

Text of Ford Letter to Nigeria's Leader on U.S. Attitude on Angola

LAGOS, Nigeria, Jan. 7 (Reuters) — Following, as made public today by the Nigerian Government, is the text of a letter on the Angolan situation from President Ford to Brig. Muritala Muhammed, the Nigerian chief of state.

Your excellency:

During this critical period in African and world affairs, I believe it would be useful to give you my views on the Angolan situation.

Since your Government has recognized the M.P.L.A. regime as the government of Angola, I believe it is necessary that there be no misunderstanding about our position.

In turn, I would welcome any ideas and suggestions which, I am sure, you will offer in the spirit of friendship and cooperation that I present my thoughts to you.

The objective of United States policy in Angola has been to counter efforts by the Soviet Union to impose one faction as the government of Angola.

Our view has been that only a government composed of all groups can claim to represent that country.

We have consequently refrained from recognizing any faction as the government. We have several times called for an end to all foreign intervention and have repeatedly stated our willingness to cooperate with such an endeavor.

As President of a country which has global responsibilities, I want you to know how seriously we regard this Soviet intervention 8,000 miles from its borders, outside its traditional area of security interest. The Soviet action could have grave future implications elsewhere in the world.

I wish to assure you that we see the M.P.L.A. as one of the three legitimate factions in Angola. We seek neither the destruction nor the defeat of the M.P.L.A.

But we do believe that it should not be allowed to assume total power by force of Soviet and Cuban arms.

We hope a government of national unity will emerge, and we stand ready to provide reconstruction assistance when that happens.

On the South African question, I wish to state that the U.S. in no way sought or encouraged the South Africans to become involved in Angola, nor were we consulted. They acted, no doubt, in defense of their national interest as they see it.

We did not initiate any consultation with them and have maintained our military embargo on all arms to South Africa.

We share your concern over their presence and desire it to end just as we do that of the Soviet Union and Cuba.

We will do our utmost to bring about their withdrawal in the interest of withdrawal of all foreign forces.

The upcoming O.A.U. summit meeting on Angola can clearly be extremely important in promoting an early end to the fighting and a peaceful settlement of the civil war.

It is our hope that the O.A.U. will insist upon a prompt end to all foreign involvement in Angola, arrange a standstill cease-fire between the forces, and bring about negotiations among the Angolan groups.

My Government would support such an initiative and cooperate with it, provided other distant powers do so as well. We would al-

so, in that case, urge South Africa to end its involvement.

We cannot however, stand idly by if the Soviet and Cuban intervention persists.

I would be pleased to learn your reaction to the foregoing, and I hope we can continue to exchange views on this and other matters of mutual concern.

Sincerely,
GERALD R. FORD