

2 Soviet Ships Moving Toward Angola Stir Growing

By JOHN W. FINNEY
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Jan. 7—Administration officials continued to display uncertainty today over the mission of two Soviet ships heading south in the Atlantic in the general direction of Angola.

With intelligence analysts reporting that the vessels' mission remained unclear, Pentagon officials said that there were no immediate plans to send American warships into the South Atlantic.

According to the analysts, the mission of the Soviet vessels—a guided missile destroyer and an amphibious landing ship—may not become clear until they rendezvous in the next few days.

One possibility being studied at the Pentagon was that the ship movements were part of routine Soviet naval deployments in the South Atlantic, but the growing opinion in the intelligence community was that the movements were related to the conflict in Angola, where a Soviet-supported group is fighting two Western-supported factions.

Possibly Show of Force

Mounting concern was expressed by the Administration that the Soviet naval activity was designed as a show of force in the Angolan conflict.

The Presidential press secretary, Ron Nessen, said at a White House press briefing that the presence of the two Soviet ships off the coast of Africa was "further evidence of a continuing Soviet involvement in an area where they have no legitimate interests."

"The President views this with the same dismay as he views the over-all Soviet intervention in Angola," Mr. Nessen said.

President Ford discussed the Angola situation today at the White House with Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld and Lieut. Gen. Brent Scowcroft, the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs.

Watched With Concern

Despite the uncertainty over the mission of the Soviet ships, officials at the White House, the State Department and the Defense Department all emphasized that the vessels' movements were being watched with growing concern.

There was a dampening of

the guarded optimism expressed by Administration officials over the weekend that a diplomatic solution could be found to end foreign involvement in Angola. This change in attitude was accompanied by growing pessimism that the tide of battle in the conflict was shifting in favor of the Soviet-supported Popular Movement of the Liberation of Angola.

Mr. Nessen made clear that the Administration still hoped to induce the Soviet Union through diplomatic means to end its involvement in Angola. But he added that "today, as yesterday, there is nothing that I can tell you that indicates progression" on this.

Toward Congo Port

As reported by the intelligence community, the Soviet guided missile destroyer, which had come from the Mediterranean, was steaming off Gabon on a southeasterly course that would take it to the vicinity of Angola. The destroyer, of the 3,885-ton Kotlin class, was accompanied by an oiler, which is normal Soviet procedure for refueling its warships on extended missions.

The amphibious ship, which has been off the West Africa coast for several weeks, was reported steaming slowly toward Pointe Noire, a port in Congo, which has close ties with the Soviet Union and which has been used for about

a year as a transit point for movement of Soviet military equipment to Angola.

The amphibious ship is of the class of Soviet vessels that can carry and land tanks as well as assault troops. As far as is known, there are no tanks aboard the ship, but officials here said there were some indications that 100 to 150 naval infantry troops—the Soviet equivalent of United States marines—were on the ship.

Pentagon officials said that no United States warships had been ordered into the South Atlantic to follow or serve as a counter to the Soviet ships. There are no United States warships in the South Atlantic now. The closest are in the Mediterranean, where the carriers John F. Kennedy and Independence are deployed.

Lisbon Bars Azores Use

Special to The New York Times

LISBON, Jan. 7 — Portugal said today that it categorically refused to allow the Azores Islands to be used as a transit point for arms or matériel to any one of the warring factions in Angola.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, José Medeiros Ferreira, issued a statement to define Portugal's position on the Azores after a Socialist deputy had challenged the Government on reports that Portugal's mid-Atlantic islands were being used as a refueling

stop for a Cuban airlift to Angola.

Deputy Jaime Gama of the Azores brought to the attention of the National Assembly reports in several Azores newspapers that Cuban aircraft were landing at the airport of Santa Maria Island with personnel and war matériel for the Soviet-supported Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola.

U.S. Has No Comment

The Azorean press has also reported that the Americans were using their air base at Lajes in the Azores for refueling aircraft taking military equipment to the two pro-Western Angolan movements, the National Front for the Liberation of Angola and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola.

United States Embassy sources here had no comment to make on the reports today. They insisted, however, that the United States had no direct flights into Angola.

Portuguese sources close to the Government said that the Azores had been used by the Cubans for their Angolan airlift without the Government knowledge but that the flights had now apparently been discontinued.

Cuban aircraft used the Santa Maria airport at least from Dec. 20 to 30, according to informed sources. Witnesses reported seeing Bristol Britannia turbo-props and Sov-

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IL-62 jets, carrying combat troops with arms.

Mr. Gama asked if the Government had authorized the Cuban airlift and pointed out Portugal's declared policy of neutrality toward the three rival factions in Angola.

"Our efforts are directed toward the elimination of all foreign intervention in Angola and for the establishment of a government of national union," Mr. Medeiros Ferreira, the secretary of state for foreign affairs, said in a telephone interview.

Military aid is not believed to be going from Lisbon to any of the Angolan factions.

Nevertheless, Portuguese sources at the Lisbon airport say that large amounts of food were being flown from here to the Popular Movement in Luanda.

The Foreign Ministry official said that he had no knowledge of supplies of any kind being flown to the Popular Movement from here.