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**Master's Thesis of International Studies**

**Success Factors for UN Peacekeeping  
Operation in Post-Conflict  
Peacebuilding:  
The Case of Namibia**

분쟁 이후 평화구축 단계에서  
유엔평화유지활동의 성공요인:  
나미비아 사례를 중심으로

**August 2021**

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# **Success Factors for UN Peacekeeping Operation in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding: The Case of Namibia**

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## **Abstract**

# **Success Factors for UN Peacekeeping Operation in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding: The Case of Namibia**

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With the end of the Cold War, new optimism on the United Nations' role in peacebuilding has arisen. The concept of post-conflict peacebuilding was officially underlined by the United Nations in *An Agenda for Peace*, and it highlighted the significance of multidimensional peacekeeping operations within the UN's lead. The United Nations Peacekeeping Operation has been progressively expanded both in terms of its size and number and has successfully implemented peace in several conflicting areas since then.

Despite this impressive growth and expansion, some operations are evaluated as a severe failure, while some are considered a great success throughout history. The blurred results of UN peacekeeping operations bring out questions of why some succeed and some fail, how success and failure can be determined, and which factors are necessary to accomplish a successful operation.

In this regard, this paper examines the United Nations Transition Group (UNTAG) in Namibia in order to find possible answers to those questions. The UNTAG – which has been widely evaluated as the most successful peacekeeping

operation led by the UN – has special meanings in that its primary missions were political and that it became a catalyst for further development and application of the concept of post-conflict peacebuilding in the UN.

Through the lens of historical institutionalism, this study shows how the behaviors and decisions of major internal and external parties along with their interactions had influenced the implementation of UNTAG in Namibia. The cooperation of South Africa was the most critical determinant in accomplishing the successful implementation of UNTAG in Namibia. Additionally, obtaining its commitment at the establishment stage necessarily triggered the successful implementation of the peacekeeping operation. In the context of the Cold War, the Western Contact Group (WCG), with strong leadership by the United States, effectively controlled the related parties by conciliating and threatening to bring South Africa to the negotiating table.

**Keywords:** United Nations Peacekeeping Operation, post-conflict peacebuilding, Namibia, South Africa, historical institutionalism

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## **List of Acronyms**

DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
ICJ	International Court of Justice
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
ONUMOZ	United Nations Operation in Mozambique
ONUSAL	United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador
SWAPO	South West Africa People's Organisation
UN	United Nations
UNITA	National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNTAES	United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium
UNTAET	United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor
UNTAG	United Nations Transition Assistance Group
WCG	Western Contact Group

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# **I. Introduction**

## **1. Study Background**

Throughout history, peace has always been considered a desirable and honorable goal. In international conflict areas, a wide range of regional and international actors have engaged in multidimensional peace operations to limit the spread of existing disputes, prevent the return of armed conflict, and conducted various missions to make sustainable peace. Although the operationalization of ‘peace operation’ is contested and is practiced differently depending on actors, the United Nations (UN) has been mainly leading international peace operations within the United Nations Security Council’s repertoire of peace and security activities (Andersen and Engedal 2013, 15).

The first – and still ongoing – UN peacekeeping dates back to 1948 when the UN deployed few military observers to oversee the Armistice Agreement between Israel and its neighboring Arab states under the name of United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (United Nations 2018a). Over the following decades, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) launched a number of similar missions in different regions based on two principles: their missions were focused on inter-state conflicts, and their mandates were limited to monitoring and observing a ceasefire and peace agreement (Dobbins et al. 2005). The only exception to these rules was the United Nations Operation in the Congo (ONUC) from 1960 to 1964. It was the first mission with a significant workforce involved and the largest of all peace operations conducted during the Cold War era, with about 20,000 troops deployed, although it harshly failed (Bellamy, Williams, and

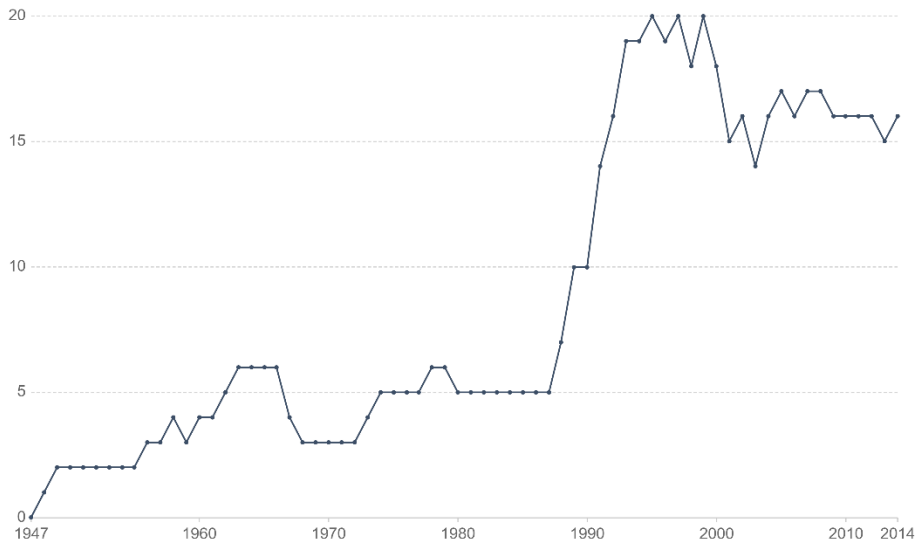
Griffin 2004). The first generation of UN missions focused on bringing warring parties to a negotiation table and contained conflicts escalating into international crises or even nuclear war (Bellamy and Williams 2010, 8). According to a set of principles codified in 1973, UN peacekeepers were allowed to utilize force in self-defense and only be deployed with the consent of warring parties. They also depended on the member states' voluntary contribution for military needs and logistics and tried to stay impartial in their activities. (Annan 2012, 33)

With the end of the Cold War, the second generation of UN peacekeeping began with a new optimism on the UN's role based on *An Agenda for Peace* issued in 1992. The year 1992 was a critical juncture. Reinterpretations of previous peacekeeping principles became essential as the number of intra-state conflicts significantly increased. Now the UN had to gradually extend its involvement in civil wars and humanitarian disasters, which meant its missions did not only aim at peacekeeping but also at building a foundation for sustainable peace in conflict-affected areas (Andersen and Engedal 2013). As former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali defined the concept of post-conflict peacebuilding<sup>1</sup> as "action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace to avoid a relapse into conflict" (par. 22), UN broadened its focus from a traditional neutral interposition between two conflicting states to an active player in intra-state conflicts, particularly in a variety of peacebuilding operations: conducting elections, re-establishing civil administration, and protecting refugees (Bratt 1996). In the same year, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) was formally created within the UN by then-UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. Three years later, the Secretary-General provided more detailed information about the UN's vision of peacebuilding in *Supplement to an*

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<sup>1</sup> In A/47/277 and S/24111 (1992).

*Agenda for Peace*, introducing a progressively expanded peacebuilding concept to intra-state armed conflicts (Boutros-Ghali 1995). As a result, the number of UN peacekeeping operations proliferated throughout this period naturally, as Figure 1 shows.



**Figure 1. Number of UN Peacekeeping Operations around the World, 1948-2014**  
(source: Roser and Nagdy 2013)

From 1988 to 1993 alone, twenty new peacekeeping operations were created, five more than during the preceding four decades (Bellamy and Williams 2010). Moreover, of these twenty operations, at least eight included both peacekeeping and peacebuilding mandates (Paris and Sisk 2009). The UN initiated sixty-three peacekeeping operations between 1948 and 2008, and seventy-five percentages of them had been conducted since 1988 (Greig and Diehl 2005). In addition, UN peacekeeping operations were extended to intra-state conflicts, especially in the political aspect (Bratt 1996). The United Nations Transition

Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia is a typical example of this generation.

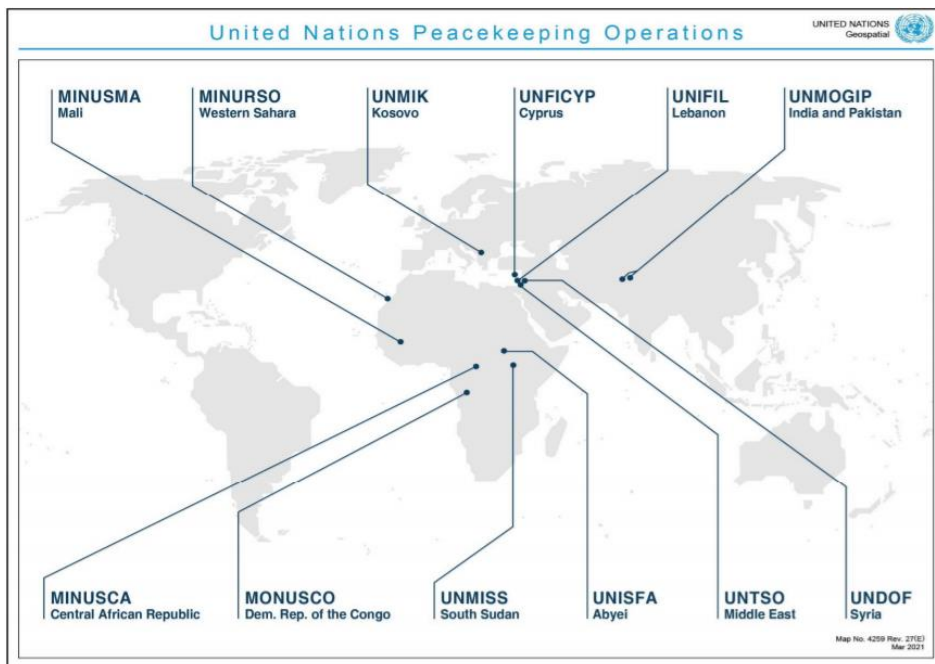
The UN has continuously developed its peacebuilding concept and practice while tackling various conflicts in the world and diligently proposed a peacebuilding architecture. In 2000, a comprehensive review of previous peace operations, the Brahimi Report by then-UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, paved the way for the appearance of the third generation of UN peace operations. It addressed a comprehensive review of peace operations in the 1990s and re-approving the idea in *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations*<sup>2</sup> that the UN should function as the center for international peace operations (par. 44). Based on this, the UN Security Council had a new interest in using UN peacekeeping missions to reconstruct conflict-affected states. The third generation of UN peacekeeping operations included allowing the UN missions to use force beyond self-defense purposes, ensuring consistency between military and civilian involvement, and staying in the conflict areas for more extended periods than during the previous decades (Andersen and Engedal 2013).

The emphasis and features of UN peace operations have been continuously reshaped. In January 2013, the Security Council adopted the very first specific outline, Resolution 2086 (2013), on peacekeeping. It delineated multidimensional peacekeeping and organized a list of elements and issues that can be included in UN peacekeeping mandates, such as “disarmament, demobilization and reintegration,” “security sector reform,” “peace consolidation and inclusive political processes,” “humanitarian assistance,” and “protection of civilians” (par. 8). In addition to the traditional wisdom on the role of UN peacekeeping operations, the Resolution newly emphasized national ownership and specific mission mandates to the needs and situation of the conflict-affected areas (par 7.)

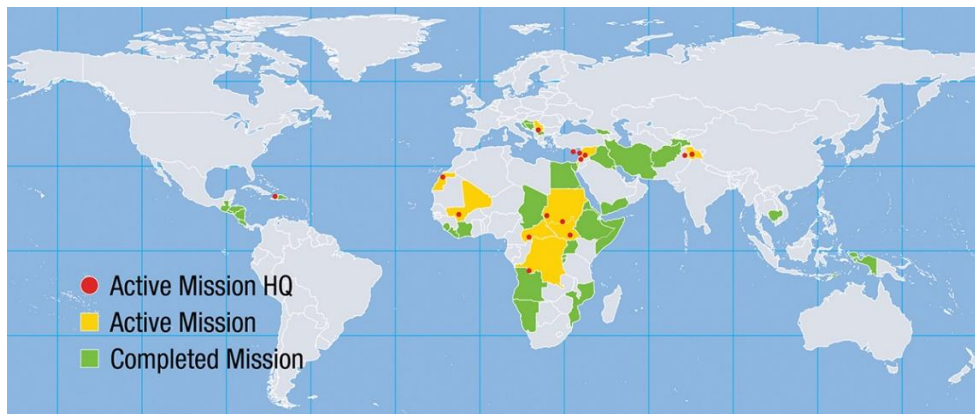
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<sup>2</sup> A/55/305 (2000). It is also known as the Brahimi Report.

Until today the world has witnessed an increased number of international peacekeeping operations, especially in civil wars and humanitarian disasters, mainly led by the UN, although each has unique characteristics in its missions and priorities (Howard 2008, 4). According to the latest peacekeeping fact sheet published by the United Nations (2021), as of January 31, 2021, there have been seventy-one UN peacekeeping operations since 1948, and twelve are currently operating missions in complex environments in post-conflict countries. Over a million men and women from more than hundred-twenty-five countries have served as UN peacekeepers under the blue helmet in more than seventy operations.



**Figure 2. Current UN Peacekeeping Operations (as of January 2021)**  
(source: Peacekeeping Operations Fact Sheet 2021)



**Figure 3. A Map Showing the History of Peacekeeping Operations until January 2021**  
(source: Peacekeeping Operations Fact Sheet 2021)

## 2. Purpose of the Study

Despite this impressive growth and expansion of UN peacekeeping operations, some UN peacekeeping operation, such as the one in Somalia, is evaluated as a severe failure while the one in Namibia is considered a great success (Bratt 1996; UN Peacekeeping Operations website 2008a). Out of ten UN-initiated peacekeeping operations in civil wars completed by 2005, half were evaluated as successful, while four operations failed and one ended with mixed results. Those five successful operations are UNTAG (Namibia), ONUSAL (El Salvador), ONUMOZ (Mozambique), UNTAES (Eastern Slavonia and Croatia), UNTAET (East Timor) (Howard 2008, 4).

The blurred results of UN peacekeeping operations bring out questions of why some succeed and some fail, how success and failure can be determined, and which factors are necessary to accomplish a successful peacekeeping operation. However, previous literature has tended to focus on the failure cases to diagnose the problems rather than find success factors (Howard 2008, 2). In reality, failure is

more likely to happen simply because UN peacekeeping operations are conducted in complex, difficult situations in the first place. Therefore, failure is the status quo when the UN enters a civil war, and it is easier to be continued than broken. On the other hand, the success of peacekeeping operations is unexpected, and it involves a number of factors – both internal and external factors – that alter the actions of peoples and environments in a war.

In this vein, the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia is a prime example of the other UN peacekeeping missions. Notwithstanding its long, complicated situation with South Africa, it is an exemplary case to thoroughly analyze to fulfill the academic need in finding success factors. The UNTAG in Namibia was the most extensive and very first successful multidimensional peacekeeping operation led by the UN after the massive failure in Congo in 1964 (Kanwal 2004). This operation was notable in that its primary goal was largely political, not military, and that it brought the innovative peacekeeping mechanisms that have been in use until today, such as a western “Contact Group” and the UN “civilian policing” (Howard 2008, 52). It was also a catalyst for the UN to extend its missions in intra-conflicts afterward. By shedding light on the sources of success, the case of Namibian independence and UNTAG’s success in carrying out constitutional elections and ensuring a democratic transition from 1989 to 1990 offer valuable insights for analyzing present and future UN peacekeeping missions and the necessary success factors.

### **3. Research Questions**

This research paper has three research objectives. First, it is to identify the major factors that allowed the deployment of UNTAG in Namibia. The second



objective is to examine UNTAG's missions and actual exercises during Namibia's post-conflict peacebuilding from the major engaging parties and see any relations between them regarding UNTAG's success or failure. Lastly, this paper is to withdraw suggestions and recommendations from UNTAG case analysis for future policymaking.

In order to achieve these objectives, three specific research questions are followed: What were the necessary factors for the successful implementation of UN peacekeeping operation in Namibia? What made it possible for UNTAG to be created and deployed and conduct its mandate? What implications does the UNTAG case bring in today's UN peacekeeping operations?

## II. Literature Review

### 1. Post-Conflict Peacebuilding

The concept of *peacebuilding* originated from Johan Galtung's pioneering work where he stated peacebuilding is an 'associative approach' that establishes better infrastructures of peace by addressing the "root causes" of conflict and helping indigenous abilities. Peacebuilding was regarded as one part of a ternary conflict resolution strategy, according to Galtung, that also embraced peacekeeping and peacemaking (Galtung 1976). Peacebuilding, however, was relatively neglected until the start of the 1990s, partially because of its abstract language.

As the Cold War ended, significant attention was given to the concept in circles of international organizations while demand for more international peace operations increased due to: the changing nature of armed conflict, the decline of inter-state wars, and the rise of conflicts within states. By that time, the UN was also ready to take more decisive actions because the termination of the superpower confrontation reduced the possibility that the UN Security Council would be incapacitated by a veto (Stephen Ryan 2013).

Alongside such changes, in 1992, former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali conceptualized *post-conflict peacebuilding* as "action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace to avoid a relapse into conflict (par. 22)" in *An Agenda for Peace*<sup>3</sup>, where he also distinguished 'peacemaking' and 'peacekeeping' from post-conflict peacebuilding. While peacemaking was to bring warring parties to agreement by peaceful means,

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<sup>3</sup> A /47/277 and S/24111 (1992).

peacekeeping was to deploy a United Nations presence – military, police personnel, or civilians – in the field to increase the likelihood for both conflict prevention and peacemaking (par. 20). He responded to a demand from the UN on how to develop peacekeeping operations, addressing peacebuilding as post-conflict social and political reconstruction activities. Even though several criticisms were directed at this approach, this concept of post-conflict peacebuilding indeed acted as a critical cornerstone and catalyst for UN-led multidimensional peacekeeping operations with a sense of the moment. It made a noteworthy contribution to the understanding of peace in the post-Cold War era.

Ever since then, the UN's understanding of post-conflict peacebuilding has been continuously underlined and evolved in various fields, as Table 1 shows. The Brahimi Report in 2000, another crucial report by the UN, again confirmed the definition of peacebuilding by stating that it “involves activities undertaken on the far side of conflict to reassemble the foundations of peace and provide the tools for building on those foundations something more than just the absence of war” (par. 3). This report did not only expand the understanding level of peace activities but also underlined ‘post-conflict’ peacebuilding, seeking to build sustainable peace in the conflict-affected area. In the continuous efforts of promoting the concept and practice of peacebuilding, the UN Peacebuilding Commission<sup>4</sup> was jointly

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<sup>4</sup> According to the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 60/180 of 20 December 2005 and Security Council Resolution 1645 (2005), the Peacebuilding Commission's primary mandates were: (1) *to bring together all relevant actors to marshal resources and to advise on and propose integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery*; (2) *to focus attention on the reconstruction and institution-building efforts necessary for recovery from conflict and to support the development of integrated strategies in order to lay the foundation for sustainable development*; (3) *to provide recommendations and information to improve the coordination of all relevant actors within and outside the United Nations, to develop best practices, to help to ensure predictable financing for early recovery activities and to extend the period of attention given by the international community to post-conflict recovery*.

established in December 2005 by the General Assembly<sup>5</sup> and the Security Council<sup>6</sup>.

KEY UN PEACEBUILDING DEFINITIONS AND RELATED CONCEPTS		
1992	An Agenda for Peace	Introduced "peacebuilding" as a UN tool.
1995	Supplement to An Agenda for Peace	Emphasized the need for the institutionalization of peace
1994	An Agenda for Development	Contributed to linking the security, development, democratization and human rights agendas
1994	UNDP Human Development Report	
1995	An Agenda for Democratization	
1996	Inventory of Peacebuilding Activities	Highlighted the building blocs of post-conflict peacebuilding
2000	Brahimi Report	Defined peacebuilding as "activities undertaken on the far side of conflict to reassemble the foundations of peace and provide the tools for building on those foundations something that is more than just the absence of war."
2001	No Exit without Strategy	Underlined three key peacebuilding objectives.
2003	Review of Technical Cooperation in the United Nations	Sought greater coordination in peacebuilding across the UN system
2004	A More Secure World	Called for creating the Peacebuilding Architecture
2005	In Larger Freedom World Summit Outcome	Elaborated and formalized Peacebuilding Architecture concept consisting of the <b>Peacebuilding Commission</b> , <b>Peacebuilding Fund</b> and <b>Peacebuilding Support Office</b> .
2006	UN Peacebuilding Capacity Inventory	Provided a snapshot of the wide range of peacebuilding activities undertaken by 31 UN agencies
2006	Policy Committee decision, September 2006	In determining strategies and operational plans, peacebuilding entails efforts to support ... country's transition from conflict to sustainable peace, with a stable political order and basic institutions in place, the risk of relapse into conflict substantially reduced, and the country able to move to more normal development processes.
2007	Policy Committee decision, May 2007	Provided a "conceptual basis" for peacebuilding
2008	Capstone Doctrine	Situated peacebuilding within the UN's comprehensive approach to addressing violent conflict
2009	Report of the Secretary-General on Peacebuilding in the Immediate Aftermath of Conflict	Set out basic principles and features which have proven relevant across different contexts. Focussed on peacebuilding in the first 12-24 months after conflict.

**Table 1. Key UN Peacebuilding Definitions and Related Concepts**  
(source: United Nations 2010, 46)

<sup>5</sup> See A/RES/60/180 (2005).

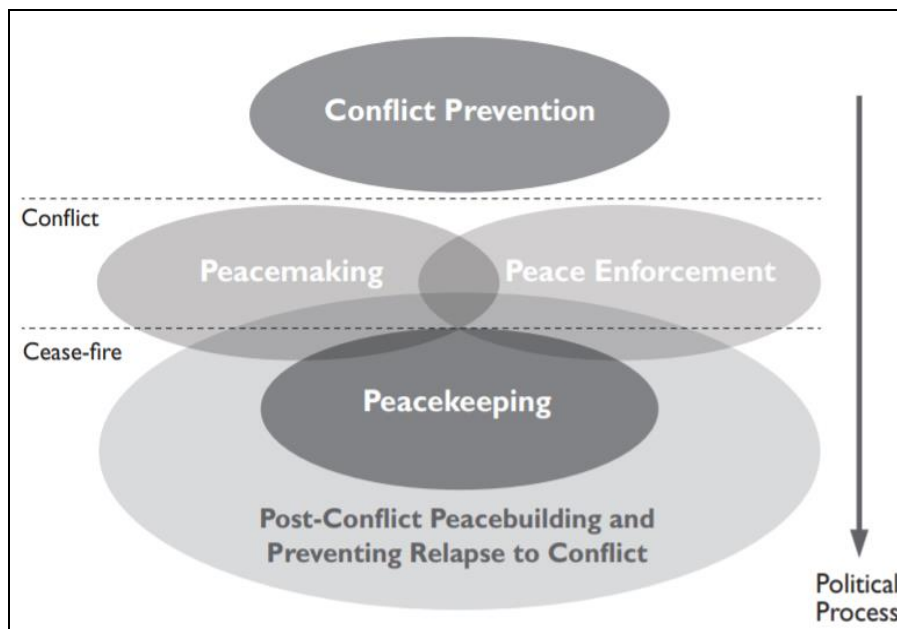
<sup>6</sup> See S/RES/1645 (2005)

Most recently, in Resolution 2282, which was unanimously adopted in 2016, the Security Council specifically mentioned ‘post-conflict peacebuilding’ once again while urging the Peacebuilding Commission to take a more comprehensive approach to consolidate peace in conflict-affected areas. The concept of peacebuilding by the UN has been focused on integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding to build foundations for sustainable peace.

Today, the boundaries between peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding are powerfully transcended in the UN’s peace activities. Ever since the significance of peacebuilding has been highlighted by the UN, its traditional peacekeeping operations have extended their missions to a wide range of peacebuilding activities. As a result, UN peacekeeping operations have been almost always multidimensional and beyond one type of peace activity since the end of the Cold War. In principle, UN peacekeeping operations supposedly only support the achievement of a ceasefire and peace agreement, but they are often asked to intervene in peacemaking activities and be actively involved in early post-conflict peacebuilding steps (UN Peacekeeping Website 2008b). It is clearly manifested in the Security Council’s inclination to demand peacebuilding activities when mandating peacekeeping missions (DPKO 2008, 18).

Figure 4 below shows how the UN views the relationship between the concepts in conflict areas. As it is seen, UN peacekeeping is included as part of post-conflict peacebuilding, and there are also shared areas with peacemaking and peace enforcement with peacekeeping in post-conflict peacebuilding. In the post-Cold War era, UN peacekeeping operations have mainly and clearly focused on peacekeeping in terms of the conflict-affected country’s political process in post-conflict peacebuilding. The first UN-led multidimensional peacekeeping operation that well-represented this mixed attribute was the United Nations Transition

Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia.



**Figure 4. Relationship between the Peace Concepts**  
(source: DPKO 2008, 19)

## 2. Success and Failure of UN Peacekeeping Operation

When the UN peacekeeping operations started to grow in terms of size and number drastically, the UN concluded arguably that the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) was the most successful multidimensional peacekeeping operation that mainly conducted political activities<sup>7</sup>. Given that the UNTAG has been widely viewed as one of the most successful UN peacekeeping operations in the post-Cold War era among scholars, it seems odd that the

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<sup>7</sup> See A/44/940 (1990) and S/21270 (1990).

definition of success has still been vague since its start.

How do we assess UN peacekeeping operations? What is a ‘successful’ peacekeeping operation? Considering the very diverse context of conflicts that UN peacekeeping operations are deployed in, it is impossible to set one answer to these questions because measurements of success and failure in UN peacekeeping operations vary considerably per the changing nature of conflicts. Peacekeeping mandates differ depending on the situation; therefore, they do not have a coincided objective standard for comparison (Downs and Stedman 2002, 45-46). Throughout the history of UN peacekeeping, the complexity of conflicts and tensions between the uncontrollable circumstances and the peacekeeping objectives have even made it more difficult to find a way to assess UN peacekeeping operations. Nevertheless, what we have clearly seen is that while the United Nations Peacekeeping Forces were internationally recognized as overall doing ‘good’ since it was honorably awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1988 “for preventing armed clashes and creating conditions for negotiations” (Nobel Media AB 2021), not all operations have been praised, regrettably. The evident disparity between success and failure has stimulated many scholars to seek a way to assess the peace operation and the factors of success and failure in an effort to improve the chances of peace.

## **2-1. Assessment**

The most frequently cited literature on how to measure success and failure in UN peacekeeping operations is by Paul Diehl (Diehl 1993). In his 1993 work, Diehl identified two criteria for evaluating peacekeeping operations: first, whether they limited armed conflict and whether they promoted conflict resolution. Though

Diehl's argument provided a cornerstone that laid the foundation in other similar research, his argument has also been widely criticized for its over-broadness. According to Charles King, Diehl overlooked an evaluation of the third-party engagement, asserting that "the factors that ignite wars are not the same as the forces that keep them going" (King 2005, 269). In addition, Howard claims that Diehl ignored essential questions of post-conflict state-building and disarmament and only defined his criteria in terms of conventional peacekeeping. Howard continuously insists that a severe problem arises when applying the exact measurement of success in both the inter-state and intra-state operations. In other words, a different measurement for assessment ought to be addressed, especially in civil conflicts. Howard also argues that phenomena outside the influence of the assigned peacekeeping operation should be included in the measurement (Howard 2008).

Bratt (1996) introduces four measurements to assess three scales of success: success, moderate success, and failure. Driven from three indicators developed by Brown and Diehl<sup>8</sup>, Bratt adds one more factor and comprehensively offers four factors that assess the peace operation's validity: mandate performance, facilitation of conflict resolution, conflict containment, and limitation of casualties (Brown 1993; Bratt 1996). Haklin Kim, in his 2004 work, organizes three approaches to evaluating the peace operation: first, standard approaches that measure the degree of how much UN mandates have achieved; second, approaches that take UN activities into consideration; third, approaches that assess the effects

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<sup>8</sup> The three criteria for determining success by Brown have driven from the two factors Diehl developed in advance: 1) whether the mandate fulfilled as specified by the proper Security Council resolution, 2) whether the peacekeeping operation led to a resolution of the underlying conflicts, 3) whether the presence of the peacekeeping operation contributed to maintaining international peace and security while reducing and eradicating conflict in the area.



of UN operation on a conflict. However, he simultaneously points out the limitations of each approach as the mandates are inevitably political and ambiguous due to the influence of UNSC Members and the intricacy of the circumstances in conflict areas. In this regard, the actual operation outcomes and chances created by the intervention may be missed out by such an assessment (Bellamy and Williams 2004).

Many other scholars have also attempted to search and introduce a variety of standards that determine the success and failure of UN peacekeeping operations. When evaluating the outcomes of the peacekeeping operation specifically, their findings incorporate the maximalist measures of institution-building or resolution of the root causes of conflict to more general, minimalist standards, which is the absence of reoccurrence of war (Call and Cousens, 2008).

Fortna determines the success of UN Peacekeeping by looking at whether the presence of UN peacekeeping operations decreased the risk of renewed conflict (Fortna 1995). Stephen Stedman and George Downs also suggest relatively minimalist measures of success, including the following elements: the end of violence and the UN peacekeeping operation's exit in a manner with the self-enforcing ceasefire (Downs and Stedman 2002, 50). On the contrary, Paris advocates liberal peacebuilding with a relatively higher measure of success: stable and lasting peace backed by market democracy (Paris 2004). He believes that setting a solid foundation for political democracy and the market economy would guarantee durable peace, which is the ultimate goal of peacekeeping. John Burton went further and suggested a similar standard for establishing lasting and vigorous conflict resolution institutions (Burton 1987 and 1990). Cousens, Kumar, and Wermester (2000) also set objectives for a self-enforcing ceasefire and peace, democracy, justice, and equity (p. 11).

The discussion on how to assess the success and failure of UN peacekeeping operations continues over various factors such as types of strategies, communication ability, types of interveners, and timing (Martin-Brûlé 2017). As aforementioned, there are several different ways of evaluating the operation depending on the focus of the assessment, and previous literature was divided mainly into two parts: process and outcome. Interestingly, most scholars include the performance of the given mandate as a basis.

## **2-2. Success Factors of UNTAG**

Scholars have expressed different preferences in their priorities, and as mentioned previously, there is no simple, straightforward answer to the correct measurements of success. When it is impossible to define one shared concept of success or one way of assessing the peace operation, it is impossible to find one standard set of success factors. However, as elaborated, the United Nations and many scholars have continuously given their utmost efforts in analyzing and discovering the success factors from the “successful” operations to avoid potential failures and improve future peace operations. There could be hundreds of factors that may simultaneously lead to the success or failure of the peacekeeping operations; therefore, searching essential conditions would be much reasonable and suitable.

In this regard, firstly, the United Nations Peacekeeping official website (United Nations 2018b) identifies three factors that are required for a successful peacekeeping operation:

- whether it was followed by the “principles of consent, impartiality and the

non-use of force except in self-defense and defense of the mandate;”

- whether it was “perceived as legitimate and credible, particularly in the eyes of the local population;”
- whether it “promoted national and local ownership of the peace process in the host country.”

They also list other seven critical factors that would support and lead the mission to success. They include the parties’ true intention in generating peace, clear mandates and matching resources, unified support from the Security Council and the field, the commitment of the host country, neighboring countries’ supportive involvement, effective communication and coordination between actors, and professionalism and good conduct of peacekeepers in the field (UN Peacekeeping Website 2008a). The listed factors are required or recommended for a successful operation, but their abstract concepts are deemed to describe what a successful operation would be. In fact, they seem more equivalent to a definitive guidebook for peacekeepers showing how a peacekeeping operation ought to function. Because these factors touch almost every possible political aspect of post-conflict peacebuilding, an actual operation likely fails to meet those factors in reality. Besides, they open up too many possibilities of subjective interpretations and operationalization of each factor.

Despite the difficulties in a complicated political nature of conflicts, literature on peacekeeping operations has increasingly sought to intensively provide the possible sources of success along with the way to assess it. Scholars rather narrow down to several critical factors that they have found in successful operations.

There are mainly three success factors of operation frequently presented in previous literature. First, many scholars claim that situational factors such as the

will of the conflicting parties are the significant determinant. Second, some assert that success depends on the Security Council's interest and intensity. Third, others assert that peacekeeping operations can succeed when the three peacekeeping rules – consent, impartiality, and limited force – are met (Howard 2008). These three rules are the basic principles provided by the United Nations, and they are supposedly reinforcing interactively in UN peacekeeping conducts. While the ten factors mentioned earlier are the requirements for success, these three principles vitalize the UN peacekeeping operations for the maintenance of international peace and security (United Nations 2018b). Some scholars view the mutual reinforcement of these three principles helps the operation turn out more successful.

Considering the various contexts of the conflicts and peacekeeping operations and different success factors in that nature, scholars have dug into the previous case proven to be “successful” by the UN to find the secret ingredients. Consequently, the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia has been frequently examined and analyzed by several scholars since it represents the most successful peacekeeping operation at the end of the Cold War (United Nations 1992).

For the success factors of UNTAG in Namibia, Kanwal puts emphasis on Namibian local people's self-determination along with simultaneous maintenance of a large peacekeeping force that monitored the ceasefire and fulfilled other duties based on dedication, sincerity, and impartiality (Kanwal 2004). Furthermore, because it took more than a decade for Resolution 435 to be implemented in Namibia, it created a rapport between the warring parties and various UN actors intervening in this conflict, which eventually allowed the operation to succeed. Panizza emphasized wise timing during the preparation and implementation periods as well as domestic political support from international key stakeholders

and the structural design of the UNTAG mission. He believed that all these are critical prerequisites for any political effort for peace (Panizza 2011).

Taking internal and external factors into account, Howard finds three necessary – and jointly sufficient – conditions to explain the success of UNTAG. These three elements include (1) certain favorable “situational factors” of Namibia; (2) consensual but rather intense interests of the strong member states of the Security Council; and (3) field-level learning on the part of the UN peacekeeping mission (Howard 2008). Based on Howard’s claim, the UNTAG in Namibia was primarily evaluated as successful in implementing its mandate as declared in UNSC Resolution 435 (UN Peacekeeping Operation website 2008a) and constructing the institutional and political foundations for political stability in Namibia. It is also argued that successful peace implementation was only possible with the warring parties’ consent and vital UNSC interests. While these elements were still essential, UNTAG’s ability to adapt to the needs of the post-war environment in Namibia was the critical factor in sealing the stable Namibian peace (Howard 2002).

Unfortunately, previous literature on the assessment of UN peacekeeping operations has tended to pay less attention to the outside influence that might lie beyond the UN’s control in terms of its evaluation (Howard 2008). Many have been eager to find intrinsic elements from the conflict-affected area, often ignoring extrinsic factors that create the success or failure conditions for UN peacekeeping operations. Evaluating the result of peacekeeping operations should entail a number of internal and external factors that must be taken into account. The external environment surrounding the conflict-affected country, besides the UN-related activities, may have a considerably tremendous impact on the success. For example, Stedman (1997) emphasizes spoiler problems in peace processes. Spoilers

– the leaders or parties who consider the emerging peace as a threat to their current power and interests and decide to use violence to paralyze those endeavors – could be the biggest obstacle in peacemaking in the first place, as happened in Angola in 1992 and Rwanda in 1994. When spoilers refuse to accept the UN peace initiatives, the results are infinite casualties that could be even higher than war, and the peace processes were unlikely to proceed. Stedman underlines that the most significant determinant of success and failure of peace processes is how international actors act as custodians of peace (Stedman 1997). In addition, Taekyoon Kim (2020) addresses that the success of UNTAG is more closely related to the degree of major bilateral donors’ supports than UN-initiated peacebuilding activities. Obtaining and ensuring important bilateral donors’ supports – mainly South Africa in the Namibian case – for UN’s peacekeeping operations in post-conflict peacebuilding are the necessary success factors for peace (Kim 2020). The consent and cooperation of external state actors that have significant influence over Namibia are the success factors in the UNTAG peacemaking process in Namibia.

Prior studies have left room for further research from a slightly different perspective on reassessing the UN peacekeeping operation to discover factors that led the operation to succeed. They have often tended to focus only on the UN missions and their accomplishments during and after UNTAG implementation. However, by grasping the whole process, including the establishment of UNTAG, this paper will explore both the impact of internal and external factors on assessing the peacekeeping operation. Therefore, this review of a previously-evaluated-successful peacekeeping operation in Namibia is expected to open up more possibilities for uncovering relatively new critical success factors.

### **III. Research Design**

#### **1. Analytical Framework**

This research paper tries to find answers to two big questions: whether the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia was successful and what factors mainly led the UNTAG to end up with such a result. As many scholars and the UN have claimed, UNTAG has been evaluated as the most successful UN peacekeeping operation in post-Cold War given that it fulfilled its initial mandate successfully (United Nations 1992). Mandate implementation is indeed a critical touchstone that determines if the peacekeeping operation was successful.

However, little literature has scrutinized the very beginning stage of UNTAG's establishment when evaluating the operation. As the previous chapter shows, the peacekeeping operation literature mostly focuses on the mandate implementation stage, and only some include the study of Namibia's state after completion of UNTAG. Thus, on the one hand, the UNTAG establishment phase has been mostly overlooked or only partially studied in assessing UN peacekeeping operations. Yet, it is critical to include the whole process of UNTAG when evaluating the operation because the actual successful implementation of the UN peacekeeping operation missions might be expected to be triggered by the cooperation of various factors from the beginning of its formation. Therefore, it is crucial to see whether UNTAG was established based on the consensual interests of significant internal and external parties and whether it was affirmed in an amicable situation from its introduction.

This paper is a meta-evaluation<sup>9</sup> of UNTAG and searching the significant causal factors in two-time spans – before and during UNTAG’s implementation – based on historical institutionalism. Historical institutionalists believe that political events occur within a historical context and that institutions – which widely referred to “the formal rules, compliance procedures, and standard operating practices that structure the relationship between various units of the polity and economy” (Hall 1986, 19) and “the product of concrete temporal processes” (Thelen 1999, 384) – come from and are sustained in the broader political and social context (Steinmo 2008). Likewise, institutions can confine and distort politics as one of the causes of outcomes (Thelen and Steinmo 1992, 3). Based on this theory, political and social alignments often change within institutions, whereas institutions, at times, change as the object (*ibid*). Immergut (1992) even argued that institutions are, for sure, formed and changed in political power struggles. Considering historical institutionalism, particularly from a political context, Rothstein (1992) argues that institutions are often formed to give the agent an advantage in the “future game of power” (p. 35). In other words, the institution arrangement, maintenance, and change by the agents should be considered in the relevant political and historical context and vice versa.

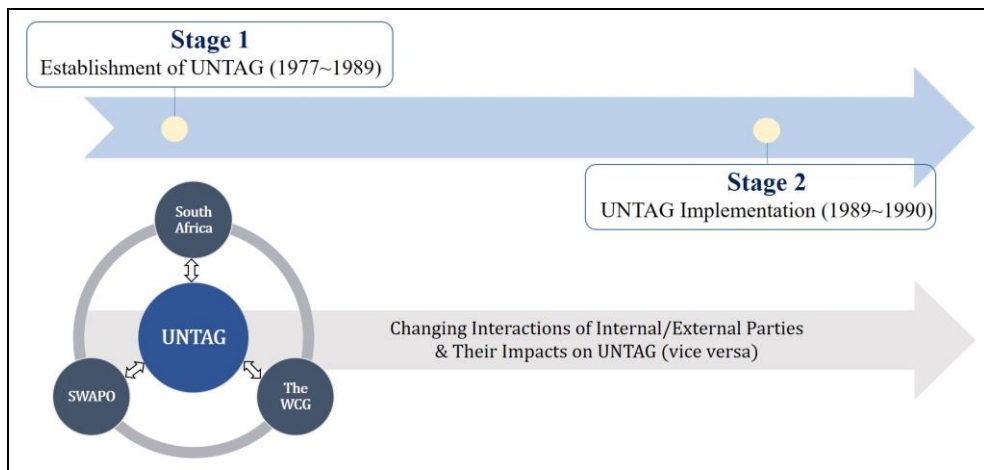
Through this theoretical framework, this paper will review the surrounding historical and political environment and major actors’ interactions that powered and abled the institution, UNTAG, to maintain its initiative until its deployment and the factors that sustained the institution as originally planned in the implementation process. In addition, I will also seek whether UNTAG, the

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<sup>9</sup> According to Cooksy and Caracelli (2009), meta-evaluation is a methodical review of evaluations to discover the quality of their findings. Meta-evaluation of a single study serves to improve the evaluation or addresses the strengths and weaknesses of the evaluation.



institution in this paper, shaped and affected the various internal and external actors and international politics in the process. The state of Namibia after completion, though it is, of course, significant in evaluating the success of UNTAG as well, will be only briefly touched in the conclusion part since this paper rather intends to focus more on the UNTAG's missions and how they were able to be exercised during post-conflict peacebuilding phase from its creation.



**Figure 5. Analytical Structure**  
(source: created by author)

Each time criterion will be further studied down to major parties related to UNTAG, such as the Contact Group, South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO), and South Africa as Figure 5 shows. To understand the change and maintenance of the institution at the macro-level, observing the agents at the micro-level is necessary. I will dig down to each major actor's decisions and behaviors on significant events and their impacts on UNTAG's formation, maintenance, and implementation in a historical and political context. This paper will mainly seek which factors guaranteed the appearance and stability of the institution, UNTAG, and its mandate implementation. By thoroughly analyzing the process of UNTAG,

it will also search for factors in successfully implementing the mission.

This paper is organized into five parts. Chapter II, the previous chapter, presents the evolution of the concept of peacebuilding and further reviews previous literature that introduced various measurements and definitions on the success and failure of UN peacekeeping operations. In particular, the chapter discovers how other scholars have unfolded the Namibian operation in regards to the previous discussions. Chapter III describes the methodological and analytical framework utilized in this paper. Then, the UNTAG is thoroughly analyzed in the following three chapters. After providing the historical background of the country and the peacekeeping operation in-depth, I examine the three engaging parties in two different stages. Chapter VII analyzes and explores the findings of the parties' relations and behaviors related to UNTAG and the most critical factors that allowed the UNTAG mission to succeed. Lastly, Chapter VIII concludes with limitations present in this research and implications for future peacekeeping operations.

## **2. Methodology**

This research paper will specifically take a look into the case of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia, re-assess the operation as a meta-evaluation taken from a different perspective, and find “success” factors through the lens of historical institutionalism. It is a single case study on UNTAG in Namibia based on a qualitative research method. Though a single case study may have difficulty applying the implications to other cases or making a generalization due to the intricacy of each conflict, it is the most suitable research method to approach the research case and offers many valuable findings holistically. Anchored in a complicated real-life situation, it will result in a much

richer account of a problem.

Besides, UNTAG was the UN's first attempt at engaging in multidimensional peacekeeping since the significant failure of the Congo peacekeeping operation in 1964 (Howard 2008). The UNTAG has substantial meanings in that its primary missions were political and became a cornerstone for the development of the concept of post-conflict peacebuilding afterward and several peacekeeping mechanisms that have been in use until today. This case is also historically unique in that it had experienced the most horrific political ills of the twentieth century – genocide, colonialism, and apartheid – along with the strong influence of neighboring countries such as South Africa in the process of peacebuilding. In this complicated internal and external context, this case is a representative sample to explore which factors were the crucial determinants and obstacles to peacebuilding and how these factors could be translated into today's context of UN peacekeeping missions.

Regrettably, there are several constraints in terms of collecting data. As of April 2021, the global pandemic situation restrains traveling abroad freely to conduct a field study. Even if it were possible to fly to Namibia, any random personal contacts – interviews or field research – would be undesirable due to the spread of the coronavirus. The UNTAG was also finished and disbanded more than two decades ago, that it is also challenging to find and contact witnesses or interviewees virtually.

Due to these unfortunate reasons, I will intensively and proactively utilize online and printed data sources to scrutinize the case instead. For the primary sources, this paper will mainly use official documents from the United Nations, official press releases from each actor, and various newspapers, including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Namibian* – a major independent print

newspaper in Namibia. By comparing these primary sources, I expect to obtain a great quantity and quality of accurate data before and during the activities of UNTAG. For the secondary data, I will thoroughly explore scholarly literature – books and journals – on post-conflict peacebuilding, the assessment of peacekeeping operations, and the evaluation of UNTAG. Furthermore, reports from credible think tanks and research institutions and interdisciplinary historical records organized by scholars will also be utilized.

Lastly, the terms peacebuilding and post-conflict peacebuilding may be used interchangeably in this paper. Indeed, the theoretical definition of peacebuilding is distinguished from the definition of post-conflict peacebuilding in terms of its coverage. However, these terms would be used interchangeably in this paper since the UN peacekeeping operation missions have been largely focused on post-conflict peacebuilding from the end of the Cold War, as the previous chapter described. Thus, in the UN peacekeeping operation mission, I consider post-conflict peacebuilding and peacebuilding to share the common characteristics in the UN's missions. The reason I choose to use 'post-conflict' peacebuilding over peacebuilding is to emphasize that my research rather concentrates on a UN peacekeeping operation in the post-Cold War era. Additionally, the term peacekeeping exclusively refers to an UN-initiated peacekeeping operation in this paper, which means it does not analyze any other organizational peace operations conducted in Namibia internationally or regionally besides the UN-led peacekeeping operations.

## IV. UNTAG in Namibia

### 1. Historical Background of Namibia until 1987



**Figure 6. Map of Namibia**  
(source: Maps of World 2020)

Namibia, formerly known as South West Africa, is in the southern part of Africa covered with the desert, as shown in Figure 6.

Germany colonized it in the late 1800s; South Africa occupied the Territory after World War I and then re-occupied it in 1920 under a League of Nations mandate after a short control of

Great Britain. However, when South West Africa was decided to fall under UN Trusteeship in 1946, South Africa still refused to renounce its power over the Territory. Instead, South Africa claimed that the mandate had perished with the League of Nations' demise and informed the United Nations in 1949 that it would no longer deliver information on the Territory (Fortna 1995; ICJ 1950). In 1950, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) held that South Africa continued to have international obligations towards the Territory and that the United Nations should exercise the supervisory functions of the League of Nations in the administration of the Territory. South Africa refused to accept the Court's decision and continued to oppose any form of United Nations supervision over the Territory (UN Peacekeeping Operations 2001). By the late 1950s, South Africa had already

considered South West Africa their fifth province by its administration for Namibia's abundant diamonds and mineral mines and their desire to protect the minority white. In 1966 and 1967, by its Resolution 2145 (XXI) and 2248 (S-V), the UN General Assembly declared that South Africa's mandate over the Territory was terminated and that the United Nations would take direct responsibility in the exercise of its administrative functions. Consequently, the United Nations Council for South West Africa was formed to administer the Territory until independence, and in 1968, the Territory was renamed the United Nations Council for Namibia. The Assembly also recognized the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) as the sole and authentic representative of Namibia's people on 4 May 1968<sup>10</sup> (UN Peacekeeping Operations 2001).

The rising tensions in the Territory became the first armed battle in 1966 – the same year when the UN declared South Africa's withdrawal – between SWAPO and South African forces in Omgulumbashe, Namibia. South Africa used ethnic divisions to maintain its authority in Namibia and built up indigenous military groups to fight against SWAPO and SWAPO's military wing, the People's Liberation Army (PLAN). The build-up of several forces – the South West African Territorial Force (SWATF) and the South African Defence Forces (SADF) – against SWAPO meant that about half of those members were indigenous Namibians from a variety of groups and regions (Howard 2002).

In the meantime, the UN Security Council continuously addressed that South Africa's actions concerning Namibia were “illegal and invalid” after the termination of the mandate. In 1971, the ICJ re-affirmed that South Africa's presence in Namibia was illegal and obliged to withdraw its government (ICJ 1971). However, South Africa maintained its presence in Namibia in opposition to

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<sup>10</sup> See A/7088 (1968).

the Court's opinion. It continued its illegal administration, such as the imposition of apartheid laws and the exploitation of various Namibia resources. It led the Council for Namibia to enact Decree No. 1 for the Protection of the Natural Resources of Namibia in 1974, prohibiting the exploitation or distribution of natural resources in Namibia without the Council's approval (McDougall 1983). In the same year, the Council also found the Institute for Namibia, in Lusaka located in Zambia, which offered Namibians education and training programs to administer their country after independence<sup>11</sup>. In 1976, the Security Council demanded South Africa to accept elections in Namibia under UN supervision. It also officially claimed that any independence talks should be held between South Africa and the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO), the sole and authentic representative of the Namibia people<sup>12</sup>.

Until the 1970s, South Africa continuously ignored the UN Security Council's decisions and warnings. They even tried to annex Walvis Bay, Namibia's vital port, and the Assembly again openly criticize that it was null and void action, perhaps an act of colonial expansion. In 1978, the Assembly even called for support of the armed liberation struggle of Namibia people as long as the settlement fits in the agreement of SWAPO and UN resolutions<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Refer to A/36/24 (1981), par. 4.

<sup>12</sup> Refer to A/RES/31/146 (1976).

<sup>13</sup> Refer to A/40/24 (1986).

## **2. Development of UNTAG**

In 1978, a group of five UN Member States – Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, the United Kingdom, and the United States – drafted a proposal and submitted it to the Security Council concerning the question of Namibia. These five states were the so-called Contact Group who eventually created the basic framework for UNTAG's peace implementation mandate<sup>14</sup>. The proposal was about holding elections for a Constituent Assembly under the United Nations aegis. Along with a Special Representative for Namibia, whom the UN Secretary-General would appoint, the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) would be in every state of the electoral process to help the representative ensure that all parties are monitored. The UN Security Council endorsed this plan for Namibia and decided to set up UNTAG for up to 12 months to ensure the independence of Namibia. This document was UN Security Council Resolution 435 (UN Peacekeeping Operation 2001).

Nevertheless, the deployment of UNTAG could not proceed right after. The violation and conflicts continued to prevail in the Territory, South West Africa. Suddenly in 1980, South Africa decided to accept the Contact Group's proposal, and in the next year, they even participated in a pre-implementation meeting at Geneva. However, the negotiations were stalled as South Africa did not agree to make progress towards a ceasefire, which was a part of Resolution 435 (1978) but demanded other conditions, such as the Cuban withdrawal from Angola<sup>15</sup>. During the 1980s, South Africa increased its interests and expanded its influence over Angola, escalating the Angola civil conflict. It was ostensibly because of SWAPO

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<sup>14</sup> See the Settlement Proposal S/12636, the report of the Secretary-General S/12827, and the Security Council Resolution 435

<sup>15</sup> Refer to A/55/305 (2000).



rebels in Angola and an attempt to destabilize the Angolan government. In the meantime, the Namibian liberation movements occurred on an even more severe scale than a civil war, with Namibian political and military groups fighting for state control (Howard 2002).

After the then-UN Secretary-General and his Special Representative traveled multiple times to discuss issues and exchange views with all related parties, the Secretary-General finally reported that all relevant issues to Resolution 435 had been resolved in 1987. Under the United States' mediation and the Soviet Union's participation, a series of meetings had been held in London, Cairo, New York, and Geneva between Angola, Cuba, and South Africa until August 1988. Consequently, they had agreed to prepare the way for Namibia's independence and peace in the region based on Resolution 435. The Geneva Protocol in August 1988 also embodied a cessation of hostilities with effect from August 10. SWAPO soon informed that they agreed to comply with the act to the UN Secretary-General (UN Peacekeeping Operation 2001). In December 1988, the three countries met again at UN Headquarters in New York to sign the Brazzaville Protocol, in which they once again agreed to the beginning of Resolution 435. Cuba also promised the withdrawal of its troops from Angola. It was another critical event that prepared necessary measures to accomplish peace and independence in Namibia (Kanwal 2004).

In January 1989, the D-day on which UNTAG implementation would start was affirmed and set by UN Security Council Resolution 629 (1989). It was 1 April 1989. The Resolution was also concerned with re-evaluating necessary conditions for the early independence of Namibia and discussed the set date for UNTAG implementation. Resolution 632 was adopted in the following month, and a decision was affirmed to implement Resolution 435 for Namibia "in its original

and definitive form.” The Administrator-General appointed by South Africa took over all governmental functions. In the first week of March 1989, advanced elements of the military component of UNTAG began arriving in Namibia. They were progressively followed by army units and military observers from various countries and UNTAG’s civilian staff. On April 1, 1989, Martti Ahtisaari, the Secretary-General’s Special Representative, arrived to take office in Namibia. The time difference between adopting the UNTAG mandate by the UN and its actual deployment was due to complex geopolitical bargaining in the region and a Cold War framework (Panizza 2011).

### **3. Functions of UNTAG**

The UN Security Council (UNSC) in Resolution 431 on 27 July 1978 stated that the UN Secretary-General would select a Special Representative for Namibia who would “ensure the early independence of Namibia through free elections” under UN auspices (par. 1). UNSC Resolution 435 (1978) of 29 September reiterated that UNTAG, for a period of up to 12 months, would “assist his Special Representative to carry out the mandate conferred upon him by the Security Council...to ensure the early independence of Namibia through free elections” (par. 3).

The initially described functions by the UN did not enclose specific measures of fulfilling its broad mandate. Its primary purpose laid in a democratic transition of Namibia to independence by creating and managing political conditions. It was broad enough to leave some room for interpretation when conducting the mandate in practice within UN framework. Ensuring the

independence in Namibia did not only mean preparation and conduct of elections, but it also included managing a multitude of military issues, such as monitoring the ceasefire; controlling the size of the South African Defense Forces (SADF) in Namibia; observing the disarmament and disbandment of local forces; and restraining infiltration of borders (Fortna 1995).

The establishment of UNTAG offices, military disarmament and civilian policing, and preparations for and conducting actual elections were three central objectives of the mission. Since its implementation, over two hundred regional UNTAG offices were established; police-monitoring mechanisms were settled; tens of refugees resettled; and military demobilization and disarmament were undergone. In particular, the transparent procedures for the elections unfolded based on a particular timeline. The UN stepped in every step with international elections experts whose advices were transmitted to the then-authority holders' offices – the Special Representative and Administrator-General – to prevent any possibilities for corruption (United Nations Peacekeeping 2001).

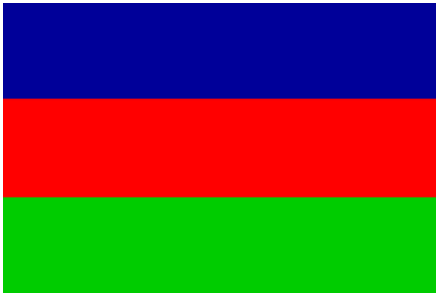
During the election campaign period, UNTAG set up regular meetings between the competing parties to loosen tensions. Even a 'Code of Conduct' was signed between nine of the ten parties after UN Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar visited the country. South Africa once falsely announced that SWAPO forces had gathered on the Angolan side of the border to invade Namibia. It was only several days before the elections, and the UN Security Council called on South Africa to hold back from any advanced actions and pre-empt a possible armed conflict. As a result, the election was successfully held from 7 to 11 November 1989. UNTAG staff were stationed with Administrator-General counterparts along with UN-employed 1,758 electoral supervisors. In addition to this, 1,038 police monitors participated with at least two UNTAG police in each voting station. The election

had a ninety-seven percent of voter turnout rate, the Constituent Assembly was convened soon after, and they adopted the Constitution on 9 February 1990 based on the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Howard 2002).

## **V. Stage 1: Establishment of UNTAG (1977-1989)**

### **1. Internal Actors: The Major Warring Parties**

#### **1-1. The South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO)**



**Figure 7. SWAPO Flag**

(source: South African History Online 2019)

Emerging in 1960 with the support of the Ovambo, the largest ethnic group in Namibia, the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) was the sole political and military liberation organization against South Africa (South African History Online 2019). Its military wing, the People's

Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), actively led the military role since 1966. SWAPO not only established the military bases to undertake attacks on South African forces, but they also ran international campaigns to obtain support for its independence (Iji 2011). By 1976, the UN officially acknowledged the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) as "the sole and authentic representative of the Namibia people<sup>16</sup>."

##### **1-1.1. The Turnhalle Conference**

When the Western Contact Group started bargaining with South Africa on 27 April 1977 ("World News Briefs" 1977) in order to constitute elections for the

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<sup>16</sup> Refer to A/RES/31/146 (1976).

transition process in Namibia, SWAPO clearly stated that they would only join in the constitutional process if the Turnhalle principles<sup>17</sup> are invalidated, if non-ethnic-based elections are held under UN supervision and if the South African Defence Force (SADF) leaves the Territory of Namibia before the elections. Their consistent contention over the issue was the prior withdrawal of South African troops before any progress was made to elections (Dierks 1999). As much as SWAPO wished to garner Namibia's independence from South Africa, they dreamed of having elections free from the apartheid and ethnic-based discriminatory laws by South Africa. Their goal was to be completely free from any influence of South Africa. In such efforts, on 18 June, SWAPO rejected the idea that South Africa would appoint Administrator-General to govern the Territory asserting the direct control of the UN during the interim process ("SWAPO Press Statement" 1977). In that press statement, SWAPO accused the Contact Group of cooperating with South Africa to incapacitate the UN Resolution for the Territory's independence. SWAPO had a general distrust of the Contact Group member states due to the Western states' close economic ties with South Africa, so it preferred a direct intervention of the UN.

### **1-1.2. Walvis Bay**

Another big stumbling block to a peaceful settlement between SWAPO and South Africa was the Walvis Bay issue. Both conflicting parties kept asserting their claim to sovereignty over Namibia's most prominent and the only deep-water

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<sup>17</sup> The Turnhalle principles were set through the Turnhalle Constitutional Conference. The conference was held in 1975 by South African and Namibian whites in order to create an internal settlement for elections in Namibia. Representatives to the conference were chosen on a racial and ethnic basis. (Hough 1980)

port, which had significant benefits for both. In this regard, SWAPO rejected the proposal – made by the Contact Group and agreed by South Africa – that the issue may be re-examined after the independence of Namibia at the UN General Assembly special session on Namibia in April 1978 (Iji 2011; “South-West Criticizes Western Plan” 1978).

In the same month, negotiations began between SWAPO and South Africa; however, in the following month, SWAPO stepped away from the negotiating table after the South African raids on Cassinga in the southern part of Angola (ibid; Burns 1978). The attacks of South Africa left between 600 and 1,200 casualties on the SWAPO side (Dierks 1999). Julius Nyerere, the chairman of the Front Line states<sup>18</sup> and also the president of Tanzania, played a critical role in pushing the SWAPO to consider the Contact Group’s proposal (Ottaway 1978). From then, SWAPO accepted the Contact Group’s suggestions with minor adjustments, which eventually led the UN to ratify Resolution 431<sup>19</sup>. In UN Security Council Resolution 432 in July of 1978, it was officially declared that Walvis Bay must be reintegrated with Namibia. South Africa was obviously dissatisfied with the decision and stated that Resolution 431 for Namibian independence would be in jeopardy accordingly (ibid). They raised dubiety of working within the UN scheme for a peaceful settlement. As South Africa was reluctant to support the implementation of the UN’s plan on Namibia’s independence, SWAPO had received distinct support from the UN from 1979 as multiple negotiation meetings and visits had been conducted by the UN and the Contact Group Members, mainly

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<sup>18</sup> The Frontline States were a group of southern African states bordering on or near South Africa. It consisted of Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe (O’Malley n.d.).

<sup>19</sup> Resolution 431 (1978) of 27 July contains requests like the UN Secretary-General would appoint a Special Representative for Namibia to make sure Namibian independence through elections under UN supervision.

by the United States (Dierks 1999).

### **1-1.3. Linkage**

In June of 1981, the United States, with new leadership by President Ronald Reagan, introduced the idea of linking the Cuban withdrawal from Angola to the implementation of Resolution 435 (ibid). In the same month, because of this “linkage” problem, SWAPO denounced the Reagan administration of undermining the UN’s efforts to the Territory’s independence and rebuffed it outright. It stated that the American diplomatic actions to Namibia were “tantamount to recognizing the puppet regime created by South Africa” and claimed that the West should impose new sanctions over “the racist regime of South Africa” (Gupte 1981, 3). South Africa had already encountered international economic sanctions once in 1963 (Manby 1992). Furthermore, SWAPO also signaled that it would seek support from the Organisation of African Unity (OAU)<sup>20</sup> to set economic sanctions against the Western countries, including the United States, if its demand would not meet (ibid). In spite of SWAPO’s outright rejection, in May and August of 1983, the UN publicly indicated that the implementation of Resolution 435 (1978) is dependent upon the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola<sup>21</sup>.

The discussion diligently continued until early 1984. At the end of 1983, South Africa offered to leave southern Angola should Angola hold back its support to SWAPO. As Angola partially agreed to South Africa’s proposal, in February of 1984, South Africa started to actually withdraw its military forces from Angola

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<sup>20</sup> The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was emerged in 1963 as a gathering of a number of African countries. Nigeria, the second-largest crude oil supplier to the United States, was a member state of the OAU.

<sup>21</sup> Refer to S/15776 and S/15943 (1983).



(Dierks 1999). In early 1984, Sam Nujoma, the president of SWAPO, wrote a letter to then-UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar urging the ceasefire negotiations between SWAPO and South Africa (ibid; "Letter to the UN Secretary-General" 1984). However, from early 1985, another battle in southern Angola escalated between Cuba, South Africa, and SWAPO forces. South Africa, SWAPO, and Angola provisionally came to a ceasefire agreement in June, where the president of SWAPO, Sam Nujoma, clearly stated in UNSC Resolution 569 (1985) that "SWAPO had always been agreeable to the immediate signing of a ceasefire" according to the "provisions of the United Nations plan for Namibia (p. 2)." The Secretary-General was to prepare arrangements between South Africa and SWAPO for a ceasefire. Nevertheless, the fighting resumed as South African troops re-entered Angola in September 1985, asserting to pursue SWAPO guerrilla attacks (Dierks 1999).

The Cuban troops' withdrawal had remained unresolved until March 1987. Even after the UNSC finally affirmed that all remaining issues to the implementation of UNSC Resolution 435 (1978) had been cleared up in Resolution 601, several attacks and bombings continued. On 4 May 1988, approximately 50,000 Cuban, Angolan, and SWAPO military forces successfully pushed the South African troops back at Cuito Cuanavale, Angola. This marked the beginning of serious negotiations between South Africa and SWAPO as South Africa began to consider the implementation of UNSC Resolution 435 (Dierks 1999). On the same day, Sam Nujoma introduced a policy of a future SWAPO government in Washington D.C., which would strive to achieve national reconciliation, neutrality, and non-alignment (Geingob 2004).

For three months starting in May, under the United States mediation, South Africa, Cuba, and Angola met in London, Cairo, New York, and finally in

Geneva to discuss the implementation of the settlement (Saunders 2001). The SWAPO was excluded in each negotiation as it was seen as a non-state actor (Dierks 1999). As a consequence, it agreed to the decisions once South Africa first affirmed it. The SWAPO had only reluctantly supported the Contact Group's settlement plan in 1978 and was then left out from the final negotiations on implementing the plan in 1988 (Saunders 2001). However, SWAPO, in August, sent a letter to the UNSC on 17 August 1988<sup>22</sup> confirming that it all agreed to comply with the cessation of hostilities in Angola until the formal ceasefire under Resolution 435. It also re-addressed this would only be held provided that South Africa also shows the necessary will in the same manner. Along with cordial cooperation of South Africa, the United States President Reagan and then General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Gorbachev had the summit meeting in September of 1988 to pave the way for the final resolution in Namibia and Angola (Dierks 1999). UNSC Resolution 632 was adopted, setting the UNTAG's deployment date as on 1 April 1989.

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<sup>22</sup> See S/20129. Letter dated 88/08/17 from the representatives of Tunisia and Zambia addressed to Secretary-General. 17 Aug 1988.

## **1-2. South Africa**

### **1-2.1. The Turnhalle Conference**

South Africa had long been in dispute with the UN on the issue of the independence of Namibia. In March 1977, the outline of an interim Constitution for Namibia was eventually ratified by the Turnhalle Conference. South Africa even organized the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) to proceed with the Turnhalle plan and stipulate a system of the ethnic-based state. At the same time, it increased South African troops in Namibia (Iji 2011).

From April, the Contact Group began bargaining with the South African government to halt the further process and delivered a diplomatic note that South Africa must continue to support the Namibian independence based on UNSC Resolution 385 (1976)<sup>23</sup>. In the meantime, South Africa continued to pursue its apartheid policy; for instance, it refused to issue passports to two black scholars who were planning to attend a conference in West Germany in June (Dierks 1999).

The international community, including the Contact Group Members, substantially criticized this unilateral procedure and continued apartheid policy that they instantly warned South Africa that they would deliberately impose sanctions. Thus, South Africa had no other option than halt the steps to further the process under intense pressure from the Contact Group and the UN. Instead, it suggested appointing an Administrator-General who would administer Namibia and work closely with a UN Special Representative for Namibia's elections ("South Africa Suspends South-West Africa Plan" 1977).

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<sup>23</sup> UNSC Resolution 385 of January 1976 urges holding UN-led free elections and withdrawal of South African troops in Namibia. It also underlines that South Africa should return exiles, free all political prisoners, and halt its apartheid policy.

Despite the strong objection of SWAPO, the UN accepted its suggestion. Due to the continued presence of South African troops in Namibia, several visits by the Contact Group had been made. While SWAPO stated that all South African troops must withdraw completely before the elections, the UN compromised it by reducing between 5,000 and 7,000. However, the South African government rejected this UN's proposal, whereas it accepted Martti Ahtisaari as the UN's Special Representative to Namibian Constituent Assembly (Dierks 1999).

### 1-2.2. Walvis Bay



**Figure 8. Map of Namibia with Walvis Bay**  
(source: World Port Source 2021)

The port of Walvis Bay has been the most controversial and pivotal harbor to both South Africa and Namibia. About 85 percent of Namibia's exports passed through this port during the 1990s. It also has a geographically strategic advantage as the only modern port on the coast of the Namib desert between Angola and South Africa. In other words, the ultimate control over Walvis Bay would allow a country to exercise decisive influence on the Namibian economy and, as a result, on its political system (Evans 1990). In this regard, South Africa annexed Walvis Bay into its electoral division in November 1977. A few days later, the UNSC passed Resolution 418 (1977) with unanimous consent (Dierks 1999). Resolution 418 strengthened an existing arms embargo. It also established a universally applied

mandatory arms embargo against South Africa due to continued racial discrimination and military build-up with aggressive acts against the neighboring countries. Although its unilateral annexation of Walvis Bay was not the direct reason, South Africa's reckless action impeded a settlement with SWAPO.

The Contact Group suggested the issue of Walvis Bay may be re-examined after the independence of Namibia at the UN General Assembly special session on Namibia in April 1978, to which South Africa also agreed; however, it was incapacitated by the rejection of SWAPO (Iji 2011). Accordingly, the Contact Group abruptly changed its stance to attract SWAPO to the negotiating table (Gayner 1978). While South Africa began to invade Angola in May 1978, the UNSC declared Resolution 432 in July, stating that Walvis Bay should be reintegrated into Namibia. Therefore, South Africa would no longer be allowed to use the port until Namibia's independence (Dierks 1999).

As a consequence, South Africa expressed its dissatisfaction over the decision by threatening that Resolution 431 for Namibian independence would be in danger. In UN Resolution 432 (1978), the inclusion of Walvis Bay in Namibia raised initial skepticism by South Africa of working within the UN framework for a settlement. Then, in September, when UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim presented a detailed plan for implementing the UN resolutions, the South Africans chose to proceed with their implementation of the original April agreement. South Africa persisted that the UN was not qualified to supervise elections over Namibia due to the UN's partiality over SWAPO. Regarding the issue, South Africa believed that it should be allowed to organize elections and orders independently (Iji 2011). It was dissatisfied with the UN's plan for Namibia, given that the UN would not monitor SWAPO camps in Angola and Zambia and that all SWAPO guerrillas would be gathered in Namibia accordingly. To South Africa, these points all

together meant that SWAPO forces could freely join in the UN-led camp in Namibia and tip the scales (Wicker 1979).

### **1-2.3. Linkage**

On 29 October 1979, South African troops started to attack southern Angola. Notwithstanding the UNSC's condemnation in UNSC Resolution 454 (1979), South Africa did not stop fighting. Attempts to achieve a settlement between SWAPO and South Africa had failed, and so did the pre-implementation of the conference for Resolution 435 in Geneva, initially planned in early 1980 (Dierks 1999). South Africa raised the matter of UN partiality towards SWAPO and refused to cooperate in implementing Resolution 435.

From April 1981, the United States tried to normalize its relations with South Africa by sending its Assistance Secretary of State for African Affairs, Chester Crocker. Without the other four Contact Group Members' supports, in June 1981, the United States, with new leadership by President Ronald Reagan, solely introduced the idea of linking the Cuban withdrawal from Angola to the implementation of Resolution 435 (Iji 2011; Dierks 1999). In a personal and confidential letter from then-South African Foreign Minister P. W. Botha to South African Member of Parliament J. W. K. Wiley, Botha stated that "the Americans are not at present trying to make trouble for us" since the Reagan administration took over the White House ("Letter from South African Foreign Minister" 1981). South Africa welcomed this linkage because a decisive victory in Angola seemed prohibitively costly to South Africa. In this regard, it was imperative for South Africa to find a reasonable formula for Cuban withdrawal from Angola in order to accept the UN plan for Namibia's independence (Fortna 1995).

In December 1982, South Africa and Angola held the unexpected first talks in Cape Verde (Dierks 1999). This surprise movement indirectly showed that South Africa decided to deal with Angola directly, instead of having the United States in between, on its settlement for Namibia. The withdrawal of around 20,000 Cuban forces from Angola was discussed as the main issue as South Africa insisted it as a precondition before it pulls out its troops from Namibia (Lelyveld 1982). In May 1983, even the UN Secretary-General indicated that the total withdrawal of Cuba from Angola is a prerequisite condition for South Africa's cooperation (United Nations 1983a), while the UNSC still urged South Africa to make a solid commitment and properly comply with Resolution 435 (1978) in UNSC Resolution 532 (1983). At the end of 1983, South Africa offered the pullout of its forces from southern Angola, given that Angola halts supporting SWAPO. As Angola provisionally agreed to the plan, South Africa finally began disengaging its forces in southern Angola as of 1 February 1984 (Cowell 1984). From May to June, South African Foreign Minister Botha traveled across Europe to propagate and explain the prerequisite conditions for South African withdrawal from Namibia (Dierks 1999).

Around this time, South Africa struggled with its economy as the international community reached the end of its tether on South Africa's apartheid policy. From 1984, international business and financial institutions started disinvestments from South Africa, and in 1985, the country encountered a financial crisis. The value of its currency declined by thirty-five percent, and its stock market closed for four days. Although the United Kingdom, along with the United States, held back the imposition of economic sanctions over South Africa as a last resort, South African raids on neighboring countries – Botswana, Zambia, and Zimbabwe – continued until early 1988 (Onslow and van Wyk 2013). The European

Community adopted an agreed series of measures in the same year, including arms and oil embargo. They also suspended imports of iron and steel from South Africa even though they left much more critical trade items such as coal and agricultural products behind due to the strong opposition of the United Kingdom and West Germany. More importantly, much more powerful measures were taken at the individual state level (Manby 2012). The United States, in October of 1986, enacted the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act (CAAA), imposing compulsory trade sanctions against South Africa regardless of President Reagan's strong objection ("Excerpts from Veto Message on Sanctions" 1986). In August, the United Kingdom agreed to voluntarily bar new investment, exports of coal, iron, steel, and tourism promotion in South Africa. In the following month, Japan took a side with the United Kingdom that it would ban its imports of iron and steel from South Africa as well as stop issuing tourist visas for South Africans (Onslow and van Wyk 2013). These states were South Africa's most significant bilateral trading partners that the impact of their sanctions on South Africa was enormous (Manby 2012). By the end of 1987, about fifty percent of the total United States firms had left South Africa (Onslow and van Wyk 2013).

The international sanctions and the large disinvestments resulted in an estimated seventeen percent decrease in South African Gross National Product from 1987 to 1991. Moreover, virulent malaria in its border areas destroyed morale among soldiers on the battlefield. South Africa's passion and will to maintain apartheid policy was waning as well. Amid all these events, approximately 50,000 Cuban, Angolan, and SWAPO military forces successfully pushed the South African troops back at Cuito Cuanavale, Angola, on 4 May 1988.

Though battles for Namibian independence continued until 1988, the battles had become an enormous financial burden to South Africa at the moment.



The anti-apartheid international economic sanctions and the increasing mobilization of people between Namibia and South Africa slowed down South Africa's reckless military operations. Finally, a stalemate was met in Angola in the battle of Cuito Cuanevale (Krška 1997). Consequently, though it was not a defeat, South Africa began to consider implementing UNSC Resolution 435 seriously (Dierks 1999). In August 1988, South Africa deliberately announced a de facto end of hostilities, and at the end of that month, it completely withdrew its forces from Angola (Dierks 1999). Several negotiations that resulted in the Brazzaville Protocol<sup>24</sup> and the New York Treaty<sup>25</sup> paved the way to the implementation of UNTAG as a following.

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<sup>24</sup> The Brazzaville Protocol of 13 December presents an agreement between Cuba, Angola, and South Africa under the UN auspices (Onslow and van Wyk 2013).

<sup>25</sup> The New York Treaty, also known as the Tripartite Agreement, takes place on 22 December 1989, was signed by Angola, Cuba, and South Africa, along with the bilateral agreement between Angola and Cuba, indicating the withdrawal of Cuban forces from Angola (See S/RES/628). Ensued ten rounds of negotiations, these accords contain detailed agreements related to the implementation of Resolution 435 (1978). Those are: (1) "A timetable for Namibian independence pursuant to the UNSC Resolution 435, the process itself to begin on 1 April 1989, and to be supervised by UNTAG"; (2) "Elections for a Namibian Constituent Assembly, to be held on 1 November 1989"; (3) "Withdrawal of all South African troops from Namibia within one week of the announcement of the results of the aforementioned elections"; and (4) "Phased departure of all Cuban troops from Angola, to be completed by July 1991" (Stultz 1992, 80).

## **2. External Actor: The Western Contact Group (WCG)**

With Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany (also known as West Germany) had seats in the UNSC in January 1977. Three permanent UNSC Member States – the United States, the United Kingdom, and France – and these two in early 1977 explored how to persuade the African states to agree on the matter of South Africa's apartheid regime at first. They had shared interest that they all had supported UNSC Resolution 385 (1976) on the withdrawal of South Africa from Namibia and UN-controlled elections (Du Pisani 1986). Although the representatives of five countries often left the Group on several issues, the Group met in New York every day for the first two years of its establishment. These five states divided and shared the task of mediating between the warring parties. Sometimes, their role was found in more complex engagements, including the UN, the Frontline States, or the public, even though the Group had no mandate nor official legitimacy (Karns 1987).

Their principal strategies were to mediate as a team, operate deliberately within the UN, promote limited leverage by using carrots and sticks. Because they worked collectively, the WCG could obtain credibility from the warring parties and the international community and more leverage in bargaining with the parties. The inclusion of three UNSC permanent member states was a powerful tool to wield such influence (Iji 2011).

### **2-1. The Turnhalle Conference**

The Western Contact Group (WCG) was formed based on UNSC Resolution 385 of January 1976. Resolution 385 (1976) indicated free elections in

Namibia under UN auspices and the withdrawal of South African forces. When the Turnhalle Conference eventually ratified the outline of an interim Constitution for Namibia in March 1977 (Iji 2011), the South African Parliament could not take any immediate decision on the constitutional draft because of these five countries (Dierks 1999).

The WCG began bargaining with South African leaders – including Prime Minister John Vorster and Foreign Minister Botha – to halt the further process and delivered a diplomatic note that South Africa must continue to support the Namibian independence based on Resolution 385 (“World News Briefs,” 1977). At the 9<sup>th</sup> special session on Namibia of the UN General Assembly in April 1978, the Contact Group expressed its clear position on South Africa’s Turnhalle principles in Namibia and threatened that they would consider unblocking UN-led sanctions on South Africa in case South Africa kept disobeying the international decision (Zartman 1989; Iji 2011). At the conclusion, in June 1977, South Africa agreed not to implement the Turnhalle principles and to hold elections in Namibia under UN supervision (Karns 1987).

The initial draft by the African states on the Turnhalle issue was to immediately impose solid international sanctions on South Africa’s government who was publicly exercising apartheid policy in Namibia; however, the Western countries wished to find a less confrontational line (Du Pisani 1986). At first, all five states wished to continue their cordial relations with South Africa (Melber and Saunders 2007). Firstly, the WCG states were enjoying economic ties with South Africa. Their involvement was primarily related to safeguarding their economic interests, specifically in the mining industry (Mushelenga 2016). Secondly, they all shared an anti-communist stance in an effort to reduce the Soviet Union’s influence

over the region (Mohr 1977). The southern African countries, even often SWAPO<sup>26</sup>, had received supports from socialist countries in the time of the Cold War, and South Africa was the assured ally of the Western countries that they could not lose. For instance, by 9 June 1978, Rhodesia – currently called Zimbabwe – boasted they received another Cuban supports for the country's guerrillas in Zambia and Angola (The Associated Press 1978). Lastly, the WCG had to soothe South Africa's deep-rooted distrust against the UN to favor SWAPO to bring South Africa to a negotiating table (Iji 2011).

The WCG's rather amiable stance towards South Africa outraged SWAPO instead. In the meantime, the WCG diligently continued to hold talks with South Africa to urge the issue of South African troops in Namibia (Dierks 1999).

## **2-2. Walvis Bay**

When South Africa accepted the WCG's proposal<sup>27</sup> on 25 April 1978, the Group actually excluded Walvis Bay from the whole of Namibia, which South Africa had incorporated in November 1977 (Karns 1987). The WCG felt that negotiation of this controversial issue should not postpone Namibia's independence. They thought it should be subject to discussion between South Africa and independent Namibia. In addition, South Africa promised the Group that Namibians in Walvis Bay would be free to participate in the elections (Karns 1987).

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<sup>26</sup> The President of SWAPO expressed his gratitude on behalf of the organization to Bulgaria and socialist countries for providing military and material supports ("SWAPO President Visit to Bulgaria 1983). In addition, both the United States and South Africa regarded SWAPO as a pro-Moscow party during the Cold War (Geingob 2004).

<sup>27</sup> The UN Security Council Document S/12636 on 10 April 1978 urged free elections for the whole of Namibia with proper UN supervision in line with Resolution 385 (1976). The proposal further developed to the UNSC Resolution 431 (1978) and envisaged the UN's Special Representative and UNTAG.

In November 1977, the General Assembly officially declared the reintegration of the port into Namibia, not South Africa. UNSC Resolution 432 (1978), which was adopted in the following year, also clarified that “the territorial integrity and unity of Namibia must be assured through the reintegration of Walvis Bay within its territory.”

### **2-3. Linkage**

In 1981, Ronald Reagan took over the White House. From his perspective, the achievement of Namibian independence in the region was closely linked with almost 20,000 Cuban troops in Angola. In contrast, its former administration stated that the linkage between the Cuban forces and Namibian independence could never be discussed together within a UN framework (Karns 1987). The Reagan Administration was scared that if South African troops withdrew and Namibia gained independence while Cuban forces remained still in Angola, any leverage would vanish (Lelyveld 1981). For the United States in the Cold War context, the linkage issue was primarily based on its geopolitical interests. The Cuban withdrawal from Angola was seen as an ideal scenario in the Cold War as it would provide the security of South Africa (Geingob 2004, 95).

South Africa, as a response, welcomed the idea. As South Africa increased its interests and expanded its influence over Angola during the 1980s, the conflicts escalated. It was expected because of SWAPO rebels in Angola and an attempt to destabilize the Angolan government. While the United States Congress prohibited American military aid to the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) in 1985, the Soviet Union increased its military supports, and Cuba

deployed more troops to help the opponent, the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). The People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) took control of the Angola government with the financial and then military supports from Cuba and the Soviet Union. Its main adversary was the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) backed by the United States and South Africa (Fortna 1995). Therefore, South Africa needed to find a reasonable formula for Cuban withdrawal from Angola to accept the United Nations plan for Namibia's independence (Krška 1997).

Besides the United States, however, all four Contact Group states – the United Kingdom, France, West Germany, and Canada – together expressed skepticism of Reagan's new approach and were disappointed to some degree that it was planned without any consultation (Gelb 1981). The linkage issue did not fit into their mission according to the Group's understanding; instead, they were concerned if it would jeopardize the whole process in the region. In more detailed action, SWAPO, the Frontline States, the OAU, France, and the UN General Assembly along with the UN Security Council all rejected this linkage in UNSC Resolution 539 (1983), saying "that South Africa's insistence on an irrelevant and extraneous issue of 'linkage' has obstructed the implementation of Resolution 435 (1978)."

As a response to the United States' action, France decided to encourage further discussions between Angola and the United States to resolve the issue. However, the negotiation was primarily and essentially held by the United States, with some support from the United Kingdom had an embassy in Angola. Even though the Reagan administration supported the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), France signed a bilateral cooperation agreement with the Angolan government and promised to supply armed forces and equipment

for guerilla operations. France also temporarily withdrew from the WCG because of the linkage issue (Geingob 2004).

On 6 June 1985, the UN Secretary-General iterated that the implementation of UNSC Resolution 435 had been barred due to South Africa's claim on the withdrawal of Cuban forces. On 20 June, the UN Security Council stated that "appropriate measures" against South Africa should be considered because it had kept incapacitating and rejecting the UN initiatives to Namibian independence. However, the United States and the United Kingdom abstained from the initial statement but suggested a compromise Resolution that France negotiated. The adopted Resolution proposed voluntary measures by the governments against South Africa, such as banning investments in South Africa. It also decreased significant portions from the initial draft that demanded countries to impose an oil embargo and cut diplomatic relations with South Africa. The United States delegate, Warren Clark, told the UN Security Council that sanctions "are likely to retard" Namibian independence ("Security Council Faults South Africa on Namibia" 1985). In consequence, UNSC Resolution 569 (1985) was adopted, calling for a voluntary prohibition on new investment, loans, the sale of all coins minted in South Africa, new nuclear contracts, and computer-related equipment. Notwithstanding South Africa's arbitrary policy, no substantive steps besides the United Nations arms embargo agreed in 1977 were adopted until 1985 (Manby 1992).

By early 1987, the only unresolved problem to implementing of Resolution 435 (1978) was the question of Cuban troops' withdrawal from Angola<sup>28</sup>. From July of the same year, Angola and the United States re-started their talks on the Cuban withdrawal and the linkage issue. In October, the UNSC authorized the Secretary-General to set arrangements for a ceasefire between South

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<sup>28</sup> Refer to S/18767 (1987).

Africa and SWAPO as well as UNTAG's deployment. However, South African troops still remained in Namibia, and a series of military fights continued in southern Angola. South African raids on neighboring countries – Botswana, Zambia, and Zimbabwe – continued until early 1988 (Onslow and van Wyk 2013).

In 1985, the European Community adopted an agreed series of measures, including arms and oil embargo. They also suspended imports of iron and steel from South Africa even though they left much more critical trade items such as coal and agricultural products behind due to the strong opposition of the United Kingdom and West Germany. More importantly, much more powerful measures were taken at the individual state level (Manby 2012). Fueled by media coverage of the crisis in South Africa, the United States Congress, in October of 1986, finally enacted the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act (CAAA), imposing compulsory trade sanctions against South Africa regardless of President Reagan's objection (Manby 2012; "Excerpts from Veto Message on Sanctions" 1986). In August, the United Kingdom agreed to voluntarily bar new investment, exports of coal, iron, steel, and tourism promotion in South Africa. In the following month, Japan took a side with the United Kingdom that it would ban its imports of iron and steel from South Africa as well as stop issuing tourist visas for South Africans (Onslow and van Wyk 2013). These states were South Africa's most significant bilateral trading partners, that the impact of their sanctions on South Africa was enormous (Manby 2012). By the end of 1987, about 50 percent of the total United States firms had left South Africa (Onslow and van Wyk 2013).

As South Africa finally stepped forward to the negotiating table, the Contact Group, mainly led by the United States, organized talks between Angola, Cuba, and South Africa starting May 1988. Chester Crocker, the United States Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, stated hopeful signs had emerged



from discussions for the first time brought together delegates of South Africa, Angola, Cuba, and the United States at the same negotiating table (Raines 1988). As the Soviet Union began its withdrawal from Afghanistan, the Soviet Union was even more willing to halt the war in Angola directly involved in negotiations as a participant. After the Moscow summit meeting between the United States and the Soviet Union, they decided to set a settlement date in Angola as 29 September (Keller 1988). The two superpowers also participated as observers and mediators in the New York Treaty, known as the Tripartite Agreement, between South Africa, Angola, and Cuba in December at UN Headquarters (Dierks 1999).

Once the Cuban withdrawal issue had been solved, the United States seemed it lost interest in Namibia, and the Western countries asserted to cut the UNTAG's budget mainly in its military component (Howard 2008). The United States had "a regional strategy and was not explicitly concerned with internal conflicts" (Weiland and Braham 1994, 78).

## **VI. Stage 2: UNTAG Implementation (1989-1990)**

As the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 632 (1989) on 16 February 1989, the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG), which was primarily drafted under Resolution 435 (1978), was affirmed to be in action on 1 April 1989. Its principal mandate was “to ensure conditions in Namibia,” allowing “the Namibian people to participate freely and without intimidation in the electoral process” under the UN auspices, ultimately “leading to early independence.”<sup>29</sup> The UNTAG was to support the UN-appointed Special Representative to Namibia to hold the Constituent Assembly election on 1 November 1989 and to ensure Namibian independence from South Africa<sup>30</sup>. The most extensive UN peacekeeping operation since 1964 was to be carried out under \$416 million in its first year and included 4,650 UN peacekeeping troops, 500 police officers, and 1,000 international civilians. It was initially planned to deploy around 7,500 soldiers at a budget of \$700 million; however, the UNSC permanent members decided to cut the cost and the size of the force at the last call (“U.N. Approves Namibia Plan” 1989).

UNTAG’s mission to ensure free and fair elections in Namibia to pave the way to independence incorporated many other aspects. Creating an amiable environment to hold elections was not only a political issue but was also closely interlinked with the military issues of ceasefire and demobilization of the previous forces. In this chapter, from the perspective of each major actor in chronological order, I will aim to describe the situation in relation to the provisions of the

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<sup>29</sup> Refer to S/RES/632 (1989).

<sup>30</sup> See footnote 25.

UNTAG's plan and examine the impact of internal and external actors on its process.

## **1. Internal Actors: The Major Warring Parties**

### **1-1. The South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO)**

#### **1-1.1. Cessation of Hostility**

As United Nations Security Council Resolution 435 (1978) commenced 1 April 1989, the ceasefire between SWAPO and South Africa was planned to come into effect. Resolution 435 iterated that the plan for Namibian independence offers “a cessation of all hostile acts by all parties and the restriction of South African and SWAPO armed forces to base” in paragraph 8(a) and that “provision will be made for SWAPO personnel outside the territory to return peacefully to Namibia through designated entry points to participate freely in the political process” in paragraph 8(d). Since 1979, South Africa had always sought clarification on the wording to “avoid any misunderstandings and differing interpretations of the practical implementation<sup>31</sup>” of Resolution 435.

However, UNTAG military component was not fully strategically deployed yet by the time the cessation was supposedly in effect, particularly not in the northern part of the country (Dierks 1999). On its official ceasefire date, according to South Africa, the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), a military wing of SWAPO, entered Namibia from Angola and clashed with South African security forces in the northern part of Namibia. In fact, during the interim

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<sup>31</sup> See S/13172 (1979).

process of ceasefire from August 1988, over 1,500 SWAPO guerrillas crossed over into Namibia from southern Angola (Macqueen 2014). For this insurgency, there is still debate over who made the preemptive strike since there has been no independent documentary proof or evidence that could back South Africa's assertion that SWAPO made a first attack. SWAPO has asserted South Africa attacked SWAPO forces first by not confining its troops to base, breaking Resolution 435 (Dierks 1999; "Who Broke the Ceasefire?" 1989; Manning 1989).

On 3 April 1989, SWAPO's Secretary for Defence, Peter Mweshihange, stated that SWAPO had been waiting for UNTAG to halt the fighting and appeal a ceasefire to South Africa. He also addressed that their combatants had been ordered to lie low until the truce. However, UNTAG denied this proposal, re-urging the expulsion of SWAPO combatants to Angola according to the UN's initial plan (Dierks 1999). UNTAG, instead, claimed that the incident fundamentally affected their plan (Manning 1989).

From 8 April, representatives of South Africa, Cuba, and Angola, with the United States and the Soviet Union as mediators, gathered at Mount Etjo of Namibia to discuss the restoration of peace and application of Resolution 435 (1978). They declared a plan under UNTAG supervision whereby SWAPO military forces inside Namibia would relinquish their weapons over UNTAG and then be relocated under UNTAG guide to bases north of the 16th parallel<sup>32</sup> inside Angola (Wing et al. 1989; "Peace in Sight?" 1989). The Agreement allowed the PLAN combatants six days to withdraw. During the fighting, over 260 guerrillas and 27 soldiers had been reported killed by that time. (Wren 1989c).

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<sup>32</sup> It was a designated demarcation the SWAPO combatants in Angola could not cross before the first elections in Namibia under the Geneva Protocol between Cuba, Angola, and South Africa in 1988 (Wren 1989). The Geneva Protocol covers the restoration of peace in Angola as well as the application of provisions of Resolution 435 to Namibia (Manning 1989).

On 10 April, though SWAPO was excluded from the agreement at Mount Etjo, the President of SWAPO, Sam Nujoma, announced that PLAN would pull back from the fighting and report to Angola under UNTAG protection within 72 hours. Their intention, as told in a press release, aimed at preventing the collapse of UN's plan for the independence of Namibia ("Statement by Mr. Sam Nujoma" 1978). SWAPO's main goal was to be elected as the Constituent Assembly in November elections and further to be the ruling party after Namibia's independence. SWAPO was confident of winning the November elections as long as they are held freely, especially after witnessing the pro-SWAPO demonstrations on 1 April 1989 with between 10,000 and 15,000 participants to celebrate the beginning of the decolonization on the streets (Dierks 1999; Manning 1989). Thus, SWAPO did not wish to undermine and delay the UNTAG anymore but to keep the process on schedule (Wing et al. 1989).

However, as South Africa continued to attack and block the PLAN forces' way back to Angola, the Mount Etjo agreement was imperiled even before it started (Dierks 1999). The South African security forces maintained a high, threatening profile and went around assembly points set by the UNTAG; therefore, SWAPO did not show up at an assembly point for being returned to Angola in part due to the presence of South African forces (ibid; Wren 1989c). On the one hand, SWAPO continued to dismiss South African contentions of prompting of violence that influenced the UNTAG against SWAPO. SWAPO asserted that South Africa seems to hope to encourage UNTAG to let South African forces off of their bases so that they can make a raid on SWAPO without rebuke ("Press Release" 1989).

On 18 April 1989, SWAPO and South Africa finally held direct talks in demand of Cuba and Angola; consequently, South Africa agreed to follow the ceasefire agreement and proceed with 60 hours of ceasefire starting 26 April. On 1

June 1989, UNTAG urged the demobilization of the South West Africa Territory Force (SWATF), which was an ancillary armament of the South African Defence Force (SADF), based on the implementation of Resolution 435 (1978) in order to prevent further incursions of SWAPO (Dierks 1999).

### **1-1.2. Election**

Amid persistent efforts to halt the fighting in Namibia, the Administrator-General passed the First Law Amendment (Abolition of Discriminatory of Restrictive Laws for purposes of Free and Fair Elections) Proclamation on 8 June 1989 in an effort to foster conditions for free elections in Namibia under the UNTAG. On 1 July 1989, the election campaign officially started. In October, Proclamation AG 49 for the “Holding of an Election for a Constituent Assembly” was also passed as the final version that offered for all registered voters to cast proper ballots (Dierks 1999). Subsequently, on 2 July, SWAPO launched its first official election campaign with a rally of around 25,000 people in Katutura, Windhoek’s segregated black township (Manning 1989). SWAPO published a manifesto on its vision of future Namibia based on the drafted Constitution of 1975. In its manifesto, SWAPO encouraged the Namibian people to vote in general and support SWAPO specifically as stated:

*“The task before the Namibian people is to seize this historic opportunity and ensure that they join hands to safeguard the revolutionary gains we have made in bringing our country to the threshold of independence. Seizing this opportunity means, first, to register as a voter, and second, to vote and send to the Constituent Assembly men, and women with a*

*revolutionary will, honourable record, vision for a better future, integrity, experience, and proven ability to fight for the interests of the broad masses of the Namibian people. Such men and women are to be found in SWAPO (SWAPO 1989, p. 1)."*

For SWAPO, their interests matched UNTAG's missions, as briefly mentioned earlier. Its goal was to create a new environment of reconciliation among Namibians and smooth transition to Namibia's independence. In this regard, SWAPO wished to invite every Namibian, even those who had been misled by South Africa's vicious anti-SWAPO propaganda, to join it in this campaign for the better future.

For instance, SWAPO hired the buses to transport its voters and supporters to the voting booths. When SWAPO realized that it could not book the buses in Namibia because the opposite party backed by South Africa, the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA), had already booked all and blocked SWAPO, it even requested to the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU). It eventually paid over 2.5 million South African Rand to get the transporting service (Geingob 2004).

However, SWAPO insisted that the election mechanisms are constructed to favor South Africa and had worried about the results until the very end. SWAPO believed that the election mechanisms were to prevent SWAPO from winning the election. Firstly, the South African government succeeded in registering white South Africans, even including former residents, to vote in Namibian elections. Secondly, SWAPO was concerned about a central counting system. It was worried if South Africa fraudulently manipulates the votes on the way to Windhoek, the capital city of Namibia (Dierks 1999).

When SWAPO decided to raise the potential problems of the election mechanisms, the UN Special Representative and Secretary-General distanced themselves and rather seemed reluctant to the point. SWAPO criticized this passive stance, stating that the UN is a cumbersome organization that only concerned about the electoral process and its role in that process and too much dependent on the Western countries (Geingob 2004).

From 7 to 11 November 1989, the elections were finally held under the UNTAG supervision. As a result, SWAPO received 57.3% of the total votes, obtaining 41 of the 72 seats in the Constituent Assembly. The Constituent Assembly adopted the constitution on 9 February 1990, and Namibia independence was declared on 21 March 1990. The Constituent Assembly adopted the 1982 constitutional principles that were established by the WCG (Mushelenga 2016).



## **1-2. South Africa**

From 1989 to 1990, there had been dramatic changes in South African domestic politics. P. W. Botha, the first State President of South Africa who took power over the past decade, suffered a stroke in 1989 and ultimately resigned after losing his Party's faith (Battersby 1989; U.S. Department of State 2016). In February 1990, Frederik Willem de Klerk, the successor, announced the release of Nelson Mandela, ending almost thirty years of imprisonment. The new leader declared "the end of a long chapter" of previous South Africa and opened a brand new era (Burns 1990). He immediately lifted the ban on black liberation political parties and allowed anti-apartheid protests. Moreover, he underlined the freedom of the press and the release of political prisoners (U.S. Department of State 2016). These sudden changes brought by the new leader should be counted in the analysis as they could impact the progress of UNTAG to some degree.

### **1-2.1. Cessation of Hostility**

Regardless of who attacked whom first, South Africa utilized the renewed battles with SWAPO guerillas on 1 April 1989 rather internationally. In a letter to the UN Secretary-General, then-President of South Africa, P. W. Botha, wrote that the "South African Government cannot be expected to implement its undertakings under the relevant agreements while SWAPO continues to act in flagrant violation of the provisions of this agreement, with the acquiescence – tacit or otherwise – of the Security Council." The same letter was also sent to the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, including three Contact Group Members – the United States, the United Kingdom, and France – along with the Soviet Union

and China (Wren 1989b). SWAPO's action was portrayed by South Africa as a brazen breach jeopardizing tortuous agreements and was considered as the great spoiler in UNTAG's peace process (Wing et al. 1989). The immediate consequence of the incursion was a sudden leap in South Africa's credibility as a responsible participant in international standing (Adelphi 1990).

On 6 April, South African Foreign Minister Botha spoke to SWAPO through the state-owned radio service that "nothing will happen to them" and "they will safely be taken to the north of the 16<sup>th</sup> parallel" if they "surrender themselves to the South-West African police (Wren 1989a)." By 10 April, Cuba, Angola, and South Africa at the Mount Etjo of Namibia agreed to discuss the restoration of peace and application of Resolution 435 (1978) even though SWAPO was once again excluded from the negotiations.

Regardless of persistent efforts and visits by Angola, Cuba, and the UNTAG, South Africa continued to use its paramilitary forces to demobilize SWAPO. Meanwhile, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 640 (1989) with unanimous consent. South Africa immediately opposed the decision outrageously; however, South Africa started to take a much weaker position from mid-August. The new President, Frederik Willem de Klerk, took over the government after Botha. The ousting of the Botha administration and the influence of Nelson Mandela in South Africa, along with severe pressure by the United States and other bilateral trading partners, all played significant roles in the process (Krška 1997). The new South African President, F. W. de Klerk, allowed an enormous anti-apartheid demonstration in Cape Town and released all rivalry party, African National Congress (ANC), leaders (Dierks 1999).

### **1-2.2. Election**

Continued excessive use of force by Koevoet, South Africa's paramilitary unit, had been exercised in Namibia until July 1989 (Pear 1989). South Africa received harsh criticism from the United States and the UN for intimidating people in northern Namibia and imperiling opportunities for free elections in that region.

However, under UNTAG's pressure, along with domestic political changes in South Africa, SWAPO and South African forces ultimately agreed on the voter registration rules for the following: the age limit was set at 18; anyone with one Namibian parent is eligible for a vote; anyone who had resided in Namibia more than four years and planned to stay after independence is eligible for a vote; returnees with proper United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) documentation could vote. UNTAG and the Administrator-General's office set up thirty-six permanent and thirty-three temporary registration centers and one hundred ten mobile registration teams with three helicopters for remote area residents in order to ensure that anybody who is eligible could register (United Nations Peacekeeping 2001).

## **2. External Actor: The Western Contact Group (WCG)**

### **2-1. Cessation of Hostility**

In early 1989, the UN member states engaged in a dispute over the size and budget of UNTAG's military component. The United States, in December 1988, had already introduced the idea to cut the UNTAG military bill from \$700 million to \$450 million or less in order to decrease overall peacekeeping expenditure. The other five permanent member states – France, the Soviet Union, China, and the United Kingdom – also liked the initiative, whereas African members strongly opposed the idea. Days of compromise finally reached the point that the force would only 4,650 in Namibia into three large battalions instead of six. These disharmonies inside the UN in the near date of UNTAG's implementation schedule caused some delay in the deployment of UNTAG in Namibia. Fewer than 1,000 troops had arrived by 3 April, and the rest started to come in the second week of April (Adelphi 1990). As a consequence, UNTAG failed to mediate the two conflicting parties at the initial level successfully.

After the insurgency of the SWAPO guerilla on the UNTAG's first implementation date, the Western countries, notably the United Kingdom's Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, immediately supported South Africa's stand on the disputes (Dierks 1999). SWAPO's action was seen as a reckless violation of the peace agreement, which could nullify all the efforts made until the moment. However, South Africa's continued unilateral threats in Namibia were to leave the settlement in disarray and prevent the UN's involvement. The British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher met with President Botha later on 1 April 1989 and

urged him to disband South African Defence Force (SADF) from their bases. She also underlined the whole process should be under UN supervision (Adelphi 1990).

## **2-2. Election**

From the beginning, “ensuring free and fair elections” stated as UNTAG’s mandate was not elaborately in specific measures, but it left the mandate with uncertainties. As mentioned previously, South Africa had continuously requested the UN to clarify sentences in Resolution 435 (1978) since 1979. These uncertainties, however, helped the UNTAG define and fulfill the mission based on the situations of the time, not on the first draft (Howard 2008). It also provided room for multiple bilateral and multilateral negotiations set by neighboring countries and the UNSC member states within UNTAG framework.

Disturbed about the continued violence after the incursion, the United States, on 26 July 1989, expressly complained to South Africa that its paramilitary forces, Koevoet, threaten blacks in northern Namibia impeding prospects for free elections. Koevoet was officially demobilized several months ago, but more than two thousand combatants had been incorporated into the Namibian territorial police force (Pear 1989).

The UN Security Council in August 1989 also unanimously adopted Resolution 640, calling for the disbandment of all paramilitary and ethnic forces along with local units such as Koevoet as required by Resolution 435 (1978). Its main purpose was to stop intimidation and fraud by South Africa in the process of holding free elections (Dierks 1999).

## **VII. Analysis**

By scrutinizing a historical and political context and various influential parties surrounding the implementation of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) from its formation, this paper has explored to find the necessary conditions for successful implementation of UNTAG.

Stage 1 covered from when the Western Contact Group (WCG) – the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and West Germany – firstly proposed a draft to the United Nations (UN) and started bargaining with South Africa on the independence of Namibia to when South Africa finally committed to a peaceful settlement and the implementation of UNTAG. Chronologically, the primary internal parties – the South West Africa People’s Organisation (SWAPO) and South Africa – had faced several significant conflicts regarding The Turnhalle Conference, Walvis Bay, and linkage issues. The implementation of UNTAG had been accepted or rejected, along with how this issue was managed and taken by each party. The major external party, the Western Contact Group (WCG), was deeply involved in those issues and even influenced the behaviors and choices of the internal parties in terms of pursuing Resolution 385 (1976) and 435 (1978).

Specifically, in Stage 1, SWAPO took a clear stance on the issue and toward each party. Because the organization was established for the independence of Namibia, it precisely expressed the genuine desire for the implementation of Resolution 385 (1976) as well as the deployment of UNTAG, which offers Namibia a ground for free elections and independence from South Africa. Along with other African states besides South Africa, SWAPO was against South African apartheid policy and ethnic-based discriminatory laws. Its goal was to be utterly free from

South African influence, and in that vein, SWAPO rejected any idea that South Africa might take part in the UN's plan. For instance, SWAPO strongly objected to South Africa's demand of South Africa would appoint Administrator-General to administer Namibia during the interim government. To SWAPO, any party advocating South Africa in any sense must be blamed, and that included the WCG, as the Group tried to push the discussion on the issue of Walvis bay after completing the Resolution. When the Ronald Reagan administration in the United States introduced the idea of linking the Cuban withdrawal from Angola as the prerequisite condition for the withdrawal of South Africa in Namibia, SWAPO again awfully denounced the administration for undermining the UN's settlement as well. SWAPO believed that the WCG favored South Africa, which was recklessly attacking SWAPO in Angola and had too much influence on the UN's decision. That was why SWAPO's leader, Sam Nujoma, directly wrote a letter to UN Secretary-General to urge the ceasefire negotiations. As Sam Nujoma stated in UNSC Resolution 569 (1985), "SWAPO had always been agreeable to the immediate signing of a ceasefire."

However, SWAPO was not taken seriously by an international party. Besides its adversary, South Africa, the WCG was reluctant to include SWAPO in the essential negotiations. Of course, it does not mean that the WCG denied the existence of the organization; in fact, the organization was recognized as the sole and representative of Namibian people by the UN. However, the Contact Group saw SWAPO as a non-state actor. The crucial discussions and commitments were first agreed upon by South Africa and neighboring countries engaged in the conflict, and they handed over the baton to SWAPO. Since SWAPO had decided to comply with the immediate cessation of hostilities in the region anyway, it was not difficult to gain cooperation in processing Resolution 435 (1978).

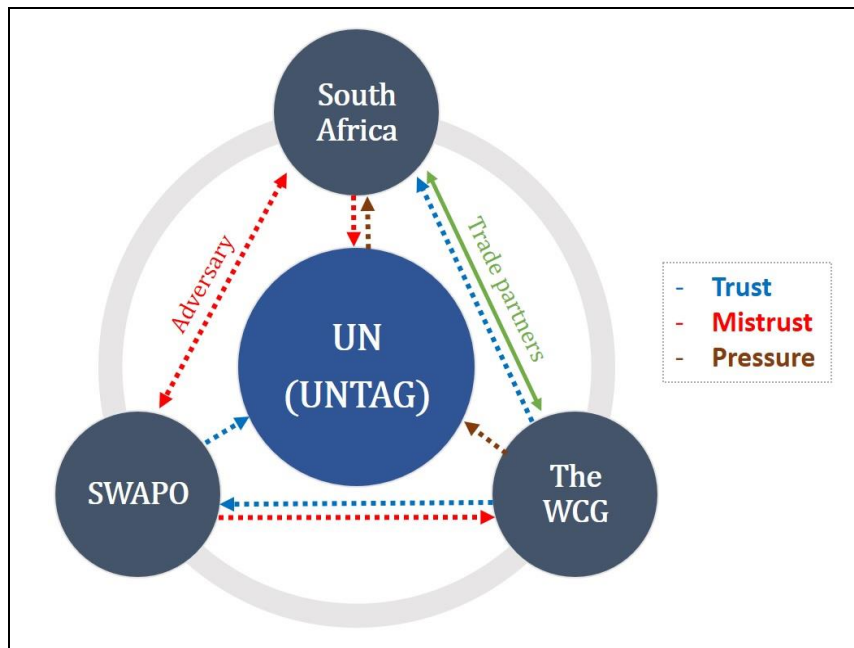
On the contrary, South Africa was the most formidable party to bring to the negotiating table. The hardest part of persuading South Africa was that it did not care much about complying with the international agreements. Instead, the country kept proceeding with its apartheid policy and even attacked Angola to destroy SWAPO. South Africa had received tremendous criticisms from the international community, but the government continued to pursue its own will and benefits, besides threatening South Africa with sanctions. Sanctions seemed to be the only solution to halt South Africa's persistent, reckless behaviors. However, imposing sanctions was not implemented every time. The WCG states – who were enjoying economic ties with South Africa – often turned down the proposal of sanctions on South Africa.

Unlike SWAPO, South Africa did not trust the United Nations, thinking the UN favors SWAPO. After the UN officially declared the annexation of Walvis bay by South Africa is illegal that the port would be re-integrated into independent Namibia, South Africa was more convinced by the decision. However, after Ronald Reagan took over the White House and started asserting the linkage issue, South Africa stayed close to the United States for its interests were overlapped with the United States' idea. For South Africa, the withdrawal of Cuban troops in Angola was very much needed at the moment because the battles in Angola had become an enormous financial burden to South Africa. The country was suffering from multi- and bilateral sanctions, especially from its largest trading partners – the United States, the United Kingdom, West Germany, and Japan.

Lastly, the role of the Western Contact Group (WCG) during Stage 1 was critical and essential. Not only they started to take action over South Africa's apartheid regime, but they also shared interest as the UN Security Council members to support Resolution 385 (1976) on the withdrawal of South Africa from



Namibia and UN-controlled elections with the assistance of UNTAG. The five states divided and shared the task of mediating between warring parties in the region until the Reagan administration came in and introduced the linkage issue.



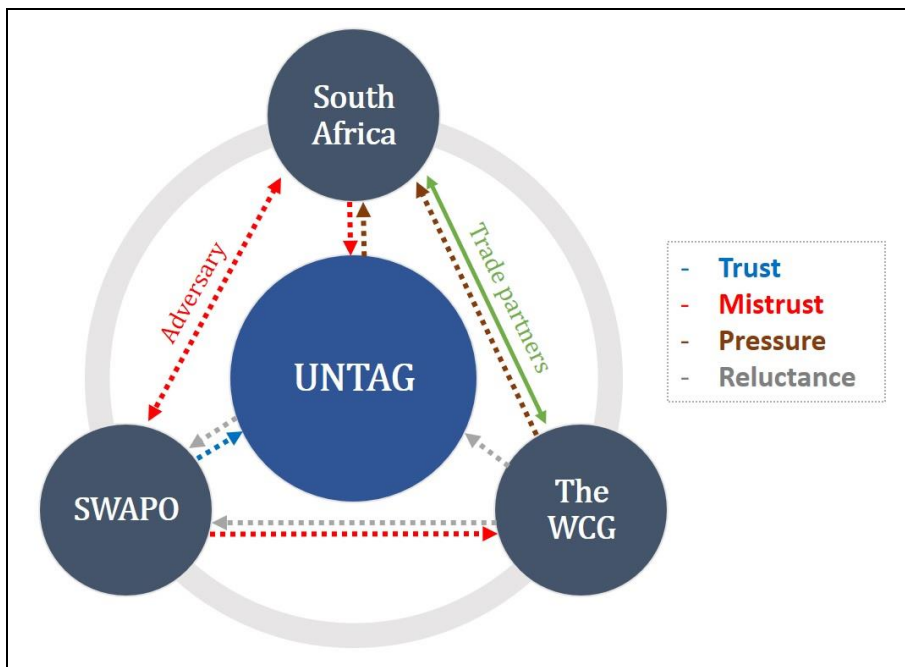
**Figure 9. Interactions of Major Parties in Stage 1**  
(source: created by author)

In the Cold War context, the WCG was eager to implement the resolutions and accomplish democratic independence in Namibia. Since South Africa was the only democratic country in southern Africa at the moment, the WCG could not harshly react to South Africa's reckless actions. The Group persuaded other member states not to impose sanctions on South Africa. However, when the Reagan administration unilaterally introduced the linkage issue, France temporarily withdrew from the Group. While the United States took this case more in the Cold War context, other states were more focused on complying with the UN resolutions.

Eventually, the United States mainly led the Cuban troops' withdrawal from Angola, which also led to the South Africa forces' withdrawal from Namibia and commitment to the resolutions. Figure 9 sums up the various interactions between major actors in stage 1.

In Stage 2, the role of the WCG declined, however. Once the Cuban withdrawal issue had been solved, the United States seemed reluctant to Namibia. The implementation of UNTAG was struggled by the Western countries' contention to cut UNTAG's budget right before its deployment date. Although each country – like the United States or the United Kingdom – had talked to South Africa directly to urge the full implementation and compliance of the previously agreed the UN resolutions, the WCG as a whole did not negotiate with South Africa anymore. However, they still had strong economic and political power that they could threaten or impose a heavy burden on South Africa.

The relationship between South Africa and SWAPO worsened in Stage 2, and without the proactive, potent mediators compared to Stage 1, it was more challenging to control South Africa's harsh behaviors. However, continued pressure from its critical bilateral partners and sudden changes in South African domestic politics acted as a catalyst for bringing South Africa to the negotiation table. SWAPO was once again excluded from a ceasefire negotiation, but the organization was busy settling a political foothold in Namibia. SWAPO still trusted and followed the UN's plan, and for its benefit, it did not wish to delay or undermine the mandate of UNTAG. Figure 10 summarizes the changed interactions between major actors in stage 2.



**Figure 10. Interactions of Major Parties in Stage 2**  
(source: created by author)

Throughout two stages, the implementation of UNTAG based on Resolution 385 (1976) and 435 (1978) had been primarily dependent on South Africa's cooperation. Thus, the success of UNTAG was also because South Africa was controlled to obey the international agreement to some degree. Although SWAPO was the principal adversary and actor as well, it was frequently excluded from several vital negotiations as a non-state actor. In other words, SWAPO was not considered as an absolutely necessary factor in pursuing the implementation of Resolution. On the other hand, every time South Africa broke its commitments to Resolution according to its changing situations, all relevant parties – including the UN – sought to obtain South Africa's consent because it is the most influential and powerful country over Namibia. The relevant parties often needed to entangle South Africa until it had no other great option but to agree with the international

community. South Africa's agreement and commitment were possibly made due to the WCG's active participation in setting negotiations during Stage 1. The measures of the WCG were the Cold War and international sanctions. On the one hand, the critical factors that changed South Africa's stance were due to both domestic and external situations. The ousting of Botha administration and the decay of the Soviet Union as an adversary to the United States had led South Africa to take a softer position to Namibia's independence and international agreements. Table 2 summarizes the changes of each party's stance.

	Stage 1	Stage 2
<b>SWAPO</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Genuine desire for UNTAG</li> <li>• Rejected any idea that SA might take part in UNTAG</li> <li>• Blamed WCG for favoring SA and having too much influence on UN's decision</li> <li>• Excluded from any international negotiations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worsened relationship with SA</li> <li>• Still excluded from negotiation</li> <li>• Settling a political foothold in Namibia</li> <li>• Still supported UN's plan for its benefit</li> </ul>
<b>South Africa (SA)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skeptical about UNTAG and UN</li> <li>• Reluctant to comply with the UN resolutions</li> <li>• Reckless actions only for its benefits</li> <li>• Stayed close with US for overlapped interests (linkage issue)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worsened relationship with SWAPO</li> <li>• Continued reckless actions</li> <li>• International Pressure from WCG and UN</li> <li>• Drastic changes in domestic politics (such as the ousting of Botha and release of Nelson Mandela)</li> </ul>
<b>WCG</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed a framework for UNTAG in the Cold War context</li> <li>• Favoring SA (enjoying economic ties with South Africa) by often turning down the proposal of sanctions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cut UNTAG's military budget</li> <li>• Reluctant to Namibian issue</li> <li>• WCG role declined; rather, the U.S. and the U.K. started bilateral talks with SA</li> <li>• Still had strong economic/political power to threaten SA</li> </ul>

**Table 2. Summary of Changing Stances of Each Actor**  
(source: created by author)

From the lens of historical institutionalism, the formation the institution – UNTAG based on Resolution 385 (1976) – was determined by the critical agent. The agent, South Africa, here is the entity that is in the institution but simultaneously changes the institution through proposing its opinions. The maintenance of the institution was also based on the cooperation of the critical agent that South Africa's consent or commitment to UNTAG was a necessary condition for UNTAG to be implemented. The successful implementation of UNTAG was hard-won fruit by relevant agents' efforts. The countries create, adopt, and comply with the institution, while they also are largely affected by the structure and order of the institution. In particular, the Western Contact Group's proactive participation in a peace settlement and various negotiations at Stage 1 was significant in determining its success at Stage 2 as it moved South Africa's stance.

## **VIII. Conclusion**

This paper explored the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia from historical institutionalism. Among the impressive growth and expansion of UN peacekeeping operations throughout history, the UNTAG was the most extensive and very first successful multidimensional peacekeeping operation by the UN after the massive failure in Congo in 1964 (Kanwal 2004). The operation has valuable meaning in that its primary goal was primarily political for the first time and that it brought the innovative peacekeeping mechanisms that have been in use until today (Howard 2008).

However, the blurred results of other UN peacekeeping operations leave us with questions of why some succeed and some fail, how success and failure can be determined, which factors or conditions are necessary to achieve a successful peacekeeping operation. In fact, peacekeeping operations are more likely to fail than succeed because they are conducted in complex, challenging situations in the first place. Thus, failure is the status quo when the UN enters a conflicting area, and it is easier to be continued than broken. On the other hand, the success of peacekeeping operations is unexpected, and it involves a number of necessary factors – both internal and external – that alter the actions of warring parties and environments in a conflict.

In this regard, this paper scrutinized the success of UNTAG in Namibia since it is an exemplary successful case in history. Instead of observing its mandate alone, as most of the previous literature had done, this study rather focused on the pre-phase of its deployment. By analyzing major internal and external parties' decisions and behaviors in UNTAG's establishment stage and its mandate

implementation stage, I organized several factors that played significant roles in the process.

In Stage 1, the context of the Cold War affected the stance of the Western Contact Group on South Africa as the Group avoided imposing sanctions. However, as South Africa continued to act recklessly by breaking its previous commitment, the Western Contact Group finally allowed multi- and bilateral sanctions and significantly damaged the South African economy. Whereas SWAPO was often excluded from the negotiation tables, the participation and consent of South Africa were the most critical and necessary factors that abled the implementation and maintenance of UNTAG. As mentioned above, the cooperative stance from South Africa had been achieved in Stage 1 through the WCG's carrots and sticks strategy, which opened the way to Stage 2. In Stage 2, South Africa changed its position when the new leader took over the government. In addition, the dwindling tensions between two superpowers in the Cold War context also had some degree of impact on South Africa.

Based on historical institutionalism, the institution, UNTAG, was formed and changed as an object by the agents while the agents – especially South Africa – were influenced and changed by the institution. Formation of the institution – UNTAG based on Resolution 385 (1976) – was determined by the critical agent. The agent and the “spoiler”, South Africa, here is the entity that is in the institution but simultaneously changes the institution through proposing its opinions. The maintenance of the institution was also based on the cooperation of the critical agent that South Africa's consent or commitment to UNTAG was a necessary condition for UNTAG to be implemented. Here, the maintenance of the institution was only possible because of the consent in Stage 1. In other words, South Africa's consent was an essential condition in the actual establishment of UNTAG, and that

consent in Stage 1 also opened the door to Stage 2, the maintenance of UNTAG. Controlling the “spoiler” was the biggest challenge. The successful implementation of UNTAG was hard-won fruit by relevant agents’ efforts. The countries create, adopt, and comply with the institution, while they also are primarily affected by the structure and order of the institution. The efforts of the UN, a high level of cooperation of strong economic and political partners of South Africa, changes in South Africa’s domestic politics all played significant parts in bringing South Africa to the negotiation table.

Regardless of the meaningful findings, this research contains several limitations. Firstly, this paper heavily depends on written documents only. Due to the global pandemic situation, traveling abroad was reluctant to proceed. A field study may raise understanding of each party’s intention and discover other crucial factors for the implementation of UNTAG. Secondly, this study concentrates on the effect of certain parties on the UN that it lacks the holistic analysis that entails the other parties – for instance, Frontline States.



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## 국문초록

### 분쟁 이후 평화구축 단계에서 유엔평화유지활동의 성공요인: 나미비아 사례를 중심으로

김이지

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국제학과 국제협력 전공

냉전이 종식되면서 유엔의 평화 구축 역할에 대한 새로운 낙관론이 등장하였다. 분쟁 후 평화 구축의 개념은 ‘평화를 위한 의제(An Agenda for Peace)’에서 유엔에 의해 공식적으로 등장했으며, 유엔이 주도하는 다차원적 평화 유지 활동의 중요성을 강조하였다. 이를 계기로 유엔 평화 유지 활동은 그 규모와 수에서 점진적으로 확장되었으며, 이후 여러 분쟁 지역에서 성공적으로 평화를 구현했다.

이러한 유엔의 평화 유지 활동의 인상적인 성장과 확장 안에서, 어떤 활동은 심각한 실패로 평가되는 반면, 어떤 활동은 역사상 가장 큰 성공으로 평가된다. 이 같은 상이한 평가는 유엔 평화 유지 활동이 어떤 상황에서 성공하고 실패하는지, 성공과 실패를 무엇으로 결정할 수 있는지, 성공적인 활동이 되는 데에 어떠한 요소들이 필수적인지 등에 대한 질문을 가져온다.

따라서, 이 연구는 이러한 질문에 대한 답을 찾기 위해 나미비아에

파견된 UNTAG(United Nations Transition Group)를 심층적으로 살펴본다. 유엔의 가장 성공적인 평화 유지 활동으로 널리 평가된 UNTAG는 이전의 평화 유지 활동과 다르게 그 주요 임무가 정치적이었다는 것과 이후 유엔 내 평화 구축 개념의 발전과 더욱 적극적인 적용의 촉매제가 되었다는 점에서 특별한 의미를 가진다.

역사적 제도주의라는 분석틀을 통해, 이 연구는 나미비아의 내부 및 외부 주요 당사자의 행동과 그들간의 관계가 나미비아에서 UNTAG의 구현에 어떤 영향을 미쳤는지 살펴본다. 결과적으로 남아프리카 공화국의 협력과 동의는 나미비아에서 UNTAG의 성공적인 이행을 달성하는 데 결정 요인으로 작용했다. 무엇보다 UNTAG의 이행 단계에서뿐 아니라 계획 단계에서부터 남아프리카 공화국의 동의를 얻는 것이 가장 큰 필수 요소였다. 미국을 필두로 형성된 Western Contact Group(WCG)은 남아프리카를 협상 테이블로 끌어들이기 위해 회유와 압박을 적절히 사용하면서 가장 중요한 요인이었던 남아프리카를 효과적으로 통제했다.

**주요어:** 유엔평화유지활동, 분쟁 이후 평화구축, 남아프리카공화국, 나미비아, 역사적 제도주의

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