

Ford: U.S. not training Angola mercenaries

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Ford declared flatly yesterday that the United States is not training foreign mercenaries to fight in Angola. But he refused to deny that the government is providing money for such training.

Ford also said that the United States is "making some headway" in getting the Soviet Union to end its military support in Angola.

He made his comments in a 19-minute interview with NBC commentators John Chancellor and Tom Brokaw for broadcast tomorrow night.

The President said flatly, "The United States is not training foreign mercenaries in Angola."

Angola is similar to Vietnam, but also very different, veteran Saigon correspondent Peter Arnett finds. Page 22.

His press secretary, Ron Nessen, declined to say whether the United States was training foreigners for Angolan operations.

But the President continued, "We do expend some federal funds or United States funds — in trying to be helpful. But we are not training foreign mercenaries."

When asked if the United States is financing the training of foreign mercenaries for Angola, Ford replied, "We are working with other countries that feel they have an interest in giving the Angolans an opportunity to make the decision for themselves, and I think this is a proper responsibility of the federal government."

In Moscow, the Soviet Union denied yesterday that it is seeking military or economic gain in Angola and called for the end of foreign armed intervention in the civil war. In a Pravda article the U.S.S.R. said it is not intervening, but is supporting a faction it considers legitimate.

The President said that detente must be continued "in the best interest of world stability, world peace."

He predicted that Americans will support detente when they take a good look at its benefits. In the election campaign of 1976, "I think any candidate who says abandon detente will be the loser in the long run," he said.

He said that the United States is working with all powers, including the Soviet Union, to help the three different Angolan groups now engaged in a civil war find a solution "that will reflect a majority view of the Angolan people."

"What we really want ... is to get an African solution to an African problem and through bilateral negotiations, through working with the Organization of African Unity, through relations with the Soviet Union and others, we are trying to achieve that," he said.

Ford said that he believed if the American people are "fully informed" as to the aims of the American government "in trying to let the Angolans and Africans come to a solution, I think in time the American people will support what we have been trying to do in Angola."