fertile soil involving the entire society affected by conflict.»<sup>11</sup>

Without any pretension to make an exhaustive discussion about the UN Agenda for Peace, we cannot dismiss its merit not only by way of ideas, but above all actions aimed at strengthening peacemaking and peacekeeping mechanisms in the post-Cold War era at the level of UN peace operations:

«(…) the fundamental contribution of the Agenda was precisely the idea of peace building as a political and participatory process. The more the affected communities were integrated into the mechanisms of political participation and take the individual people (especially women) were encouraged to participate and take responsibilities in public causes, the greater the chances for the process to succeed. In this sense, peacebuilding translated in many cases as empowerment for self-government.»<sup>12</sup>

Our perspective on social peace is a vision that goes away from a simple conflict resolution mechanism. According to IEP Positive Peace Report (2014), this perspective is about attitudes, institutions, and structures that create and sustain peaceful societies. The realization of positive peace depends on eight key factors, according to PPI (Positive Peace Index): 1) Well-functioning Government; 2) Sound Business Environment; 3) Acceptance of right of others; 4) Good relations with neighbours; 5) Free Flow of information; 6) High Levels of human capital; 7) Equitable distribution of resources; 8) Low levels of corruption. In this sense, we can also add the following statement of Caplan:

«There is general recognition across the UN system that peace, if it is to be sustainable, needs be a “comprehensive peace” – one that achieves the following three broad and interrelated objectives: the consolidation of security (internal and external of security); the establishment of effective and inclusive political institutions, norms, and practices; and fostering of conditions for economic and social rehabilitation transformation, and develop-

ment.»<sup>13</sup>

However, the complexity of peacebuilding also has a lot to do with geographical contexts. The paradigms may be universal, but their applicability and effectiveness depends a lot on other factors such as the internal reality of each country, the political systems *en place*, the quality of its democracy, the level of economic and social development. We cannot forget even the emergence of “new pattern of war since the 1990s, blurring the lines that distinguished interstate and intrastate wars, as well as civil and ethnic wars and unleashing unbounded violence”. Therefore, only a case study can provide us with the empirical tools to evaluate the applicability of a theoretical paradigm.

## 2. The Angolan peace processes

Angola’s recent political history is marked by a protracted political and military conflict between the two main political forces in the country, namely the MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola) and UNITA (Union for the Total Independence of Angola). The decades-long civil war can be divided into three distinct phases, according to Paula:

«The first, 16-year, war (1975-1991) was a conflict of ideologies and competing visions for the nation fed by Cold War proxy dynamics (···). The second war (1992-94) was a vengeful war of political betrayal and disillusion (···). The third war of 1998-2002 became the war to end all wars.»<sup>14</sup>

In each of these phases, shifting international influences also shaped the internal dynamics of the conflict, its crucial events, advances and setbacks for both parts at war. The first phase is linked to Angola’s independence in the context of the Cold War, marked by an ideological confrontation that was fueled by the geostrategic interests of the USA and the USSR.<sup>15</sup> During this phase, an internationalized war developed in Angola, with several foreign armies involved - from South Africa, Zaire, Cuba, etc.

A first failed peace process between the Government of Angola and the UNITA rebels took place with the signing of the Gbadolite (Zaire) agreements on June 22, 1989, under the mediation of President Mobutu Sesse Seko and with the presence of eighteen African heads of state. The agreement had established the first ceasefire and enshrined the principle of national reconciliation that foresaw the integration of UNITA forces into state institutions.

For the first time there was a physical meeting and a handshake between President José Eduardo dos Santos and Dr. Jonas Savimbi. Two months later, there was a return to war.<sup>16</sup>

This Accord was practically forgotten because it was dead at birth. In the literature on peace processes in Angola, it is rarely referenced. However, the most promising agreement that opened the way to a new era in Angola was the Bicesse Agreement signed in Estoril (Portugal) on May 31, 1991.<sup>17</sup> Because of its importance and scope, it practically earned the place of first agreement for the resolution of the military conflict in Angola. For this reason, in this article we also assume this position. The New York Accords (Dec. 1988) were important because of the presence of foreign forces in Angola and the linkage policy that conditioned Namibian independence to the withdrawal of Cuban forces from Angola. However, they cannot be considered as the first agreement although it was before Bicesse. Bicesse was the first because the two parts of the conflict were in direct negotiations. Bicesse also had the merit of changing the political and constitutional system by adopting the system of multiparty democracy with periodic elections.

The first sixteen years of armed conflict in Angola had both internal and external causes. Regarding the internal causes, we can go back to the deep roots of the conflict between the liberation movements during the colonial war (1961-74), marked by rivalries, divergences in terms of vision of the struggle and by the antagonistic interests that animated their leaderships. The MPLA and UNITA fought each other fiercely during the Angolan liberation struggle. On the one hand, the MPLA, which was better armed and with greater international projection, did everything to put an end to Jonas Savimbi's political project. The ethnic and social basis of both political projects was also an important factor that fueled these differences. While the MPLA was based on the *Mbundo* ethnicity and the *assimilados* (the privileged class under colonial rule) and mostly urban population. UNITA was ethnically based on the *Ovimbundo* and rural populations. Another aspect, in terms of the strategic vision of the liberation struggle, is that the MPLA fought from the outside, insofar as its entire political and military leadership was based in Congo Brazzaville and Tanzania, with some guerrilla bases within the territory. UNITA's leadership was established inside the national territory, although with some representatives abroad for diplomatic work.<sup>18</sup>

External causes are linked to geostrategic interests and disputes over the world hegemony by the great powers of the Cold War. The Soviet Union embraced the cause of the colonized peoples within an ideological vision of the expansion of communism. The United States, defended the decolonization of African peoples after the Second World War for

economic reasons linked to access to natural resources. The two superpowers disputed the space that the colonial powers came to occupy in Africa since the Berlin Conference (1884-85). For this reason, external support for the liberation movements in Africa presupposed an ideological alignment with strategic commitments that future African leaders should embrace. In the case of Angola, the MPLA received support from the Soviet Union during the liberation struggle, and later during the first phase of the civil war.<sup>19</sup> UNITA initially received military support from China and during the civil war it had US support.<sup>20</sup>

The engagement of external powers in the civil war in Angola was one of the biggest problems that prevented an early understanding between Angolans themselves. Since the interests of external powers were practically irreconcilable, the logic installed was to perpetuate the war until the annihilation of the other. The MPLA fostered the conviction that the war would end with the annihilation of UNITA forces. UNITA nurtured the belief that its leader would be the savior of the homeland, taking power through war. The intensity of the war and its dimension as one of the most devastating wars in contemporary Africa is precisely due to some persuasions that animated both sides of the conflict with a strategy of total annihilation. The scale of human suffering caused by three decades of successive periods of civil war was devastating and tragic, according to Paula:

«Three decades of conflict had seen deaths of a million Angolans, the displacement of 4.1 million, the fleeing of 450,000 to neighboring countries, the maiming of 100,000, and the all-encompassing militarization of society.»<sup>21</sup>

The long civil war caused a vast array of problems for society, such as a complex humanitarian crisis in the country, generalized insecurity that limited free movement, the breakdown of families and widespread psychological traumas of war.

«Angola has plunged into a severe humanitarian crisis that had international agencies struggling to address the situation's complexity. For almost four years, parts of the country had been completely inaccessible to humanitarian agencies who before 1998 were already caring for vulnerable populations by providing minimum services and aid. High level of insecurity had led many NGOs to close down operations.»<sup>22</sup>

Considering in general the post-conflict peacebuilding in Angola, we should know that there are issues that the first peace process resolved; issues that remained unresolved; and issues without any solution. Angolans are aware that the first peace process ended the war



with a ceasefire, the quartering of troops and the integration of UNITA forces into the single national army; UNITA's transformation from a belligerent group to a civilian political party; the establishment of a multi-party democracy regime with periodic elections replacing the single-party regime; rebuilding war-destroyed infrastructure; resettlement of displaced populations and repatriation of refugees, among others. However, many challenges to national reconciliation remained unresolved: The implementation of agreed upon tasks was dragging on, such as the social reintegration of former UNITA combatants, the return of UNITA assets held by the government; the healing of psychological wounds of war through a kind of social *catharsis*, the "departidarization" of the State; and the alternation of power through fair, transparent and credible elections. Finally, the issues that will never be resolved are the loss of human life, the permanent maiming of thousands of people and breakdown of families.

Three fundamental moments/steps we can find in the peace process: 1) Negotiations; 2) Signing the agreement; 3) Implementation of the peace agreement (post- conflict peace-building).

War and diplomacy as instruments of the foreign policy may alternate as well as coexist. In the Angolan context, while the civil war was raging, there were also diplomatic contacts at various levels, between the main actors in the conflict. On the one hand, diplomacy was seen as the only pragmatic way out of a civil war that had no winners, and on the other hand, an escalation of war aimed at achieving a position of strength that would carry diplomatic advantages. The same actors of the war were also of diplomacy. There was an undeniable interdependence between the belligerents, so a solution would necessarily have to be the result of working together.

Regarding internal actors, the perception was that the government of José Eduardo dos Santos was increasingly bent on crushing the internal rebellion by military ways; therefore, the objective was to annihilate UNITA and its forces. Negotiations with UNITA were preliminarily ruled out because they were perceived as an attack on the Angolan constitutional law anchored on the one-party system. The regime of José Eduardo dos Santos was neither interested nor prepared to end the war through diplomatic means in view of a political compromise with the rebels.

« (⋯) Dos Santos declared that an internal peace process in Angola would not entail the sharing of power with UNITA. For the MPLA, negotiations with UNITA would be con-

trary to the constitutional principles of the “people’s republic”. Dos Santos argued that “the Angolan state is one-party state and so the acceptance of such a political organization (UNITA) is out of question”.»<sup>23</sup>

President José Eduardo dos Santos was neither interested nor prepared to end the war through diplomatic means in view of a political compromise with the rebels. The regime tried to persuade UNITA to abandon the guns and embrace the policy of “national harmonization”. By implementing a regional plan for peace in Angola in a combination of political maneuvers and military operations, José Eduardo dos Santos may have believed that within a year UNITA could disappear.

The plan foresaw a clemency for the rebels and their consequent social reintegration. However, José Eduardo dos Santos was aware that ending the civil war would not be possible without a change in Angola’s external context, particularly in the Southern African region. This was probably the main motivation for the MPLA to engage constructively in the diplomatic steps that culminated with the signing of the New York Agreement. The military impasse after a series of large-scale battles added to a new hope in diplomacy as a way out, namely the ‘Battle of Mavinga’ (1987/88) aimed at assaulting UNITA’s headquarters in Jamba, and the tragic ‘Battle of Cuito-Cuanavale’ (November 1987 to March 1988) seen today as the largest conventional battle in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Africa, with Cuban, Soviet and South African forces, and SWAPO, besides the Angolan warring armies.

«The battle of Cuito Cuanavale was the most important confrontation in the entire course of the Angolan conflict. The scale of warfare is shown by the fact that Angolan and Cuban planes completed approximately 3000 sorties out of the airfields of Cuito Cuanavale and Menongue. More than 1100 of these succeeded in their task of inflicting rocket strikes on enemy ground troops. According to South Africa data, the South African air force accomplished over 1000 armed sorties, dropping on the enemy’s positions more than 3000 high explosive and anti-personnel shrapnel bombs of approximately 700 tons in total mass».<sup>24</sup>

This opened the door to the New York Accords that takes place after the Brazzaville Protocol (13/12/1988). The diplomatic process involved persistent and patient contacts and talks between Angolan, Cuban and South African delegations under the mediation of the United States, in this case Chester Crocker (also known as “Mr Africa”) and later Herman Cohen. The talks had two main stages: the first concerned the withdrawal of Cuban and South African forces from Angola and the implementation of UN Security Council resolution

435/78 on the independence of Namibia. The second stage involved consultations aimed at exploring the possibilities of an internal reconciliation between UNITA and the MPLA. It was the US understanding that the Cuban withdrawal would leave room to resolve the internal issues between the two contenders (Angolan government and UNITA). The fact that military solutions failed played in favour of the understanding that exploring internal solutions was necessary.

However, UNITA did not see things quite the same way about how a compromise for peace should look like. Although Jonas Savimbi constantly expressed his desire for peace and reconciliation in Angola, he was never enthusiastic about accepting a peace that excluded his organization from the Angolan political process or simply absorbed it into the state institutions. The UNITA leader preferred direct talks with the MPLA government as a first step towards the establishment of a transitional and national unity government under international supervision, in preparation of multi-party elections. Savimbi had the conviction that he was fulfilling a “messianic” mission, as can be seen in this quote in the Washington Post:

«I have spent thirty years of my adult life fighting for the freedom and dignity of the black man in this country. If the Cubans want to stay, I will fight them and I will win. If the Cubans leave and there are no negotiations with the MPLA, we will win. If the Cubans leave and there are elections, we win.»<sup>25</sup>

Developments in the diplomatic field indicated, however, that the government’s efforts to achieve peace with the South Africans would not succeed by isolating UNITA. This gave Savimbi more confidence that he would win, as the US played a more incisive role in military and diplomatic support for UNITA until the government accepted a political compromise with UNITA. This was the assurance given in a letter that the then President-elect George Bush is said to have addressed to Jonas Savimbi in what was his first bet in terms of foreign policy of his Administration.<sup>26</sup>

However, President José Eduardo dos Santos continued trying several diplomatic initiatives and this time concerning the internal conflict. França Van-Dúnem, former Prime Minister of Angola and participant in the negotiation process, described President Dos Santos aims at a first mini-summit in Franceville, Gabon on October 1, 1988 as follows: “President José Eduardo dos Santos pledged at the time before the world that the government would put all its efforts into resolving the internal issue as soon as the external elements of the Angolan

question disappeared.” França Van-Dúnem saw in the following summit in Luanda on May 16, 1989, chaired by President Kenneth Kaunda and attended by the Presidents of Congo, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe, Zaire, Zambia and Zimbabwe, in addition to the host as the beginning of a new chapter in the peace process. According to França Van-Dúnem’s account, «The Angolan government presented three documents: a peace plan, a memorandum on the negotiation process of the ‘New York Accords’ and on the evolution of the situation in Southwest Africa, and a draft final communiqué.»<sup>27</sup> By March 20, 1990, França Van-Dúnem saw an important milestone in Angola’s diplomatic endeavours as achieved:

«On the margins of Namibia’s independence celebrations in Windhoek, Secretary of State James Baker met with President José Eduardo dos Santos at our embassy in the capital. The President handed the Secretary of State a document containing nine principles he considered important for the solution of the peace process. James Baker, in turn, delivered a document reflecting the American point of view.»<sup>28</sup>

Further talks were held in Windhoek, between General França Ndalú, delegate of President Dos Santos, and Herman Cohen. These meetings contributed to the Angolan government’s decision to negotiate directly with UNITA, which opened the doors to the negotiations that culminated in the Bicesse Agreement (31/05/1991) and the Lusaka Protocol. According to the Ambassador José Patrício, an understanding was finally reached that the only way to achieve a stable, durable peace was through negotiation, the difficult process of demands and compromises, of mutual exchanges and agreements. There was no other way out. Angola could not continue to be “the playground of the Cold War,” after having already been “the jewel of the Portuguese Colonial Empire”.<sup>29</sup>

Though it was President José Eduardo dos Santos’s conviction that removing external influences would resolve the domestic conflict, external influences did not dissipate. On the contrary, the interests of the external powers conditioned the kind of solution and peace process for Angola. To prove this, we only need this occurrence reported by Ambassador José Patrício:

«On July 1, 1988, the Moscow summit between Presidents Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev proclaimed the principle of “constructive interaction” between the United States of America and the Soviet Union to promote political solutions in regional conflicts. Meanwhile, the Soviets insisted on an end to American aid to UNITA - a solution firmly rejected by Chester Crocker - as a precondition for the withdrawal of Cuban troops from

Angola. Crocker considered American support for UNITA the ‘perfect bargaining chip’ for a Cuban withdrawal from Angola and South African withdrawal from Namibia.»<sup>30</sup>

In fact, the key to the architecture of peace in Southern Africa and Angola was in the hands of these external powers. Some proposals that came to the negotiating table were frequently conditioned by non-consensual counterproposals, since it would be very difficult to follow a path of converging interests. The linkage policy that emerged as an American strategy to link the implementation of UN Resolution 435/78 (on Namibian independence) with the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola is an example for this. Another US demand was that the end of American support for UNITA depends on the free elections in Angola. Now, without mutual concessions it was not possible to advance towards an understanding that would result in an agreement that would bring mutual advantages without forging a peace of winners and losers.

The developments of the last phase of the Cold War with the political and economic reforms (perestroika and glasnost) carried out by Mikhail Gorbachev paved the way for the - not intended, but inevitable - collapse of the Soviet empire (1991). At the same time, this outcome marked the end of the Cold War. For some specialists in International Relations the end of the Cold War coincides with the fall of the Berlin Wall (11/9/1989). In any case, at the level of the International System, the old (bipolar) World Order ended, and a New Order – still undefined - began. The USSR was the great “loser” of the Cold War due to the obsolete situation of its economy, probably the sector that suffered most from the large investments in the weapon’s industry (especially with nuclear weapons). While the collapse of the USSR left it weakened, its rival now had a robust economy. The Angolan government, which had always considered the US as the source of the imperialist aggressions against its country, embraced a new approach towards the US, with a less conspiratorial and hostile official narrative, and realigned its foreign policy accordingly, which eventually led to a rapprochement with the US Administration.

«With the Soviet Union’s demise, both American motives and Angolan reactions were to change. The 1990s and Angola’s transition to democracy meant an increasingly clear thaw in relations with the United States. This was followed by a reorientation, as if in slow motion. The presence of the United States in the Joint Political-Military Commission (CCPM), alongside Russia and Portugal, constituted under the short-lived Bicesse Accords of May 1991, both initiated and symbolized the official reciprocal opening. Once the bipolar rift was over, Angola was forced to change the agonistic aspects of its relationship

with the United States, which was now virtually unchallenged in the region.»<sup>31</sup>

UNITA also established contacts with the Eastern countries. However, among the super-powers themselves, an environment of more open cooperation was also created in the search for solutions to global problems through a New World Order that was still uncertain.

Patrício said, in this perspective, that the various diplomatic meetings that took place on Namibia's independence ceremonies in March 1990, highlighted the new environment in international politics that was quite favourable to the search for a solution for peace and national reconciliation in Angola:

«The US Secretary of State, James Baker, met in Windhoek on March 19 with his Soviet counterpart, Eduard Shevardnadze. Shortly afterwards President José Eduardo dos Santos received the head of US diplomacy at the Angolan Embassy. James Baker presented to the President a negotiating proposal for direct talks between the government and UNITA, with a view to signing a cease-fire and defining the political framework for holding the first multiparty elections in Angola.»<sup>32</sup>

Meanwhile, Ambassador José Patrício is also keen to point out in the context of this Angola-US détente. Is that «Chester Crocker confided, at the time, in Windhoek, to Prof. Gerald Bender, of the University of California, that Baker had been 'pleasantly surprised' by President dos Santos, considering him an interlocutor with whom the United States 'should work constructively.'<sup>33</sup>

Thus, direct contacts between the Angolan government and UNITA began. The "troika" of facilitators/observers was then formed by Portugal, the Russian Federation and the US. The role of these countries was to act for the best agreement and its full implementation. The conditions were finally created for the signing of the package of agreements reached during the talks between the Government of Angola and UNITA. In the ceremony that took place in Bicesse on May 31, 1991, both parts were represented at the highest level by President José Eduardo dos Santos and by the leader of UNITA, Jonas Savimbi.

Despite the presence of the international community, the Government of Angola and UNITA were the protagonists of this first political agreement since 1975. Other political and civic actors in Angola did not participate. The political preconditions for the transition to the second republic were met. Among several key points of the agreements, we high-

light three: 1) the revision of the constitutional law; 2) the creation of the single army (the Angolan Armed Forces); 3) multi-party elections.

We also need to emphasize the secondary role of the United Nations in this process. The UN left the space for the same external actors of the conflict, mainly the US and the Russian Federation. With the end of the bipolar confrontation, at a time when there was already talk of a New World Order, it was expected that the United Nations would recover its role as a key player in the international system. However, the UN appeared only as a guest in the process, while the “troika” became part of the Joint Political-Military Commission. Thus, the logic of the interests of those involved in the process prevailed.

Later analyses of the Angolan process showed that the internal protagonists of the process signed the agreement without full transparency (*bona fide*). Neither the MPLA nor UNITA were seriously thinking about a deep reconciliation and democratization of the country, despite having negotiated these two aspects. The MPLA was under pressure and wanted to avoid political defeat in the face of UNITA’s growth. UNITA was triumphant and confident that the elections would give it the long-awaited prize of assuming power in Angola.

These considerations constitute the fracturing aspects of the process, whose most obvious responses will appear in the implementation phase of the agreements, precipitating them to collapse. We believe that the two problems were significant for the failure of the peace plan. In the perspective of peacebuilding and peacekeeping, we can take the following considerations: first, the fact that “the transition was left entirely to the belligerents parts; second, the fact that the UN accepted the role of conducting a peace process under those conditions”.

### 3. The Angolan attempts to build post-conflict peace

The two problems we pointed out above had considerable significance in the processes of post-conflict peacebuilding in Angola. Regarding the first problem, Pinheiro said that:

«Ownership of the process lies with the Angolans, who preside in rotation over the supervisory body, CCPM (Joint Political-Military Commission), monitor the ceasefire (CCVF - Joint Commission for Verification and Supervision of the Ceasefire), form the single army (CCFA - Joint Commission for the Armed Forces), and prepare for elections. Mediation ends, Troika and UN observe and assist the parties.»<sup>34</sup>

As for the second aspect, engaging the United Nations in an architecture for peace that was made rather according to the interests of the belligerent parties than general Angolan population, showed to be complex and problematic. Both MPLA and UNITA know beforehand that peace was only a 'steppingstone' and not the goal of the negotiation. There were clearly two diverging logics and methodologies of peace. When UNITA advocated for peace, it was thinking about access to power - peace would be the great opportunity to conquer power in Angola. When the government advocated for peace it was aiming at maintaining power through its legitimization before the international community by undermining the arguments of its contenders, which until then had been characterized as freedom fighters in certain international corridors. Talking about the driving forces of conflict, Hodges argues that "Overall, during the 1990s the oscillation between periods of peace (1991-92), war (1992-94), quasi-peace (1994-98) and war (from 1998 to the beginning of 2002) was driven mainly by internal political factors. Clearly, a major factor in the breakdown of both the Bicesse and Lusaka agreements was the depth of disruption between the two sides. Each assumed that the other was prone to cheating and bent on absolute power, and acted accordingly, tending to confirm the suspicions on both sides. The breakdown of the Bicesse Accords could, of course, only accentuate the climate of mutual distrust during the second attempt at restoring peace, after the Lusaka Protocol".<sup>35</sup>

However, the UN Charter somewhat limited the initiatives of the organization due to the rule of non-interference in the internal affairs of member states:

«No provision of the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State, or compel members to submit such matters to a solution under the present Charter.»<sup>36</sup>

In his article on UN Missions in Southern Africa, Branco recognizes this reality and points to this limitation as one of the reasons for the failure of the Bicesse agreements. Following the agreements, the Angolan government requested the participation of the United Nations to verify compliance with the ceasefire and supervise the action of the police. With the approval of Security Council Resolution 696 on May 30, 1991, a peacekeeping mission was established, which became known as UNAVEM II. However, the nature of the electoral process required extra care.

«In view of the complexity of the situation on the ground, UNAVEM II's initial mandate was subsequently extended through the adoption, on 27 March 1992, of Security Council



resolution 747 to include the process of observing the September 1992 elections.»<sup>37</sup>

The author, while noting the importance of the UN mission's presence and the tasks assigned to it, nevertheless acknowledges that the UN "(...) in many respects was faced with a *"fait accompli"*". In his opinion, this relegation of the UN from the core of the Angolan transition process was due to a combination of the following matters:

«1. The MPLA government made it clear from the beginning that it and it alone, was in charge of organizing the elections. Still imbued by the spirit of the bipolar conflict, the MPLA feared that a UN, heavily influenced by the Americans, would be favourable to UNITA. Therefore (...) the UN was not able to oversee all the phases of the preparation of the electoral act.

2. UNITA also did not look favourably on a UN mission with strong means on the ground, which would make it difficult for it to hide either troops or heavy weaponry, in clear violation of the signed peace agreement.

3. The international community was also interested in a small mission in Angola. (...) there was a generalized desire for savings. This desire was clearly evident in the inability of the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative, Margaret Anstee, to obtain the number of blue helmets she considered necessary to carry out the mission that UNAVEM II was charged with, namely the supervision of the ceasefire, the demobilization and the cantonment of the troops.»<sup>38</sup>

Thus, it proved to be very difficult for the United Nations to succeed in this endeavour. Its late engagement and the "absence" throughout the cycle of armed conflict in Angola was a handicap. The United Nations were known by its occasional condemnatory Security Council statements against the military aggressions of the South African Army, and its role in the context of the New York Agreements. The supervision of the application of Resolution 435 as well as the supervision of the gradual withdrawal of the Cuban troops through the first mission to Angola known as UNAVEM I (United Nations Angola Verification Mission) were also some aspects of UN involvement in Angola.

The timing of the elections was also a fundamental challenge in the process. There was no initial understanding between the parties on the deadlines. While the Government of Angola advocated for longer periods (36 months), UNITA favoured shorter periods (12 months) for the elections. Eventually, an intermediate solution of 18 months was agreed upon. However, this deadline in fact proved to be, insufficient to fulfil all the political,

military and logistical tasks. Ideally, the elections should have been postponed until later to allow completing all the relevant tasks. However, on UNITA's part there was certainly some pressure regarding the upcoming US elections within 18 months, which made it inconvenient to delay the elections beyond this deadline. With a change of President in the White House - as happened with the victory of the Democrats - it was predictable that the position of the American administration would change, which would not be very favourable to UNITA's intentions. Effectively, the new US administration has recognized the government of Angola. The establishment of diplomatic relations between Angola and the USA finally took place on May 19, 1993, during President Bill Clinton's administration. In his announcement, President Clinton said:

“Since taking office, I have tried to use the possibility of American recognition as pressure to promote an end to the war and the participation of all relevant forces in the government of Angola. Unfortunately, the party that lost the elections, UNITA, has resumed the war and has refused to sign the peace agreement currently under discussion.”<sup>39</sup>

However, the political transition process also required a reform of the State and specifically the ruling political system. Hence, the need to review the Constitutional Law in effect since the independence in 1975. A first revision was made in 1991, even before the signing of the Bicesse agreements, whose objectives were stated as follows:

«The main objectives of the present revision are fundamentally aimed, on the one hand, at enshrining multi-partisanship and the non-partisanship of the Armed Forces, and on the other, at giving constitutional dignity to the important transformations that have been introduced in the economic area.»<sup>40</sup>

In addition to this partial revision, less than two weeks ahead of the elections scheduled for September 29 and 30, 1992, another revision was passed that aimed at preserving the democratic rule of law:

«Without neglecting the competencies of the National Assembly in matters of revision of the current Constitutional Law, and the approval of the Constitution of the Republic of Angola, it is essential to immediately carry out the revision of the Constitutional Law, as planned, aimed essentially at clarifying the political system, separation of functions and interdependence of the organs of sovereignty, as well as to clarify the status and guarantees of the Constitution, in accordance with the already established principles of building

a democratic state of law in Angola.»<sup>41</sup>

This same law, among others, changed the designation of the State to Republic of Angola, of the legislative body to the National Assembly (previously it was the People's Assembly), and removed the expression "popular" in the designation of the Courts.

The first democratic elections in Angola, regardless of the controversy surrounding their results, marked the end of the one-party regime and the beginning of a multi-party regime. This brought about the emergence of several new political parties, with eighteen participating in the legislative elections. New personalities also emerged in Angolan politics who ran for the presidential elections besides the two main antagonists, José Eduardo dos Santos and Jonas Savimbi. Thus, the population had expectations of change after more than sixteen years of conflict and authoritarian rule.

For the regime of President José Eduardo dos Santos, despite all the fears of losing these elections to UNITA, its greatest achievement was its international legitimization. Without implying that the Angolan government had not enjoyed a full international legitimacy before Bicesse Agreement. This achievement permitted the removal of main obstacles that prevented Angola from normalizing its diplomatic relations with the US. The peace process and the elections in 1992 allowed Angola to open a new page of its foreign policy.

In relation to its former ally, the USSR, the end of the Cold War era and the establishment of a new world order implied a strategic and diplomatic repositioning. With remarkable skill, the Angolan regime, metamorphosed with the new internal and external dynamics, free of the systemic pressures of bipolarism, reoriented its policies of partnership with the Russian Federation. This reorientation would also include maintaining relationships with the former allies from the East. Angola implemented a rational choice for its foreign policy without the background of ideological alignments. Therefore, Angola's interests in the Soviet bloc countries (socialist states) after the independence were gradually transferred to new external actors, giving back, in our opinion, more autonomy to internal actors in terms of decisions, choices and implementation of their foreign policy.

As for UNITA, the main partner of the government in the peace process, the situation evolved in a tragic way. Having failed to achieve its main objective to conquer power in Angola, cohabitation with the government became difficult, with hostile language from both parties, plunging the country into a post-electoral crisis. With the Lusaka protocol

(20/11/1994) another attempt was made to test the “power sharing” strategy with the government of unity and national reconciliation (GURN), but this solution did not end the war. The crisis quickly evolved into a new brutal, devastating, and bloody war. After more than ten years of military conflict, the civil war ended in 2002 after the death of UNITA’s leader Jonas Savimbi in combat. Finally, with the Luena Protocol (04/04/2002), Unita dismantled its army of about 80,000 troops. Part of it was integrated into the Angolan National Army (FAA), another into the Police, and the majority of them were demobilized.

#### 4. Transformation from military peace to social peace: the challenge from 2002

The experience of peace in Angola is connected to the context of the long military conflict that ravaged the country since independence. In Angola now a day, we talk about twenty years of effective peace since the Luena agreement (April 4, 2002). During this period, what kind of peace have we experienced? Our experience shows that the warring parties, through war, shaped peace. Official speeches have been limited to the exhortation not to repeat the experience of war. However, we should see this military peace as a starting point, but never as the point of arrival. Military peace was a necessary precondition to advance social peace. It remains necessary to go beyond a peace achieved through war (the peace of the belligerents) and move towards a peace built on social justice, inclusive development, and social harmony (the peace of the citizenship).

However, we must beware of a concept of peace without conflicts. Any situation of peace, by the force of the dialectic of the history to which all societies are exposed, has within the roots of conflict. Thus, as Kant ironically suggested, peace conceived as the end of all conflicts would be rather like a cemetery. Kant’s thought in his philosophical project about “Perpetual Peace”, although it has as its context international relations or peace between states, could be adapted - *mutatis mutandis* - to the context of our approach. A peaceful federation is only possible if each State is peaceful. Given the rules of law and the principle of sovereignty, according to which there can be no authority above the State within its borders, the States in internal conflicts are factors of instability for the community of nations. I agree with this preliminary principle of Kant’s insofar as the agreements reached are not always in the spirit of “*bona fide*”. Both the adversaries maintain their strategies of mutual annihilation. Perhaps we would need to rethink the importance and effectiveness of peace treaties. For Kant, treaties do not serve to solve the causes of war. For example, the treaty of Versailles (1919) created the conditions for the Second World War (1939-1945) because it did not solve the causes of the First World War (1914-1918). In Angola as well, the

successive peace treaties have not been effective in building peace. We had several failed agreements. In all of them, the war restarted over to achieve what the agreement was not able to deliver.

From this perspective, it is necessary to review the current paradigm of post-conflict peacebuilding that is usually understood as a solution to a conflict. Once the post-conflict peacebuilding was not adequately consolidated, the war restarted. According to Ramos, «post-conflict peacebuilding is a complex, long and difficult process and it is well known that there are a significant number of cases of a return to violence a few years later.»<sup>42</sup>

If we look closely at the problem of peace as a transformation of armed conflicts, perhaps it would be more correct to consider the post-conflict situation and the agreement itself as a situation of “concord” and not necessarily a situation of peace. However, peace, by its intrinsic nature (*de rerum natura*), must first and foremost be the fruit of justice (*opus justitiae pax*) and not the fruit of war. Yet, peace based on social justice, inclusion and harmony between groups and ethnicities does prevent new conflicts. It is not about the total elimination of potential conflicts, because, considering the imperfect nature of man and societies, peace will always be equally imperfect. Pacifism is not an idea rooted in human nature, but has to be a construct of human civilization. According to Kant, «The state of peace between men living side by side is not a state of nature (*status naturalis*), which is rather a state of war. (...). It must therefore be instituted (...).»<sup>43</sup>

Social peace is based on the law that regulates social coexistence. Peace should be understood as a social construction that requires the empowerment of communities for inclusive and participatory development through local actors, rather than through external protagonists. We should not wait for a peace brought by external forces. In our communities, villages, neighbourhoods, there must be seeds of peace germinating in each citizen. This new paradigm - which does not necessarily replace post conflict peacebuilding and peacekeeping but, provides new horizons, the so-called “grassroots peacebuilding”. The best way to build peace is from the existential context of every man and woman.

In this sense, Angola’s great challenge today is how to make social peace effective. What should be done to transform military peace into social peace? As an answer to these questions, we refer to Fátima’s suggestion that a way to prevent conflicts is to eliminate the forms of violence resulting from governance without inclusion:

«To build a future with lasting peace in SA<sup>44</sup>, ways must be found to: (1) eliminate the use of violence to ensure that the security and identity needs of all ethno-linguistic groups are met; (2) ensure for all groups the legitimacy of different cultures, religions and other values; (3) build a political culture based on the recognition and acceptance of the diversity of ethno-linguistic, religious, class, group, cultural values and needs, economic and social interests identities (and constituencies); (4) strongly reduce personal and institutional corruption and promote a culture of transparency and popular accountability, as well as an economic system that guarantees a decent and humane life for all populations.»<sup>45</sup>

According to Fátima Roque, although peacebuilding is every citizen's task, with each citizen being an actor of peaceful social coexistence, the responsibility to guarantee social peace is belongs to the State. In this sense, the State is irreplaceable. Angola is currently facing a deep social crisis with the worsening of multidimensional poverty and social exclusion. The public policies of the current government are ineffective and do not meet the basic needs of the population. This fact creates social grievances resentments and frustration, especially among young people, who make up the majority of the Angolan population. The lack of education and employment opportunities is one of the most frequent problems among young people, who are increasingly dissatisfied with the benefits of peace. Social dissatisfaction is a potential threat to social peace because it generates conflicts that can come out of control.

## Concluding Remarks

This article aimed to demonstrate the weaknesses of the military peace in Angola obtained throughout a long military conflict that caused immense human suffering. Political disputes were fought over on the battlefields. External powers took advantage of internal disagreements for their geostrategic interests, which transformed the Angolan war into a proxy conflict and Angola into the most internationalized civil war in Southern Africa. For nearly thirty years, the dream of building a nation of prosperity was postponed and became a nightmare. The main challenge of military peace is that it aims at resolving problems of the belligerent parties who do not necessarily represent the interest of the nation therefore; Angola's apparent (military) peace success story should not be taken as a model for the region. Angola is still following a paradigm of militarized or securitized peace in the classical logic that "if you want peace, get ready for war" (*Si vis pacem, para bellum*). However, an important distinction needs to be made between the negative sense of peace as the absence of war from the positive sense as a state of "tranquillity in order". This paradigm

needs to evolve into a concept of peace that is focused on conflict prevention and resolution. The grassroots peacebuilding paradigm offers that advantage for being built inclusively rather than being limited to peace of the winners. Therefore, Angola must choose the best ways to achieve peacebuilding as a prevention to new conflicts. This commitment is the best method for an effective, permanent and fair peace. We hope that this work carries an important contribution for this goal, especially to enhance academic peace studies in Angola.

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## Notes

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- <sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*.
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- <sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, p.17.
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- <sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, p.71.
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<sup>29</sup> PATRICIO, J., op. cit., p.34.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*, p.38.

<sup>31</sup> GUEDES, Armando Marques, op. cit., pp.48-49.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem.*, p.41.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*.

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<sup>41</sup> Idem, *Lei de Revisão Constitucional*, Lei N.23/92, de 16 de Setembro.

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<sup>43</sup> IMMANUEL, Kant, op. cit.

<sup>44</sup> Sub-Saharan Africa.

<sup>45</sup> ROQUE, L. Fátima, *África, a NEPAD e o Futuro*, Luanda: Texto Editores, 2007, p.52.