

S. Africa, U.S. Push Angola Line

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ADDIS ABABA, Jan. 5—In what appears to be an unparalleled diplomatic campaign across Africa, President Ford has sent a personal message and a top State Department aide to rally moderate African states in support of two pro-Western Angolan nationalist groups before the Organization of African Unity begins its summit meeting here Saturday.

The effort, in which the United States and South Africa have shown a remarkable coincidence of activity and proposals, stands in sharp contrast to the "benign neglect," or indifference, that has marked U.S. policy toward Africa in the past decade.

There is no confirmation available that Pretoria and Washington have been coordinating their pre-summit diplomacies directly, but their parallel efforts suggest that the two governments may be in contact over strategy.

The common problem facing both capitals is the presence of South African

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forces inside Angola. The involvement of Pretoria's white troops has helped the Soviet-backed Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola win the backing of nearly half of the OAU's 46 member states.

Last week South Africa offered to withdraw its troops from Angola if the Soviet Union and Cuba reciprocated. Pretoria has tried to bolster the position of the two pro-Western groups, the National Front for the Liberation of Angola and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA).

It is understood here that

the United States is urging moderate and other still uncommitted African governments to show up at the summit conference and block the Popular Movement from gaining formal diplomatic recognition from the African body. The best way to do this, it is argued, is to call for an Angolan government of national unity comprising all three warring parties.

The presence of South African forces and advisers in Angola has become a serious embarrassment to the National Front and UNITA, and is partly responsible for their failure so far to gain diplomatic recognition for their joint government from any African country.

In addition to helping purify their tarnished image in African eyes, the South African proposal would seem to give these two pro-Western groups added bargaining power in their efforts to get the Cuban troops, who are reported to number as many as 7,500, and the 400 to 500 Soviet advisers aiding the Popular Movement out of Angola.

(Washington sources reported that the U.S. government is considering asking South Africa to state specifically that it plans to get out of Angola before the African summit conference. The sources said the United States had originally urged South African entry as a desperation short-term move to prevent the Popular Movement from overrunning Angola.)

President Ford has sent a message to an undisclosed number of African leaders, including Uganda President Idi Amin, the current African Organization chairman, urging an end to all foreign interference in the Angolan war and a government of national unity as a basis for a settlement.

Today, Amin and Liberian President William Tolbert both called for removal of foreign troops and an Angolan national unity government during ceremonies inaugurating Tolbert for an eight-year term.

The strength of the Ford proposal is that it parallels closely the official stand of the Organization of African Unity, which has sought for months to reconcile the three Angolan parties and to achieve a three-

way coalition government.

But its basic weakness is that past attempts by the three groups to cooperate in a Portuguese-led transitional government just prior to Angola's independence Nov. 11 were a total failure, and the Popular Movement has since repeatedly rejected all calls for another coalition government or even for negotiations with the other two groups.

Instead, the Popular Movement has proposed another kind of "national unity government" dominated by its own leaders but also including sympathizers, although not the top officials of the other two parties.

Thus, getting the African

organization to re-endorse its position of a settlement based on a three-way coalition government would represent a major diplomatic victory for the National Front and UNITA as well as for the United States and South Africa.

The main obstacle to obtaining this objective could be the failure of the moderate African leaders to attend the summit meeting here. This would leave the meeting in control of the large minority of African states — 20 to date — already committed to the Popular Movement.

William E. Schaefe Jr., the new U.S. Assistant Secretary of African Affairs, has just completed a 10-day tour to five moderate African countries — Zaire, Gabon, Cameroon, the Ivory Coast and Senegal — in what is believed here to be partly an effort to get the leaders of these and other like-minded governments to attend the summit.

So far, the African organization secretariat here has received confirmation that the leaders of six countries — Somalia, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Botswana, Gambia and Mauritius — will definitely attend. All but Gambia and Botswana have already recognized or promised to recognize the Popular Movement as the sole legitimate government of Angola.

But secretariat sources said today that they have received unofficial word that both Zaire President Sese Seko Mubutu and Zambia President Kenneth Kaunda are also planning

to attend. These two African leaders are the main supporters of the National Front-UNITA coalition government and command considerable respect among moderates on the continent.

Other sources said President Mobutu is bringing a delegation of 50 members, indicating that he is preparing for a major battle in defense of the National Front and UNITA.

Altogether, the secretariat expects a total of at least 13 and perhaps as many as 20 African leaders to be present at the conference, plus lower-ranking delegations from practically all 46 member states.

Both factions are expected to agree readily to condemning the presence of South African troops inside Angola. Not even the most moderate African states, including those known to have regular contacts with South Africa, are likely to dissent on this.

The remaining issues include whether the African summit will vote for the withdrawal of all foreign forces or simply that of South Africa troops inside Angola, and whether Cuba and the Soviet Union will be mentioned by name.

Even without specific mention of the two Communist countries, a vote in favor of the withdrawal of all foreign forces would be a partial victory for the National Front and UNITA, since both have been supporting this position despite their dependence on South African military assistance.

The most heated debate is likely to be over formal recognition of the Popular Movement as the sole legitimate government of Angola. If all 46 African countries are present, the pro-National Front and UNITA bloc could theoretically carry the day and force through an endorsement of the standing African position in favor of a government of national unity.

But the pro-Popular Movement faction has only to persuade three or four other African states to have an absolute majority in its favor.