

U.S. in Angola first: Senators

ANALYSIS

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WASHINGTON — Some Senate opponents of U.S. involvement in Angola believe the United States began supplying covert aid to that nation before the Soviet Union did.

These Senate Foreign Relations Committee members also suggest the goals of secret U.S. aid were to protect neighboring black African governments and to avoid stirring up racial troubles in Rhodesia and South Africa.

They want an investigation of reports the United States began supplying covert aid to Angola much earlier than last March, the date given by the administration.

The senators say Soviet involvement in Angola may have begun after the United States already had been supplying arms to two democratic Angolan factions through neighboring Zaire and Zambia, considered anti-Communist by U.S. officials.

The goal of the administration, these Senators say, was to create a coalition government from the two favored factions in the former Portuguese colony, which gained independence Nov. 11.

Sen. Dick Clark, D-Iowa, chairman of the subcommittee on Africa, recently told the committee that U.S. involvement in Angola was intended to help prevent fanning racial unrest in Rhodesia and South Africa.

Clark helped blow the cover on the covert CIA aid to Angola by holding public hearings on the administration's sharply increased request for military security aid to Zaire. Clark's statement that aid was being funnelled through Zaire proved correct.

Clark did not oppose helping Democratic factions fighting for control of Angola, but strenuously objected to covert aid.

Clark sponsored a joint resolution that would prohibit covert aid for Angola, but allow the President to ask Congress openly for aid to democratic factions there.

Sen. Hubert Humphrey, D-Minn., said in the same meeting he opposed providing aid to Angola in a manner even indirectly linking the United States to South African operations there.

Humphrey said a hint America was associated in any way with South Africa would have disastrous results on U.S. relations with politically moderate black African governments.