

Possible Soviet Shift on Angola



AP Wirephoto

RICHARD B. CHENEY
White House chief of staff

Washington

The Ford administration is "encouraged" by new signs that the Soviet Union "now endorses the principle that all foreigners should clear out of Angola," the White House chief of staff said yesterday.

Richard B. Cheney cautioned on "Face the Nation," on CBS-TV, that it is too early to say whether these new signals will be followed by Soviet withdrawal from Angola.

But if such a withdrawal does come about, Cheney at least raised the possibility that President Ford's response might include acceding to the Senate's demand to cut off secret American aid to forces in Angola.

"What has happened in Angola within the last day or two," said Cheney, "is at least a preliminary indication, publicly — an unsigned editorial in Pravda — that the Soviet Union now endorses at least the principle that all foreigners should clear out of Angola.

"Whether or not that is a solid indication that will lead to results that they will no longer be actively involved in Angola, nor will the Cubans, only time will tell," he added.

"We're encouraged by it," said Cheney in speaking for the Ford administration. "We'll have to wait and see what developments occur over the next few weeks to determine whether or not they'll continue down that path."

Asked if Soviet disengagement would sidetrack any presidential appeal to the House to reverse the Senate's 54-to-22 vote last month to cut off CIA funds for Angola, Cheney replied, "It's too soon to tell."

While the White House chief of staff linked that reply to Congress still being in recess, some diplomatic observers read his answer as a signal to the Soviet Union of American willingness to participate in a mutual disengagement from financing forces in Angola.

President Ford himself, in an interview taped by NBC for use tonight, said "we are making some headway" with the Soviet Union to end foreign involvement in Angola, "but I can't say categorically that the end result is what we want it to be at the present time."

The Pravda editorial printed Saturday said "The Soviet Union comes out firmly for the termination of foreign armed intervention in Angola." But the declaration made no mention of Soviet and Cuban military personnel already in Angola — an omission that may

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mean Moscow does not consider Communist personnel in Angola part of the "foreign armed intervention."

Through such messages, the White House said, President Ford is trying to establish a dialogue with African leaders in advance of the Organization of African Unity conference on Angola scheduled to open Thursday in Addis Ababa.

John A. Marcum, provost at the University of California at Santa Cruz and scholar on Angola, predicted that unless South Africa withdraws from Angola, the meeting of African leaders in Addis Ababa will bring a condemnation of South African intervention "and perhaps produce recognition of the Popular Movement government without any change at all."

He said the Ford administration has "proclaimed that Soviet and Cuban intervention is wrong" but has been "unwilling to say anything about South Africa."

Such silence, he said on "Meet the Press" (NBC), links South Africa and the United States in the minds of Africans abroad. In this country, such a linkage with a racist government could turn out to be "a very dangerous issue" politically, Marcum said.

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