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With cold war gone US 'democracy' body casts round for a role

WASHINGTON/ Thirty political parties from nine Southern African countries were represented last month at a workshop in Namibia sponsored by an arm of the controversial US National Endowment for Democracy (NED)-

The purpose of the 5-day workshop, held at a Mount Etjo hunting lodge 125 miles north of Windhoek, was innocuous enough. According to the Washington Post, the representatives held long debates on democracy and heard lectures on such topics as setting up an electoral system, voter registration, building support for political parties, running election campaigns and campaign monitoring.

Nevertheless, although the cold war has ended, NED, established by Congress in 1983 to supplant the CIA's scandal-plagued intervention in foreign elections, is still in the business of political intervention.

Last summer it dispatched former CIA officer Paul Henze to 'advise' Ethiopia's new government. The only thing that has changed is that NED is now in search of new justifications for its continued existence. In conjunction with the workshop in Namibia, NED officials made an appearance on the Voice of America's Africa service to stress the technical expertise available through the endowment.

The Namibia workshop was sponsored by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDIIA), one of NEU's four main funding arms. In addition to the institute, which is affiliated with the Democratic Party, NEU's core granting groups include:

- 0 the Republican Party-linked National Republican Institute for International Affairs;

- 0 the Center for International Private Enterprise, created by the US Chamber of Commerce; and
- ' the Free Market Union Institute of the AFL-CIO, which has a long history of doing the CIA's business overseas.

If there was an agenda at Mount Etjo - beyond demonstrating NED's continued utility - it may well have been to bolster emerging Mozambican and Angolan parties that may be marginalised as the ruling parties square off against their primary opponents, Renamo and Unite. Unite has access to \$30 million in CIA funds appropriated before last year's ceasefire. According to a NED document obtained by SouthSoan, the Congress: Anal Human Rights Foundation submitted a for a \$41,250 grant for 'Friends of Mozambique' to hold seminars on human rights and democracy! The foundation is run as a

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liberalDemocrat.

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NED document dated April 19, 1991
was submitted on January 24, 1991.

Among those present at NDIIA's re-
cent workshop were Mozambican
Casimiro Nhamithambo, who founded
his new oppodtion Social Liberal and
Democratic Party amt parting ways
with Palmo, which he helped found.
Also attending from Mozambique
was oppositionist Marcos J uma.
Other workshop participants identi-
fied by the Post included Moses
Tjitendero, the speaker of Namibiaais
national assembly, Peter Koep, head of
the Namibian Peace Plan, Michael
Mothobi, legal adviser to the Botswana
National Front, and Zambian Deputy
Chief Justice Matthew Ngulube.
N gulube headed Zambiafs election
commission'which oversaw the poll last
fall in which voters retired long-time
president Kanneth Kaunda.

Ironically, NED's potential as a weapon of
US policy has been somewhat blunted by
its evolution into a source of grants for
US-based organisations and their foreign
beneficiaries, who are often skilled at
eliciting funds.

In 1990 Ngulube headed the govern-
ment-created commission which pre-
sided over the vote on reinstituting
multi- politics in Zambia.

In addition to seeking new raisons
d'etre, for the last year NED has been
challenged to convince Congress thatit
can clean up its act.

Last year the General Accounting
OHioe, Congress's investigative agency,
reported that, despite its past prom-
ises, NED had failed to produce evalu-
ations of almost all the projects it had
funded . over \$130 million during its
lifespan.

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Hustling, rather than ideology, is the
predominant theme of several docu-
ments made available to SouthScan.

Osmr Dhlomo, executive chairman
of South Africa's Institute for Multi-
, who was formerly

tary-general, tells NED
president Carl last April 12 that his
institute had signed an agreement with
the US Agency for International Devel-
opment (US AID) tn 'Tund the Institute
from their budget' andthanksthe NED
preddentTorymuverywelcome grant? ,
That grant, to the memo

(whichdoesnotmention either amount)
was made the Joint Centerfor
Politiml and Economic Studies, Inc, a
blackJed Washington think-tank. -

The Joint Center's name appears on a number of NED grants in endowment documents that SouthScan has seen.

Among them:

0 a \$44, 000 grant for 'IMDESA (Institute for Multi-Party Democracy) Dhlomo civic education project (South Africa)' approved on January 18, 1991 (possibly the grant referred to in Dhlomo e fax);

0 a \$34,000 grant for IDASA's Institute for a Democratic Africa on Goree Island in Senegal;

0 \$40, 000 for "Botswana Democracy Project";

' \$44, 000 and \$40,000 for media and human rights work in Sudan and Uganda respectively.

' The King/Lithuli (sic) Transformation Center in Johannesburg, received a \$20, 000 NED grant 11/18/1990 through the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change (headed by Dr. King's widow and based in Atlanta, Georgia.)

Another document obtained from a NED source appears to be an internal memo of another favourite NED subcontractor, the Washington-based Center for Democracy.

The memo, dated April 16, 1991, recapitulates the travails of the centre in trying to obtain \$75,000-3100,000 of the \$10 million which Congress was then considering appropriating for the ANC and other South African political groups.

In March 1991, centre director Allen Weinstein conducted an exhaustive series of meetings in South Africa - some with Inkatha and Azapo representatives and with Ntshatlo Motlana ("conh dant of Mandela" the memo notes, parenthetically). but most with South African-based US AID and embassy officials, whose goodwill, the memo makes clear, would be important when it came time to divvy up the \$10 million.

US officials asked whether the centre would be opening an office in South Africa and involving itself in substantive work. But, according to the memo, Weinstein replied he wanted to focus on the initial 575,000-8100,000 contract to do a "needs assessment" for the ANC and Inkatha. The memo relates that 'Amb. Swings opens the meeting by saying how glad he is that the Center is going to be working in South Africa, citing ... his knowledge of AWEWinst-Mnland the Center's work in other parts of the world. '

One recent Weinstein foray was to Bulgaria, where, as head of a team of scholars, he was to explore the larger role of intelligence agencies in a democracy, 'in the words of the New York Times. He was also to investigate the alleged Bulgarian connection in the

1980 attempt to assassinate Pope John
Paul II. Weinstein's planned year-long
mission, which began last spring, was
overshadowed by revelations in the
1990s, during the US Senate hearings
on Robert Gates' nomination to head
the CIA that the 'Bulgarian operation'
was a CIA concoction. (Own corre-
spondent)

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