

Foreign policy-making for a pre-independent Namibia and the subsequent results

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Abstract

This paper presents an account of Namibia's diplomatic historiography and foreign policy actions. It refers to early Namibian diplomatic initiatives at the United Nations by emissaries of the Herero Chief's Council and organisations such as the Ovambo People's Congress (OPC), Ovambo People's Organisation (OPO), South West Africa National Union (SWANU) and South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO). Namibian diplomacy enjoyed considerable success, from the chiefs' humble initiatives to the more accomplished diplomacy of the nationalist movements. Supported by countries from the East Bloc of the Cold War world divide SWAPO emerged as a major player in pre-independence Namibian foreign policy. It established links with a number of countries and international organisations such as the United Nations (UN), Organisation of African Unity (AU) and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). These organisations and other inter-governmental bodies including the Western Contact Group (WCG), the Frontline States (FLS) and Nigeria played significant roles in the diplomatic negotiations for Namibia's independence. Following independence the Namibian government adopted foreign policies based on the foundation laid by SWAPO and embraced new friends.

Introduction

This paper presents an account of Namibian diplomatic historiography and foreign policy activity. Mainly descriptive in its approach, the article refers to early diplomatic efforts and initiatives for Namibian independence by individual leaders such as Herero chiefs and their emissaries, and such organisations as the Ovambo People's Congress (OPC), Ovambo People's Organisation (OPO), South West Africa National Union (SWANU) and South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO). These representatives of South West Africa (SWA), as Namibia was then known, petitioned the international community, particularly the United Nations (UN). Eventually, these efforts culminated in the establishment

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of relations with a number of governments and organisations around the world as illustrated by the establishment of offices to represent SWAPO outside South West Africa. These diplomatic initiatives led to the adoption of a number of UN resolutions, which eventually led to Namibia's independence. The article also addresses the role of external actors like as the UN, OAU, the Western Contact Group (WCG) and the Frontline States. The paper will then show how this diplomacy influenced foreign policy in post-independent Namibia, by examining briefly how foreign policy was defined and the issues involved.

Early diplomatic initiatives

The period of South African colonialism (1915–1990) witnessed the beginning of diplomatic initiatives, calling on the international community to address the needs of the people of South West Africa. Chris Saunders explains that only independent states make and pursue foreign policy and accordingly, he discusses pre-independence diplomacy by Namibians, rather than Namibia's pre-independence foreign policy and diplomacy.¹

The early diplomatic initiatives came about thanks to Reverend Michael Scott, an Anglican clergyman working in South Africa. In 1947, he travelled to Bechuanaland (now Botswana) where he met with the exiled Chief Frederick Maharero of the Hereros. Reverend Scott alerted the Chief to attempts by South Africa, at the time a British colony, to incorporate South West Africa, at the time a UN Mandate, as a fifth province of South Africa. Chief Maharero sent Reverend Scott to Chief Hosea Kutako of the Hereros in South West Africa. Reverend Scott met Chief Kutako and the Herero Chief's Council, after which he travelled to and fro between the two chiefs until a petition objecting to the incorporation had been drafted. The petition called for South West Africa to remain under the UN Trusteeship Council. Namibia was a C-Mandate territory under the League of Nations, the precursor to the UN which was established in 1919 after the First World War. C-Mandate territories were to be administered until the inhabitants of the territory reached a level of development at which they could govern themselves. With the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 the League of Nations collapsed. It was replaced by the UN in 1945. The Mandate territories under the League of Nations were placed under the UN Trusteeship Council. The South African Government tried, without success, to prevent Reverend Scott from petitioning the UN by labelling him as a "crank and follower of the left-wing causes".² From 1947, Reverend Scott was a regular petitioner to the UN for the people of South West Africa.³

¹ Chris Saunders, "Namibian diplomacy before independence", in: Anton Bösl, André Du Pisani and Dennis U. Zaire, (eds.), *Namibia's foreign relations: historic contexts, current dimensions and perspectives for the 21st century*, Windhoek, Macmillan Education Namibia, 2014, 27-36 (27).

² Peter Katjavivi, *A history of resistance in Namibia*, Paris, UNESCO, 1988: 38.

³ Hage Geingob, *State formation in Namibia: Promoting democracy and good governance*, PhD thesis, University of Leeds, 2004: 41f.

In 1957, Mburumba Kerina, then a student at Lincoln University in USA, became the first South West Africa national to petition the UN for the termination of South Africa's mandated power over South West Africa. He was requested by Chief Kutako to act on behalf of South West Africa and subsequently teamed up with Reverend Scott in 1955. Kerina applied for an oral hearing, which was granted following the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) affirmative response to the General Assembly's request for advice as to whether a South West Africa native could petition the UN General Assembly Committee on South West Africa. Kerina was not able to petition until 1957 due to the prolonged consultations with the ICJ.⁴ Other petitions from Namibians followed by correspondence, including Johannes Dausab in the Hoachanas Native Reserve, Chief Hosea Kutako of the Hereros, Willem Heyn and Joachim Seergert, and Jacobus Beukes of the Rehoboth Community. Herman Toivo Ja Toivo and eighty other Ovambos petitioned the UN in 1957, calling upon the governments of Great Britain, America, France and Belgium to reconsider their decision to hand over S.W.A. to the Union Government.⁵

Petitions from South West Africa nationals were considered by the General Assembly during October 1957. The UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 1141 of 1957 on 25 October 1957, which *inter alia*, reiterated that the South West African territory should be placed under the Trusteeship System in accordance with the provisions of Chapter XII of the Charter of the United Nations.⁶ In 1958, Herman Ja Toivo (now Andimba Toivo Ya Toivo), founder of the Ovambo People's Congress (OPC), the precursor to the Ovambo People's Organisation (OPO), later the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO), sent a petition to the UN through Kerina. The petition was sent in two forms, a letter and a message recorded on a tape recorder, hidden in the book *Treasure Island* by Robert Stephenson. The letter arrived first and Kerina read it before the UN General Assembly's Fourth Committee. The Fourth Committee (Special Political and Decolonisation Committee) deals with decolonisation and a number of political issues, but not disarmament issues as these are dealt with by the First Committee. The petition requested the UN to terminate South Africa's administration in Namibia and allow the UN to take over the administration of the territory.⁷ Ja Toivo would be instrumental in another petition by SWAPO as Hage Geingob sought him out when he (Geingob) became a petitioner at the UN, to give briefings on the situation in South West Africa. Ja Toivo's response was long and elaborative and, thus, strengthened Geingob's presentation at the UN.⁸

⁴ Interview Mburumba Kerina, 03 March 2007, Windhoek.

⁵ National Archives of Namibia, Windhoek, AACRLS, 6, Petitions, Petition dated 03 August 1957 from Herman Toivo Ja Toivo and eighty other Ovambo, to the Chairman of the Trusteeship Council. Though it was stated as such in the petition by South West Africa nationals, the mandate was handed over by Great Britain, and not by America, Belgium and France.

⁶ United Nations, Resolution 1141 of 1957 adopted on 25 October 1957, <[http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/1141\(XII\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/1141(XII))> [accessed December 11, 2015].

⁷ Sam Nujoma, *Where others wavered. The autobiography of Sam Nujoma*, London, Panaf, 2001: 10.

⁸ Interview Hage Geingob, 01 March 2007, Windhoek.

In order to strengthen their hand at the UN, Kerina asked the Herero Chief's Council to send another person to join him at the UN. The Council sent Fanuel Jariretundu Kozonguizi, who first petitioned in 1959. While at the UN, Kozonguizi was elected President of the newly established national liberation movement, the South West Africa National Union (SWANU). The following year, 1960, Kozonguizi met with Sam Nujoma, President of OPO, in Liberia, who was due to travel to New York to petition the UN, Nujoma had just escaped from South West Africa into exile.⁹

In June 1960, Sam Nujoma appeared before the Sub-Committee of the Fourth Committee of the UN General Assembly as President of SWAPO. He appeared before the UN Committee for South West Africa again in July 1960. Nujoma stayed in New York until December 1960 and, then went to Africa to open the SWAPO office in Dar es Salaam, Tanganyika (now Tanzania), in 1961. This office served as the provisional headquarters of the movement. Other SWAPO members who subsequently joined Nujoma to petition before the UN were Emil and Putuse Appolus, Ismael Fortune, Jacob Kuhangua, Solly Mifima and Peter Mweshihange. From the beginning SWAPO and SWANU cooperated and petitioned jointly, often joined by church leaders such as Reverend Scott and Reverend Markus Koopers.¹⁰

In 1964 SWAPO appointed Hage Geingob, the current President of Namibia, as Chief Representative to America (covering countries in North and South America) and the UN. Theo-Ben Gurirab and Hidipo Hamutenya were appointed associate representatives and the trio, who were at the same time studying at American universities, constituted a team of SWAPO petitioners, permanently based at the UN. At this time petitioners at the UN received a day pass and had to leave after petitioning. Petitioners befriended security officials and were then able to access the UN premises with expired passes, as security staff were not so strict in examining the access period written on the pass cards. At the time, SWANU's petitioners were Zed Ngavirue, Charles Kauraisa and Festus Muundjua.¹¹

Namibian petitioners had one sole purpose, namely to end South Africa's occupation of South West Africa and thus attain self-determination. It should be further noted that they believed in multilateralism, a common feature of smaller states.¹² Petitioners wanted the international community to guarantee collective security and to avoid a bilateral conflict with the South African colonial regime. Herman Toivo Ja Toivo, for example, asserted in his address to the court during the 1968 Terrorism Trial in Pretoria, that he was against any form of conflict and preferred a peaceful solution to the question of independence.¹³

⁹ Interview Mburumba Kerina, 03 March 2007, Windhoek.

¹⁰ Nujoma, *Where others wavered* : 102f, 113, 118f.; Interview Sam Nujoma, 22 and 23 March 2007, Windhoek.

¹¹ Interview Hage Geingob, 01 March 2007, Windhoek.

¹² David McCraw, "New Zealand's foreign policy under national and labour governments: Variations on the "small state" theme?", *Pacific Affairs*, 67 (1), 1994, 7-25 (7f.).

¹³ SWAPO, *To be Born a Nation*, London, Zed, 1981: 314f.

The UN, where SWAPO and SWANU members were petitioning, was an institution that could resolve the issue and, thus, minimise conflicts, as one of its main objectives is to promote world peace.¹⁴

The establishment of diplomatic relations with governments and the results

Apart from petitioning the UN, SWAPO and SWANU also started to establish diplomatic relations with several governments. In 1960, the SWANU President visited China, thereby establishing diplomatic relations and securing Chinese support for the Namibian cause. In 1963 SWANU and three South African liberation movements, the African National Congress (ANC), the Pan-Africa Congress (PAC) and the Indian Congress also opened an office in Cairo under the banner of the Southern Africa United Front. Eventually, the Front was disbanded as individual liberation movements grew larger and continued to operate individually. The SWANU office in Egypt was funded mainly by the Egyptian Government. During the early years the movement also had diplomatic representations in Ghana and Egypt.¹⁵

Both SWAPO and SWANU secured scholarships for some of their members in the USA and Europe. SWAPO members were subsequently appointed as Chief Representatives of SWAPO in the countries where they were studying. In 1962 the first SWAPO Mission was opened in Cairo. The Egyptian Government assisted SWAPO with the running costs and an allowance for its officials. The then President of Egypt, Gamal Abdel Nasser, had a great understanding of the cause of liberation movements. Assistance was also received from Eastern Bloc countries (in the Cold War context). Apart from SWAPO's Mission, Cairo was also home to missions from other southern African liberation movements such as the *Frente de Libertacao de Mozambique* (Front for the Liberation of Mozambique – FRELIMO), *Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola* (People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola – MPLA), and the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU).¹⁶

In 1963, SWAPO opened an office in Algeria and appointed Solomon (Solly) Mifima as Chief Representative. A few years later Algeria provided two sub-machine guns and two pistols to SWAPO and these were among the weapons used in the first encounter between SWAPO guerrilla fighters and the South African Defence Force (SADF) on 26 August 1966, at Omugulugwombashe, northern Namibia.¹⁷ Following the independence of Zambia in 1964 SWAPO opened a Mission in Lusaka and appointed Hifikepunye Pohamba as Deputy Chief Representative. Pohamba later became independent Namibia's

¹⁴ United Nations, Charter of the United Nations and statute of the International Court of Justice, 1945, <<https://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/ctc/uncharter.pdf>> [accessed November 15, 2015].

¹⁵ Interview Zed Ngavirue, 21 December 2015, Windhoek; interview Helao Ndadi, 28 February 2007, Windhoek.

¹⁶ Interview Helao Ndadi, 28 February 2007; Andreas Shipanga and Sue Armstrong, *In search of freedom. The Andreas Shipanga story*, Gibraltar, Ashanti, 1989: 78.

¹⁷ Nujoma, *Where others wavered* : 129f.; Interview Sam Nujoma, 22 and 23 March 2007, Windhoek.

second President. Meanwhile, Namibia's current Vice President, Nickey Iyambo, who was studying in Finland at the time, was appointed SWAPO Chief Representative to that and other Nordic countries in 1965. He had no proper office facilities and conducted his affairs from his room in the students' dormitory.¹⁸ Iyambo faced many challenges as the Finnish Government was opposed to an armed struggle which was one of the measures adopted by SWAPO. This made representatives of the Finnish state reluctant to meet with SWAPO. Subsequently, SWAPO embarked upon an aggressive diplomatic campaign, mobilising sympathetic students and trade unionists, to boycott trade with South Africa, especially the export of paper. Finland had become a major producer of paper. With the support of some trade unions and students the Finnish Government finally agreed to meet with SWAPO, FRELIMO and MPLA in 1969. Diplomatic relations centred more on material assistance and excluded issues related to the armed struggle.¹⁹

In 1968 SWAPO opened two diplomatic missions. One was in the UK with the current Speaker of the National Assembly, Peter Katjavivi, as Chief Representative. It served as a vital link between SWAPO and its diplomatic missions, and coordinated activities between the SWAPO diplomatic mission in New York and the movement's other missions. A further mission was opened in Sweden with Paul Helmut, who was studying in Sweden at the time, appointed SWAPO's Chief Representative in Sweden and other Nordic countries. The mission in Finland subsequently concentrated solely on relations with Finland while relations with other Nordic countries were handled by the mission in Sweden. Unlike Finland, the Swedish social democratic political system was particularly receptive to and supportive of liberation movements. However, SWAPO initially experienced problems finding its feet in Sweden because SWANU members studying in Sweden had established SWANU in Swedish diplomatic circles. Nevertheless, SWAPO's standing soon improved as SWANU had no official diplomatic representation.²⁰

The establishment of links with international organisations

By 1960 SWANU had joined multilateral organisations such as the All-Africa People's Conference (AAPC), the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organisation (AAPSO) and the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM), based in London.²¹ In the 1960s, SWAPO also joined international organisations to strengthen its position on the international stage. In 1961, the SWAPO President, Sam Nujoma, attended the founding of the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM) in Belgrade. From then SWAPO attended meetings of NAM and was eventually invited to become a full member in 1978. Nujoma also represented SWAPO at

¹⁸ Interview Nickey Iyambo, 02 March 2007, Windhoek.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Interview Paul Helmut, 03 March 2007, Windhoek.

²¹ Lauren Dobell, *SWAPO's struggle for Namibia. War by other means*, Basel, Schlettwein, 1998: 33f.

the founding of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in Addis Ababa in 1963. Thereafter SWAPO attended various meetings of the OAU.²²

An informal organisation, the Africa Group of Ambassadors at the UN, was instrumental in bringing SWAPO into contact with various governments. During the early days of petitioning by SWAPO, the Tanzanian Representative to the UN, John Malecela (who later became Tanzania's Foreign Minister and then Prime Minister), and other members of the group, introduced SWAPO's petitioners to other UN diplomats. Malecela was a respected figure and access to UN diplomats became less problematic for SWAPO petitioners. Other diplomats such as ambassadors Abdul Wahab of Egypt and Vernon Mwaanga of Zambia also played a major role in assisting SWAPO take its first steps in international relations.²³ By the time SWAPO convened the Consultative Conference that brought the exiled members of the movement together in Tanga, Tanzania from December 1969 to January 1970, the movement had nine resident diplomats accredited to Algeria, Botswana, Egypt, Finland, Sweden, UK, UN and US, Tanzania (where the movement also had its provisional Headquarters) and Zambia.

The emergence of SWAPO as a pre-independence foreign policy actor

The previous section focused, inter alia, on the various instruments applied by various actors in South West Africa to achieve Namibian independence. SWAPO eventually emerged as the major actor in this process. Although SWAPO had been engaged in diplomatic activities and opening diplomatic missions from 1962, it was only after the Tanga Consultative Conference (1970) that it officially established its Department of Foreign Affairs, with Peter Mweshihange serving as the first Secretary for Foreign Affairs. Thereafter, more diplomatic missions were opened, especially in Africa and Europe. Theo-Ben Gurirab, who served as SWAPO Permanent Observer at the UN and later succeeded Mweshihange as Secretary for Foreign Affairs states that SWAPO's main foreign policy objective was to rally international support for the liberation struggle in Namibia and to isolate South Africa internationally. Despite differences with the Nordic countries, with whom SWAPO enjoyed fairly good diplomatic relations, over the armed liberation struggle, SWAPO was determined not to compromise on this issue.²⁴

Through diplomatic relations SWAPO, as outlined above, began to assert its role in the foreign affairs of South West Africa and a future Namibia, which eventually resulted in its being recognised internationally ahead of SWANU. There were differences between SWAPO and SWANU leaders in terms of the time dedicated to the diplomatic activities of the movements. The President of SWAPO and other senior leaders of the movement

²² Lauren Dobell "SWAPO in office", in: Colin Leys and John S. Saul, (eds.), *Namibia's liberation struggle. The two edged sword*, London, Currey, 1995, 171-195 (173); Interview Sam Nujoma, 22 and 23 March 2007, Windhoek.

²³ Geingob, *State formation in Namibia*: 52.

²⁴ Interview Theo-Ben Gurirab, 01 March 2007, Windhoek; Interview Sam Nujoma, 22 and 23 March 2007, Windhoek.

operated from provisional headquarters in Dar es Salaam on a full-time basis. The president only travelled to petition at the UN, attend international conferences and lobby support from various governments. Meanwhile, SWANU's President, Fanuel Kozonguizi, was based in London where he was pursuing his studies. Other senior leaders of SWANU were also studying, resulting in the perception that SWANU did not take the struggle seriously. Thus, a SWANU representative in Tanzania, Moses Katjuongua, who was relatively low ranking compared to the freedom fighters from other liberation movements in southern Africa, including SWAPO, had constant difficulties when seeking appointments with high ranking government officials or diplomats in Dar es Salaam.²⁵

SWAPO's standing in the diplomatic circles in Dar es Salaam and Africa at large was boosted when it embarked upon the armed liberation struggle, something that SWANU failed to do. SWANU's reluctance to take up arms led the Liberation Committee of the Organisation of African Unity's (OAU) to reduce and eventually withdraw its support. The Liberation Committee was established in June 1963, a month after the OAU was founded, and among its functions was the provision of financial support to liberation movements.²⁶ Geingob adds that the OAU withdrew its support from SWANU, following diplomatic outrage caused by SWANU President, Fanuel Kozonguizi, when he criticised all African states as puppets and reactionaries who were receiving money from imperialist countries.²⁷ Kozonguizi's tirade came during the Afro-Asian-Latin American People's Solidarity Conference (Tri-Continental Conference) in 1966. Consequently, the OAU withdrew its recognition of SWANU in 1968. Accordingly, SWANU offices in Egypt and Ghana were closed down. These developments allowed SWAPO to assert its standing on the African continent. The difference in the approach to the liberation struggle between SWAPO and SWANU was that SWAPO became more pro-active, shifting from what Lionel Cliffe et al. (1994: 21) called "a party of protests, addressing the UN as well as its immediate overlords, to being people bringing about their own independence", whereas SWANU was complacent, waiting for the UN to deliver independence.²⁸

The OAU Summit held in Rabat, Morocco, 1972, resolved to recognise SWAPO as the sole representative of the people of Namibia.²⁹ Two other liberation movements were accorded similar recognition: the *Frente de Libertacao de Mozambique* (Front for the Liberation of Mozambique – FRELIMO), and the *Partido Africano da Guine e Cabo Verde* (African Party for the independence of Guinea and Cape Verde Islands – PAIGC). At the same time recognition was granted to more than one liberation movement from some African countries, such as the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan-African Congress (PAC) of South Africa; the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) and the

²⁵ Interview Moses Katjuongua, 19 March 2007, Windhoek.

²⁶ Nujoma, *Where others wavered* : 152.

²⁷ Geingob, *State formation in Namibia* : 78.

²⁸ Lionel Cliffe, Ray Bush and Jenny Lindsay, *The transition to independence in Namibia*, Boulder & London, Rienner, 1994: 21.

²⁹ Interview Theo-Ben Gurirab, 01 March 2007, Windhoek.

Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) from Zimbabwe. In 1975, the OAU Council of Ministers passed Resolution 433 of 1975, which, amongst other things, reaffirmed “that SWAPO is the sole representative of the people of Namibia”, and demanded that South Africa also recognise SWAPO as such.³⁰

The President of SWAPO, Sam Nujoma, addressed the UN Security Council in 1971 and subsequent years on the question of Namibia’s independence.³¹ In 1976, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 31/152 of 1976 which recognised SWAPO as “the sole and authentic representative of the Namibian people”. This enhanced SWAPO’s status among the international community. Accordingly, the movement’s diplomatic mission in New York started receiving financial assistance for its operations. From 1974, two years before the “sole and authentic” recognition by the UN, the mission received funds from the UN, through the UN Council for Namibia. The funds made available by the UN constituted the budget of the SWAPO mission in New York. From 1976, SWAPO’s representative at the UN became the movement’s Permanent Observer to the UN. As a liberation movement with an observer status at the UN, unlike other liberation movements such as the ANC and ZANU PF for example, SWAPO was in a good position to advance the cause of Namibian independence, using the UN platform.³² Following the UN’s recognition of SWAPO as the sole and authentic representative of Namibians, SWANU no longer received support from the international community and its leaders could no longer access the UN to make petitions. This trend was repeated in other international organisations like the Non-aligned Movement (NAM) and the Commonwealth which provided scholarships to SWAPO members.³³

In 1982, SWAPO opened a diplomatic mission in India, which was accorded a full diplomatic status from 1985, enjoying all diplomatic privileges under the terms of the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and the 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, which are enjoyed by the diplomatic missions of independent sovereign states. While the heads of SWAPO’s diplomatic missions were called Chief Representatives, the head of the movement’s mission in India was officially called Ambassador. Similarly, visits to India by the President of SWAPO, Sam Nujoma, were treated as official state visits. This was important to SWAPO’s standing within the NAM as India was an active member of the organisation.³⁴

It should be noted that, although the USSR and China were major supporters of SWAPO, these permanent members of the UN Security Council were relatively late in establishing diplomatic missions with SWAPO. SWAPO only opened its diplomatic mission in the USSR

³⁰ Organisation of African Unity, Resolution 433 of the Council of Ministers, 1975, <http://www.au.int/en/sites/default/files/decisions/9588-council_en_18_25_july_1975_council_ministers_twenty_fifth_ordinary_session.pdf> [accessed April 1, 2016].

³¹ Saunders, “Namibian diplomacy”: 32.

³² Interview Theo-Ben Gurirab, 01 March 2007, Windhoek.

³³ Lauren Dobell, *SWAPO’s struggle for Namibia. War by other means*, 2nd ed., Basel, Schlettwein, 2000: 66.

³⁴ Office of the President, *Speeches of the President of Namibia 1990–1995*, Windhoek, Meinert, 1999: 168.

in 1987 and had no diplomatic mission whatsoever in China. Nevertheless, SWAPO maintained strong relations with the Chinese Communist Party and members of the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), SWAPO's military wing, trained in China. China also provided ammunition to SWAPO. There were also SWAPO members studying in the USSR. Commenting on SWAPO's relations with the USSR and China, Gurirab maintains that the geographical distance from SWAPO's provisional headquarters in Luanda had a major impact.³⁵

Colin Leys and John Saul summed up SWAPO's performance in international relations and diplomacy thus:

[W]orking' both sides of the Cold War [...] winning friends and neutralising enemies internationally in order to sustain a convincing presence at the United Nations [...] SWAPO's achievements on all these fronts was by any standard substantial.³⁶

At the time of Namibia's independence, SWAPO maintained 27 diplomatic establishments, and also maintained sound diplomatic relations with other countries where the movement did not have resident diplomats.

Actors in Namibia's foreign policy prior to independence

External and internal actors played a role in Namibia's foreign policy prior to independence. The former were international and regional organisations, and the Western Contact Group, while the latter included SWAPO leaders, its diplomatic officials and leaders of the Namibian churches which collaborated with SWAPO. The UN was instrumental in influencing the international position on Namibia and SWAPO, particularly with its recognition of the movement as the sole and authentic representative of the Namibian people in 1976. Accordingly, Nujoma states that the UN General Assembly's recognition of SWAPO,

[R]aised the status of Namibian representatives at every international conference as well as national level [...] Even Britain gave us some help, sending teachers to Zambia and Angola to work with our people in the SWAPO Health and Education Centres.³⁷

The UN General Assembly's recognition of SWAPO raised the interest of the US government in the question of Namibian independence, with the then Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, embarking upon what was termed 'shuttle diplomacy'. In 1976 he travelled to South Africa to meet with Prime Minister John Vorster to discuss issues pertaining to Namibia's independence. In the same year, Kissinger also held discussions with the SWAPO's President, Sam Nujoma, during which SWAPO stressed the illegality of South Africa's occupation of Namibia, and sought diplomatic and political support from the US

³⁵ Interview Theo-Ben Gurirab, 10 October 2015, Windhoek.

³⁶ Colin Leys and John S. Saul, "Introduction", in: eadem, (eds.), *Namibia's liberation struggle. The two edged sword*, London, Currey, 1995, 1-18 (3).

³⁷ Nujoma, *Where others wavered* : 257.

to ensure the implementation of the relevant UN Resolutions, as their implementation would result in Namibian independence. Kissinger assured the SWAPO delegation of the US Government's support.³⁸ In the same year, the UN Security Council passed resolution 385 (see below). Kissinger's shuttle diplomacy was short-lived as in 1977 the Democratic administration under President Jimmy Carter came to power in the USA.

In 1977 President Carter's Ambassador at the UN, Andrew Young, invited Canada, France, Germany and the UK to cooperate with the US in addressing the question of Namibian independence. They informed the South African government that they were opposed to what the South African government termed 'the internal settlement' of Namibia's independence. In 1975, the South African government convened a conference of representatives of the 11 Namibian ethnic groups in Windhoek. The Conference, later known as the Turnhalle Conference after the gymnasium hall where it was held, resolved to draft a constitution for South West Africa within three years and denounced the use of force and the armed struggle to overthrow the existing order.³⁹ This was deemed to be a direct attack on SWAPO, which was engaged in a military confrontation with the South Africa. Although SWAPO was not excluded from the Turnhalle Conference, it refused to participate in what it perceived to be a circus of the South African government.⁴⁰

The WCG presented an aide-memoir outlining proposals for the independence settlement in compliance with the UN Security Council Resolution 385 of 1976.⁴¹ The provisions of this resolution are enumerated in the next section of this article. From 1977 to 1978, the President of SWAPO led a delegation in negotiations with the WCG.⁴² The WCG wanted to safeguard their economic interests in Namibia. For example, Rio Tinto, a company from the UK was mining at the Rössing uranium mine. The UK was, therefore, against the use of the phrase "South Africa's illegal occupation of Namibia" in the UN resolutions and preferred the term "unlawful occupation". Despite Britain's preference, the word "illegal" was not replaced. The companies American Metal Climax from the US and Newmond from Canada were mining copper at the Tsumeb Corporation Limited mine.⁴³ The WCG's involvement in Namibian issues was based on concern for their economic interests, which is in line with the assumptions of Liberalism as a theory of IR studies, especially its pluralist perspective: "Pluralists argue that international activity is not just a matter of behaviour of states but of other actors too [...] For example economic issues are issues in their own right."⁴⁴

³⁸ Ibid.: 256.

³⁹ Alfred T. Moleah, *Namibia, the struggle for liberation*, Wilmington, Disa Press, 1983: 180.

⁴⁰ Katjavivi, *A history of resistance* : 95; Nujoma, *Where others wavered* : 254-256.

⁴¹ Katjavivi, *A history of resistance* : 114.

⁴² Nujoma, *Where others wavered* : 272.

⁴³ Interview Sam Nujoma, 22 and 23 March 2007, Windhoek.

⁴⁴ Michael Nicholson, *International relations. A concise introduction*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2002: 98.

For Pluralists, there is room for accommodating the interests of economic actors in the international political system. It was, thus, imperative for the US, Canada, and the UK to strike a balance between efforts towards Namibia's independence, and punitive measures against South Africa, which might also have had an impact on their commercial and economic interests. At times, the economic interests of the WCG states compromised their diplomatic effectiveness. Geingob maintains that the diplomatic initiatives of the WCG had failed to gain momentum and influence over South Africa as some members of the group, namely France, the UK and the United States, vetoed some resolutions in the UN Security Council.⁴⁵ Most of these resolutions would have placed a heavy burden on South Africa and, accordingly, would have brought about the end of its illegal occupation of Namibia.

The dealings of actors such as Henry Kissinger and the WCG during the Carter administration should be understood in the context of Realism as an approach to the study of International Relations (IR). According to Geingob, western countries were not initially convinced that SWAPO could prevail against South Africa.⁴⁶ When the Portuguese colonial regimes were overthrown in Mozambique and Angola in 1974 and 1975 respectively, western countries realised the potential for the USSR's communist ideology to take root in southern Africa. To prevent this from happening, they became involved in the Namibian issue.

Nel asserts that the distribution of power between actors in world politics is one of the main assumptions of Realism.⁴⁷ Accordingly, it could be argued that western countries did not want the USSR to exert its influence in southern Africa, but they needed a balance of power in the region. Realists' balance of power assumption contends that alliances are formed to prevent any great power from achieving a hegemonic position over the international political system. Great powers would, therefore, strive for power equilibrium in the international political system.⁴⁸

Ronald Reagan of the Republican Party was elected US President at the end of 1980 and assumed power in January 1981. His election initiated a paradigm shift in international negotiations vis-à-vis Namibia's independence. Hage Geingob, who was a member of the SWAPO delegations during negotiations reiterated that, during the negotiations on Namibia's independence, the Reagan administration excluded SWAPO and preferred to deal with state actors only – a pertinent Realist approach.⁴⁹ Hedley Bull, a strong proponent of Realism, advocates that the cause of the world order should

⁴⁵ Geingob, *State formation in Namibia* : 96.

⁴⁶ Interview Hage Geingob, 01 March 2007, Windhoek.

⁴⁷ Philip Nel, "Theories of international relations", in: Patrick J. McGowan., Scarlett Cornelissen and Philip Nel, (eds.), *Power, wealth and Global equity. An international relations textbook for Africa*, Cape Town, University of Cape Town Press, 2006, 21-45 (30).

⁴⁸ Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse-Kappen and Beth A Simmons, (eds.), *Handbook of international relations*, London, Sage, 2002: 354.

⁴⁹ Geingob, *State formation in Namibia* : 90.

not be advanced by involving non-state actors.⁵⁰ Bull further suggested that the state should be strengthened, rather than subverting its role. State actors are central to Realism's assumptions, while Liberalism (Pluralism) recognises the role of non-state actors in international relations.⁵¹

During the negotiations, the Frontline States (FLS), which included southern African states such as Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe, and Nigeria discussed the Namibian question with the WCG. The FLS was formed as a political front in the region to strive for the total independence of the southern Africa region.⁵² In response to the US insistence on state actors, SWAPO entrusted its representation at the independence negotiations to the FLS. The FLS and Nigeria were, therefore, among some of the external actors in the foreign policy-making of pre-independent Namibia. The state actors' concept was further maintained during the ceasefire negotiations when there were discussions between the governments of South Africa, Angola and Cuba in 1988, where SWAPO was excluded. Subsequent to the ceasefire negotiations, SWAPO discussed its positions with the Cuban and Angolan negotiators.⁵³ It should be noted that although the South African colonial government had installed an interim government in Namibia in 1978, that government had no mandate over foreign affairs and defence matters. These were handled by the South African government. The WCG, the FLS and Nigeria, therefore, only dealt with the South Africa government.

The OAU, too, was involved in SWAPO's pre-independence foreign policy. Since its inception in 1963, the OAU had played a prominent role in Namibia's foreign policy historiography. For example, at the founding summit of the OAU, its members reaffirmed in Agenda Item II the right of the people of South West Africa to self-determination, and called for the breaking of diplomatic and consular relations between African states and South Africa.⁵⁴ Through the OAU's Liberation Committee, which was based in Tanzania, SWAPO received financial and material assistance. Furthermore, the OAU's accommodation of SWAPO at the Heads of State Assembly afforded SWAPO an opportunity to contribute to the decolonisation debates, not only for Namibia, but also for other African states that were under colonial rule. When Liberia and Ethiopia took the case of South Africa's illegal occupation of South West Africa to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 1965, the OAU Council of Ministers adopted Resolution 58 (iv) at its meeting held in Nairobi, which reaffirmed the OAU's commitment to render financial assistance in respect of the

⁵⁰ Hedley Bull, "The state's positive role in world politics", in: Herbert M. Levine, (ed.), *World politics debated. A reader in contemporary issues*, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1989, 24-36 (33).

⁵¹ Karen A. Mingst, *Essentials of international relations*, London, Norton, 2004: 62-70.

⁵² Ibbo Mandaza, Arne Tostensen and Emang Motlhabane Maphanyane, *Southern Africa: In search of a common future. From the Conference to a Community*, Gaborone, SADC, 1994: 4.

⁵³ Interview Theo-Ben Gurirab, 01 March 2007, Windhoek; interview Sam Nujoma, 22 and 23 March 2007, Windhoek.

⁵⁴ Organisation of African Unity, Resolution CIAS/Plen.2/Rev.2 (a) of the First Conference of Independent African Heads of State and Government, 1963, <<https://www.issafrica.org/uploads/AHOGASSEMBLY1963.PDF>> [accessed April 1, 2016].

costs of the case. The decision was endorsed by the assembly of Heads of State in resolution 39 (II), at its meeting held in the same year in Ghana.⁵⁵

SWAPO further pursued multilateral diplomacy through the NAM. Former SWAPO President Sam Nujoma explained SWAPO's multilateral diplomatic strategy whereby issues which SWAPO wanted to bring to the attention of the international community were first discussed at the meetings of the OAU Liberation Committee, which met every January in Dar es Salaam.⁵⁶ Thereafter, these issues were taken to the subsequent meeting of the OAU Council of Ministers, and then to the following OAU summit. After the summit discussed and took resolutions on given issues, such issues were transmitted to the NAM. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of NAM member states met annually in New York at the beginning of the regular session of the UN General Assembly to focus on the items on the agenda that were of major importance to the NAM. By the time the General Assembly met, issues which SWAPO wanted to bring to the attention of the international community had been discussed and adopted at the meetings of OAU and NAM, making it possible to pass the necessary resolutions in favour of SWAPO at the UN General Assembly.

SWAPO's foreign policy actors operated in an environment similar to that of an independent state as the organisation's president played a major role in foreign policy issues. SWAPO's president represented the movement at high-level multilateral meetings such as OAU and NAM summits, and led SWAPO delegations at key negotiations with representatives of the South African government. Successive SWAPO Secretaries of Foreign Affairs, Peter Mweshihange (1976–1986) and Theo-Ben Gurirab (1986–1990), and the Deputy Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Aaron Shihepo (1976–1990) were also major foreign policy actors. The Secretary of Foreign Affairs presented reports to the SWAPO Central Committee, the policy making organ of the movement, and advised the movement on issues related to foreign policy.⁵⁷ Nujoma reiterated the Central Committee's prominence in foreign policy-making at the time by explaining that the Central Committee had taken the resolution that diplomatic negotiations for a solution to the Namibian question should be adopted in order to have a three-pronged approach to the struggle for independence, namely political action, diplomatic engagements and the armed liberation struggle.⁵⁸

Other SWAPO foreign policy actors were the movement's heads of diplomatic missions, the Chief Representatives. These diplomats saw their role as Ambassadors of Namibia to

⁵⁵ Organisation of African Unity, Resolution 58 (iv) of the Council of Ministers, 1965, <http://www.au.int/en/sites/default/files/decisions/9576-council_en_26_february_9_march_1965_council_ministers_fourth_ordinary_session.pdf> [accessed April 1, 2016]; Organisation of African Unity, Resolution 39 (ii) of the Assembly of Heads of State, 1965, <http://www.au.int/en/sites/default/files/decisions/9513-assembly_en_21_26_october_1965_assembly_heads_state_government_second_ordinary_session.pdf>, [accessed April 1, 2016].

⁵⁶ Interview Sam Nujoma, 22 and 23 March 2007, Windhoek.

⁵⁷ Interview Theo-Ben Gurirab, 01 March 2007, Windhoek.

⁵⁸ Nujoma, *Where others wavered* : 282.

countries where they were posted. Writing about SWAPO's foreign policy actors, Colin Leys and John Saul stated:

SWAPO continued to have political weight abroad, in large measure because of the increasing effectiveness of its 'external loop' of diplomatic representatives [...] Reinforced by Nujoma's tireless presence on this world stage, these 'SWAPO Ambassadors' were increasingly able to deliver resources and ever enhanced credibility to the movement from networks they had established in their host countries and at the United Nations.⁵⁹

As is the case with diplomats from sovereign states, the tasks of SWAPO's Chief Representatives also included informing the SWAPO leadership about the situation in their respective countries. This enabled the movement to formulate its policy towards a particular country. For example, the Chief Representative in Finland, Nickey Iyambo, advised SWAPO leaders to adopt a more liberalism-inclined foreign policy approach when dealing with Finland. This was based on an assessment of the Finnish government's position on SWAPO's armed liberation struggle, as stated earlier.⁶⁰ Gurirab states that SWAPO's Permanent Observer to the United Nations played a more vital role because the UN mission served as a feeding centre for other diplomatic missions.⁶¹ Given his strategic positioning, the Permanent Observer participated in key negotiations at the UN, where most members of the international community annually converge in September to attend the General Assembly sessions. Saunders acknowledges the important role played by SWAPO foreign policy actors, despite lack of formal academic training in International Relations. He maintains that their skilful diplomacy was instrumental in gaining recognition within international diplomatic arena.⁶²

The breakthrough and triumph of SWAPO's diplomacy: United Nations Security Council Resolutions 385 of 1976 and 435 of 1978

Early diplomatic lobbying by South West African nationals among the international community resulted in the adoption of the UN General Assembly Resolution 2145 of 1966, which terminated the mandate of South Africa to administer South West Africa as a C-Mandate Territory of the UN.⁶³ In 1967, the UN General Assembly Special Session by Resolution 2248 (S-V) established the UN Council for South West Africa to administer the territory and make the necessary arrangements for independence by 1968 on a date to be determined by the people of the territory. The Council comprised 11 UN member states, namely Chile, Colombia, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Nigeria, Pakistan,

⁵⁹ Colin Leys and John S. Saul, "SWAPO, the politics of exile", in: eadem, (eds.), *Namibia's liberation struggle. The two edged sword*, London, Currey, 1995, 40-65 (45).

⁶⁰ Interview Nickey Iyambo, 02 March 2007, Windhoek.

⁶¹ Interview Theo-Ben Gurirab, 01 March 2007, Windhoek.

⁶² Saunders, "Namibian diplomacy": 34.

⁶³ United Nations, Resolution 2145/1966 of the UN General Assembly, adopted on 27 October 1966, <[http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/2145\(XVI\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/2145(XVI))> [accessed December 18, 2015].

Turkey, the United Arab Republic, Yugoslavia and Zambia. The executive and administrative powers of the Council were vested in the Commissioner for South West Africa. The Council acted as a legislature, for it was empowered to promulgate laws and decrees governing the territory.⁶⁴

As outlined in the previous section, SWAPO used diplomacy as an instrument of its foreign policy. Former SWANU petitioner Festus Muundjua (2007) acknowledged the competence of SWAPO diplomats in lobbying and negotiations, which was one of the reasons why the movement was the only Namibian political entity recognised by the UN. The movement lobbied for favourable resolutions at international organisations. Muundjua credits SWAPO for the UN resolutions that paved the way for Namibian independence. Through SWAPO's lobbying at the UN, the Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 385 of 1976, which marked the bold move by the UN on the question. In the resolution, the Security Council, *inter alia*.

- Condemns the continued illegal occupation of the Territory of Namibia by South Africa
- Further condemns all attempts by South Africa calculated to evade the clear demands of the United Nations supervision and control in Namibia.
- Reiterates its demand that South Africa take the necessary steps to effect the withdrawal [...] of its illegal administration maintained in Namibia and to transfer power to the people of Namibia with the assistance of the United Nations.
- Demands again that South Africa [...] accord unconditionally to all Namibians currently in exile for political reasons full facilities for return to their country without risk of arrest, detention, intimidation or imprisonment.⁶⁵

Although the armed liberation struggle was conducted parallel to diplomacy, it was important to have a UN-managed transition to independence. During that transition period, civil wars had broken out in Angola and Mozambique because other internal stakeholders were dissatisfied with the way in which the MPLA and FRELIMO governments had assumed power. The management of the election process by the UN in Namibia would be a precaution against a repetition of the Angolan and Mozambican experiences.

Gurirab states that when the Carter administration came to power in the USA in 1977 it adopted Resolution 385 of 1976 as the basis for talking to SWAPO, Nigeria and the Frontline States.⁶⁶ This resulted in diplomatic negotiations with the WCG, which resulted

⁶⁴ United Nations, Resolution S-V 2248 of the UN General Assembly, adopted on 16 December 1967, <[http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/2248\(S-V\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/2248(S-V))> [accessed December 18, 2015].

⁶⁵ United Nations, Resolution 385/1976 of the UN Security Council, adopted on 30 January 1976, <[http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/385\(1976\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/385(1976))> [accessed December 20, 2015].

⁶⁶ Interview Theo-Ben Gurirab, 01 March 2007, Windhoek.

in the adoption of the UN Security Council Resolution 435 of 1978. Among other provisions, UN Security Council Resolution 435 of 1978 stated that the Security Council:

- Reiterates that its objective is the withdrawal of South Africa's illegal administration from Namibia and the transfer of power to the people of Namibia with the assistance of the United Nations in accordance with Security Council resolution 385 (1976).
- Decides to establish under its authority a United Nations Transitional Assistance Group in accordance with the [...] report of the Secretary-General for a period of up to 12 months in order to assist his Special Representative to carry out the mandate conferred upon him by Security Council [...] namely, to ensure the early independence of Namibia through free elections under the supervision and control of the United Nations.
- Welcomes the preparedness of the South West Africa People's Organisation to co-operate in the implementation of the Secretary-General's report, including its expressed readiness to sign and observe the cease-fire provisions as manifested in the letter from its President of 08 September 1978.
- Calls upon South Africa forthwith to co-operate with the Secretary-General in the implementation of the present resolution.⁶⁷

SWAPO's Eastern Bloc allies were wary of a negotiated process led by countries from the other side of the Cold War divide.⁶⁸ Accordingly, the USSR and Czechoslovakia, both strong supporters of SWAPO, abstained from the adoption of the resolution. It was perceived that the involvement of the WCG would, in a way, give its members prominence in the Namibian question. The Eastern Bloc countries would, therefore, be expected to be averse towards such a move, which is in line with the assumptions of Realism as a theory of IR studies that a state should not let another or a coalition of states, take predominance.⁶⁹

The UN's Resolutions pertaining to Namibia's independence came as a result of the UN, SWAPO and the WCG's diplomatic engagements. These also included South Africa as a party to the dispute over Namibia's sovereignty. An assumption of IR studies theory of Liberalism states that in a peace-making process, third parties are often concerned about mutually acceptable conditions of dispute resolution.⁷⁰ This assumption is reflected in the UN's recognition of SWAPO as an important player in conflict management and resolution with regard to the Namibian question, unlike the Reagan administration, which advocated only state actors and thus the exclusion of SWAPO. It

⁶⁷ United Nations, Resolution 435 of the UN Security Council, adopted on 29 September 1978, <[http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/435\(1978\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/435(1978))> [accessed December 20, 2015].

⁶⁸ Interview Theo-Ben Gurirab, 01 March 2007, Windhoek.

⁶⁹ Charles W. Kegley, *World politics. Trends and transformation*, 11th ed., Belmont, Wadsworth, 2007: 504.

⁷⁰ Carlsnaes et al., *Handbook*: 393.

should be noted that when all disputing parties, state actors and non-state actors alike, are included in the negotiation process, the degree of mutual acceptance of the conditions of settlement advocated by Liberals is likely to be high. When one party is excluded, it may accept conditions, merely for the sake of compromising and allowing the process to go ahead, but the possibility is there that that party might not see the conditions as binding.

Resolution 435 of 1978 was eventually implemented on 1 April 1989, over 10 years after it was adopted. In November 1989, the UN supervised elections were held and SWAPO received 57.3% of the votes, gaining 41 of the 72 seats in the Constituent Assembly which drafted the constitution for an independent Namibia. The Constituent Assembly adopted the constitution on 9 February 1990, and independence was declared on 21 March 1990. The Constituent Assembly adopted the 1982 constitutional principles that were formulated by the WCG and presented to SWAPO. Namibia's independence marked the end of the period of pre-independence foreign policy-making and the beginning of foreign policy-making by a sovereign Namibian state.

To register its recognition of Namibia as a C-Mandate territory of the UN, SWAPO insisted on receiving the reins of power from the UN which inherited the trusteeship Mandate of Namibia from the League of Nations, rather than from South Africa, which SWAPO continued to regard as an illegal occupier of Namibia. Accordingly, Javier Perez De Quellar, the UN Secretary-General at the time, administered the oath to the SWAPO President, Sam Nujoma, as the first President of Namibia.

Post-independence redeployment of SWAPO diplomats

Saunders states that at independence, the Namibian government built the country's sovereignty on the foundation laid by SWAPO's diplomacy during the pre-independence period.⁷¹ Following independence, SWAPO redeployed its former diplomats in the diplomatic service of the Republic of Namibia. SWAPO Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Theo-Ben Gurirab, was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs at independence. Two prominent figures in SWAPO's Department of Foreign Affairs moved to other fields. SWAPO's longest serving Deputy Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Aaron Shihepo, was appointed as a Member of the Public Service Commission. Shihepo played a key role in the negotiations for independence and also served as Vice President of the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organisation (AAPSO). Nico Bessinger who acted as SWAPO Secretary of Foreign Affairs inside Namibia was appointed Minister of Wildlife and Nature Conservation (later renamed Environment and Tourism). Similarly, other former Heads of SWAPO diplomatic missions did not immediately become part of the post-independence diplomatic services. Some started their career elsewhere and joined the Namibian diplomatic corps at a later stage, while others were never involved in Namibian diplomacy. Table 1 reflects how total of 24 SWAPO diplomats, who in 1989 were SWAPO Heads of Missions, were re-deployed.

⁷¹ Saunders, "Namibian diplomacy": 35.

Table 1: Former SWAPO Heads of Missions and their deployment after independence

Name	Position prior to independence	Position after independence
Elia Akwaake	Chief Representative to Tanzania and East Africa ⁷²	Ambassador to Cuba
Ndeutapo Amagulu	Chief Representative to Ethiopia,	High Commissioner to Nigeria.
Eddy Amkongo	Chief Representative to France	Permanent Secretary in the Office of the President
Helmut Angula	Permanent Observer to the UN	Deputy Minister of Mines and Energy
Hinyangerwa Asheeke	Deputy Permanent Observer to the UN and Deputy Chief Representative to the US ⁷³	Ambassador to Ethiopia and the OAU
Shikwetepo Haindongo	Chief Representative to the Germany Democratic Republic (East Germany)	Employed in junior position in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the auxiliary Services Division
Leonard lipumbu	Chief Representative to Congo (Brazzaville)	Ambassador to France
Joel Kaapanda,	Chief Representative to Australia	Joined the private sector
Tuliameni Kalomoh	Ambassador to India	Ambassador to the US
Phillemon Kambala	Chief Representative to Nigeria	Under Secretary for Presidential Affairs, Office of the President
Bernard Kamwi	Chief Representative to Romania	Passed away during the transitional period to independence
Shapua Kaukungwa	Chief Representative to the UK	Ambassador to Belgium and the EU
Phillemon Malima	Chief Representative to the USSR	Deputy Minister of Defence
Billy Mwaningange	Chief Representative to Yugoslavia	SWAPO Party Coordinator, Ondangwa Region
Titus Mwayilepeni	Chief Representative to Iran	SWAPO Party Coordinator, Oshakati Region
Nickey Nashandi	Chief Representative to Libya	Ambassador to the USSR

⁷² Asheeke acted in the position of Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah when she left for studies (1986–1989).

⁷³ Asheeke acted as Permanent Observer to the UN and Chief Representative to the US during the transitional period to independence, when Helmut Angula came to Namibia to join the SWAPO election campaign team in 1989.

Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah	Chief Representative to Tanzania and East Africa	Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
Kapuka Nauyala	Chief Representative to Zimbabwe	Passed away during the transitional period to independence
Vinnia Ndadi	Chief Representative to Algeria	SWAPO Party Coordinator for Grootfontein District
Veiccoh Nghiwete	Chief Representative to Zambia	High Commissioner to the UK
Charles Shihepo ⁷⁴	Chief Representative to Botswana	High Commissioner to Zambia
Nghidimondjila Shoombe	Chief Representative to the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany)	Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Local Government and Housing
Niilo Taapopi	Chief Representative to Sweden	Deputy Head of Mission, Permanent Mission of Namibia to the UN
Peter Tsheehama	Chief Representative to Cuba	Deputy Minister of State Security

Source: authors own compilation

As can be seen from the table above, only nine SWAPO Heads of Missions continued as Namibian Heads of Missions immediately after independence. Meanwhile, Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah continued to play a role in post-independence foreign policy as Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1995–1997, and later as Minister from December 2012. At the time of writing (February 2016) she serves as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation.

Other former SWAPO Heads of Missions were not immediately appointed to the Namibian diplomatic services but joined later. For example, Eddy Amkongo was later appointed to the Namibian diplomatic services as Ambassador to Ethiopia and the OAU, and later as Ambassador to the DRC. Kondja Kambala was appointed High Commissioner to Nigeria and later to South Africa. Both Amkongo and Kambala, however, remained indirectly involved in foreign policy-making, being aides to the President who is a chief policy-maker. Joseph Jimmy, who previously served in SWAPO's diplomatic services as Chief Representative to Sweden, was appointed High Commissioner of Namibia to Zimbabwe in 1993. Jesaya Nyamu, who previously served as Chief Representative to Ethiopia and the OAU, and later as Chief Representative to Zimbabwe, before being replaced by Kapuka Nauyala, worked as an Under-Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for one year, after which he was appointed Deputy Minister of Mines and Energy.

⁷⁴ After his term as High Commissioner to Zambia Shihepo later changed his name Wilbard Hellao. He avers that Charles Shihepo was never his real name, but just a *nom de guerre*.

Other former SWAPO Heads of Missions who moved on to other careers include three officials who remained in the service of SWAPO Party and joined the government after some years as political office bearers. During the first Regional Council Elections, held in December 1992, Titus Mwayilepeni was elected Regional Councillor for Ompundja Constituency in Oshana Region, while Billy Mwaningange was elected Regional Councillor for Ondobe Constituency in Ohangwena Region, and was subsequently elected Governor of Ohangwena Region. At the time of writing (February 2016), Mwaningange serves as Deputy Minister of Defence. Vinnia Ndadi who became SWAPO Party District Coordinator for Grootfontein and later became the Regional Coordinator for Oshikoto Region, was appointed Special Advisor to the Minister of Prisons and Correctional Services in 2001. Shikwetepo Haindongo left his junior position in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs after one year and went on to work his way up to become a senior civil servant, Chief Regional Officer (accounting officer) for Khomas Region in 2004 and was later elected Regional Councillor for Windhoek West in 2010.

Joining the Namibian diplomatic service were two SWANU members, Dr Tunguru Huaraka and Nora Schimming-Chase, who were appointed Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN and Ambassador to Germany respectively. Two Members of Parliament, John Ya Otto and Joshua Hoebeb, the former with a background in the labour sector and the latter in education entered the diplomatic services as Namibia's first Ambassador to Angola and High Commissioner to South Africa respectively. Two other Members of Parliament from a religious background, Reverends Matti Amadhila and Heikki Ausiku, joined the first Namibian diplomatic corps as senior diplomats, but not as Heads of Mission.

Information on post-independence deployment of diplomats became known to the researcher of this study, as events were unfolding, having followed with keen interest the development of issues related to foreign affairs and through peer discussions, as a student activist, student of Political Science, SWAPO Party Youth League leader and Desk Officer at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Member of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security and finally as Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs – later International Relations and Cooperation.

A reflection of pre-independence foreign policy-making in the post-independence foreign policy positions

According to Gurirab the solidarity of the international community with SWAPO, and that of United Nations in particular, had some influence on Namibia's post-independent foreign policy.⁷⁵ Namibia immediately joined the United Nations in April 1990 and adopted a foreign policy focusing on peace and security in the southern Africa region, with specific reference to the return of peace in Angola and the democratisation of South

⁷⁵ Interview Theo-Ben Gurirab, 01 March 2007, Windhoek.

Africa.⁷⁶ Independent Namibia established diplomatic relations with all countries where SWAPO had diplomatic missions, including the Western Contact Group countries, given its limited resources Namibia could not send resident diplomats to all these countries (SWAPO missions were supported financially by host countries, but missions of an independent Namibia had to be sustained by the Namibian Government).

Namibia has worked to ensure that friendships that had been built with SWAPO's allies are maintained and consolidated post-independence. Namibia's first president, Sam Nujoma, adopted a doctrine of maintaining old friends and winning new ones. It was necessary to acquire new friends as Namibia's independence came at the end of the Cold War which changed the foreign policy positions of many states. President Nujoma visited the Nordic countries in order to consolidate diplomatic relations which had been forged during the liberation struggle and to follow up on the cooperation agreed then. He further visited the Frontline States – as part of SADC and invited President Ibrahim Babangida of Nigeria to visit Namibia in 1992. Namibia maintains diplomatic establishments in Sweden and Finland and has established the Joint Commissions of Cooperation with former members of the Frontline States and Nigeria as part of its policy of pursuing economic diplomacy.⁷⁷ The Republic of Namibia established full diplomatic relations and opened diplomatic missions as indicated in table 2 below.

Table 2: List of Namibian Missions by 2015

Missions in countries and organisations where SWAPO had Missions	Angola, Botswana, Congo (Brazzaville), Cuba, Egypt, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Germany ⁷⁸ , India, Nigeria, Senegal, Sweden, Tanzania, United Kingdom, United Nations, USSR (later Russian Federation), USA, Zambia, Zimbabwe
Missions in countries where SWAPO had no Missions	Austria, Brazil, Belgium, China, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Malaysia, South Africa
Countries without Namibian Missions but had SWAPO Missions	Algeria, Australia, Iran, Libya, Romania, Yugoslavia

Source: authors own compilation.

⁷⁶ Peya Mushelenga, *Foreign policy-making in Namibia, the dynamic of a smallness of a state*, MA Thesis, Pretoria, University of South Africa, 2008: 92f., 102, 180.

⁷⁷ National Assembly, *Debates of the National Assembly*, Vol. 3, Windhoek, National Assembly, 1990: 205; Peya Mushelenga, *The economic diplomacy of a small state, the case of Namibia*, PhD Thesis, Pretoria, University of South Africa, 2015: 98f., 134-136, 153.

⁷⁸ At independence, Namibia opened a diplomatic mission in Bonn, but following the unification of Germany in 1990, the mission later moved to Berlin.

After the disintegration of USSR in 1991, Namibia maintained a mission in the Russian Federation. The missions in Austria and Belgium were necessitated by the presence of the UN offices in Vienna and EU Headquarters in Brussels. Under the EU's Cotonou Agreement, Namibia enjoyed trade benefits and was granted the Least Developed Country status for a period of five years.⁷⁹ It should be noted that Namibia maintains diplomatic relations with those countries where SWAPO had diplomatic missions but there are no missions currently.

However, Namibia would appear to be neglecting her old friends in Eastern Europe, who were part of the Eastern Bloc during the Cold War. Apart from Russia, 25 years after independence, Namibia has no permanent diplomatic establishments in Eastern Europe. The author of this paper, in his capacity as Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, pointed this out in parliament during the 2015 budget debate. He stated that Romania would be an ideal partner to engage with in the area of trade and investment. Citing Andrei-Christian Balasan's discourse titled *The recent trends of Romania's international trade in goods*, the Deputy Minister averred that Namibia could learn from Romania's acquisition of the technology from more advanced countries and that the country has witnessed improvement in economic performance, resulting in export growth.⁸⁰ He further stated that Romania is a large scale producer of grapes and that Namibia could learn from Romanian agricultural techniques for her grape production near the Orange River in the Karas Region. The Deputy Minister further maintained that relations with the Czech Republic, where many Namibians were educated during the liberation struggle, should be revisited, given that the Czech economy is integrated in the EU's regional supply chain with the foreign direct investment (FDIs) stock being above the EU average. He propounded that Namibian businesses could learn from the manufacturing industry in the Czech Republic and boost industrialisation at home.⁸¹

Conclusion

SWAPO's principles, approach and activities dominated the foreign policy environment of pre-independent Namibia. One of the prevailing perceptions prior to independence was that the people of Namibia believed in the importance of the international community to resolve the question of their independence from South Africa. While many actors from the then occupied South West African territory engaged in diplomatic negotiations and

⁷⁹ André Du Pisani, "Namibia forges a regional role for herself", *Namibia Yearbook*, 2, 1991/92, 14-19 (61); idem, "Namibian foreign policy: Transformation and emerging global orders (1989-1999)", in: Christiaan Keulder, (ed.), *State, society and democracy: a reader in Namibian politics*, Windhoek, Gamsberg Macmillan, 2000, 297-311 (307); idem, "Peacemaking in southern and central Africa, Namibia's role", *Namibia Yearbook*, 8, 2001/2002, 14-19 (17).

⁸⁰ Andrei-Christian Balasan, *The recent trends of Romania's international trade in goods*, Centre for Economic Studies (CES) Working Paper, 6 (1), 2014, 7-16, <http://www.ceswp.uaic.ro/articles/CESWP2014_VI1_BAL.pdf> [accessed 20 February, 2016].

⁸¹ National Assembly, *Debates of the National Assembly*, Vol. 168, Windhoek, National Assembly, 2015: 113f.

lobbying for Namibia's independence, it was SWAPO that eventually emerged and remained as the key foreign policy actor. Foreign policy was largely influenced by external factors and actors, which led to policy characterised by inclinations to both Realism and Liberalism IR studies theories.

SWAPO won the UN supervised elections, which allowed it to form a government on independence. Accordingly, pre-independence foreign policy-making, of which the major actors were SWAPO and the international community, has had a major impact on the foreign policy of independent Namibia, taking into account the Cold War and post-Cold War environments during which the respective policies were conceived. This is reflected by a leaning towards multilateralism and maintaining diplomatic establishments in countries where SWAPO previously had diplomatic representation. There are, however, some countries which maintained strong relations with SWAPO, especially from the former Eastern Bloc, such as the Czech Republic and Romania, but whose diplomatic relations with Namibia, although cordial, are not strong as those with SWAPO prior to independence.

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