

Ford Is 'Angry' Over Stories of U.S. Meddling

Washington

The White House reacted angrily yesterday to news accounts of secret U.S. involvement in Angola's war and Italy's politics.

White House press secretary Ron Nessen refused to confirm or deny that the Central Intelligence Agency had increased its covert support for non-Communist political parties in Italy by giving them \$6 million.

But he described President Ford as being "angry" at seeing the story in print and said that, whether true or not, the account undermined the government's conduct of foreign policy.

The Washington Post and The New York Times yesterday quoted authoritative sources describing the covert aid to Italy's non-Communist parties, principally the Christian Democratic Party.

Nessen said there is a "strong suspicion" at the White House that the allegation of CIA funds flowing into Italian politics originated in Congress. CIA Director William E. Colby briefed congress-

sional committees last month on the covert aid. Nessen said the episode raises questions about how to keep Congress "responsibly" informed on intelligence operations.

The White House denied as "totally false" and "irresponsible" a claim by Senator John V. Tunney (Dem-Calif.) that Ameri-

Back Page Col. 6

From Page 1

can pilots have flown weapons into Angola. However, Nessen did not rule out the possibility that American foreign aid funds may be used to launch operations in Angola from the neighboring country of Zaire.

Tunney said Tuesday that American pilots have been airlifting weapons from Zaire into Angola on U.S.-built C-130 cargo planes. Tunney did not say whether his information showed that they were members of American armed forces or mercenaries.

Nessen said there are not American pilots flying into Angola and that neither American ground crews nor support missions are involved in the airlift. Tunney's assertions, he said, are "irresponsible and it does not serve the interests of the United States to have false allegations made by a U.S. Senator."

However, Nessen said it is not possible to rule out the chance that some American "soldiers of fortune" might be involved, though not paid by U.S. government funds. "it is not possible to keep track of every American over there in West Africa," he said.

Similarly, Nessen would not rule out the possibility that some U.S. foreign assistance funds were being used by Zaire to subsidize an airlift operation. "We are giving small amounts of assistance to countries in Africa," he said, "and we can't say how every penny of that money is being spent."

Nessen also said that the White House views with "dismay" the presence of a Soviet guided-missile destroyer and a landing ship for tanks in African waters, apparently headed for Angola. "The presence of the ships is continuing evidence of the Soviet involvement where they have no legitimate business," he said.