

Gulf Seeks Restart Of Angola Drilling

WXPost

FEB 21 1976

Cuba Briefings Talks Asked

By Austin Scott

Washington Post Staff Writer

More than a dozen American organizations, most of them black, have been invited to Cuba next week for briefings on the civil war in Angola by the Soviet and Cuban-supported faction, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA).

Lennox Hinds, director of the National Conference of Black Lawyers, said the invitation was extended by the MPLA through the Cuban mission at the United Nations for Feb. 23 through March 2.

Hinds said his 4,000-member organization will send a representative. He said that on behalf of the MPLA he extended an invitation to the Congressional Black Caucus.

Sources indicated that the 17-member caucus had not made a decision on the invitation.

Julian Torres Rizo, first

See INVITE A8, Col. 1

By Don Oberdorfer

Washington Post Staff Writer

Gulf Oil Corp. said yesterday it is seeking direct negotiations with the Soviet- and Cuban-backed regime in Angola with an eye to resuming production in oil fields there.

Gulf's action, which came after discussions with the State Department, is considered the first move toward eventual U.S. dealings with the MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola), which is winning the Angolan civil war.

James E. Lee, Gulf's president, was quoted by Business Week magazine yesterday as saying, "We would have no trouble working with any government in Angola." Reliable reports said Gulf has made contacts with the MPLA outside the capital of Luanda. A company spokesman confirmed that direct negotiations are now being sought.

See GULF, A8, Col. 2

Gulf Seeks Restart Of Angola Drilling

Gulf, From A 1

"We have heard nothing yet, but we are now ready to resume operations if this can be worked out," the Gulf spokesman said.

Gulf's 125 offshore oil wells near the Angolan enclave of Cabinda are a potential source of extensive funds both for the multinational oil firm and the Angolan regime. The low-sulphur crude from the Angolan wells accounted for 20 per cent of the oil processed by Gulf in the United States last year, and accounted for close to 10 per cent of all Gulf overseas profits.

For the MPLA, royalties and taxes from the Gulf production would bring about \$500 million annually under existing contracts. For this reason, the MPLA is reported to be eager to resume production. Sources said the MPLA has signaled Gulf of its desire to renegotiate the concession con-

Gulf came under pressure from the State Department last December to suspend its drilling operations while the battle for control of Angola was urging Gulf not to pay the MPLA \$125 million in royalties and taxes coming due at the end of the year, on grounds that claims from rival factions placed the identity of the "Government of Angola" in dispute.

Had Gulf made its scheduled payment, it would have been paying about four times as much to the MPLA as the U.S. government had authorized in CIA secret aid to the U.S.-backed factions who were fighting against the MPLA.

Gulf announced in late December that it placed the

\$125 million into a special interest-bearing account to be disbursed when a government is "in control of the territory and population and . . . has been generally recognized by the world community."

Backed by Soviet arms and 12,000 Cuban troops, the MPLA has taken effective control of most key points. Its regime in Luanda has been recognized by more than 70 countries, including 37 of the 46 African states.

The Gulf spokesman said yesterday that the MPLA has been widely recognized. But he added that, for now, the \$125 million is still being held in the special account.

In view of the situation in Angola, the State Department is reported to have withdrawn its objections to Gulf's dealings with the MPLA. Officials said State has no legal authority to stop Gulf.

The company has been under growing pressure from the Luanda regime, which charged the United States with waging "economic war" and threatened to bring in help from other countries to operate the oilfields if Gulf continued to stay aloof.

The United States has refused to grant diplomatic recognition to the MPLA regime. Officials said such a move is unlikely as long as fighting continues.

In the meantime, a decision is reported near on two Boeing 737 jets purchased by the Angolan airline last year.

Cuba Invites U.S. Units For Briefings on Angola

INVITE, From A-1

secretary at the Cuban mission, said he was not authorized to say anything about the meeting, and would have to consult with officials of his government before making any statement.

Other organizations invited according to various sources include several black weekly newspapers, the Black Economic Research Center headquartered in New York City, several black magazines, the American Committee on Africa, the National Council of Churches, and the American Friends Service Committee.

The Friends, the Baltimore Afro-American, the San Francisco Sun-Reporter, Muhammad Speaks and Freedomways Magazine said they would each send one representative.

A National Council of Churches spokesman said his group received an invitation, also through the Cuban U.N. mission, but has not decided whether to go.

Dr. Carleton Goodlett, publisher of the Sun-Reporter, said invitations for specific representatives from the black media were extended to him in his role as president of the black Na-

tional Newspaper Publishers' Association.

Goodlett said his invitation came "from the Cuban government for the specific purpose of explaining its foreign policy... its being in Angola in support of the national liberation movement."

John Sullivan, a spokesman for the Friends, said his organization accepted, to help it get a "balanced perspective" on the Angolan civil war.

"We also have a representative in southern Africa who is also in contact with UNITA and FLNA," the U.S.-backed groups, he said. "In accepting, we informed them we are not MPLA supporters. We are a pacifist organization opposed to Soviet, Cuban or American, or any other foreign intervention."

Sullivan said the invitation was extended to his group by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, headquartered in Philadelphia.

Hinds said the National conference of Black Lawyers, consisting of about 1,000 lawyers and about 3,000 law students in the United States, Canada and the Virgin Islands, believes the Angolan people should decide who fights in their country.

A spokesperson for the Congressional Black Caucus said their position is that Angolans should have the right to determine "the form of government they want to pursue," and that the United States "needs to develop a positive US-African policy" using normal diplomatic channels.

The Cuban U.N. Mission said no one was immediately available to talk about the details of the conference, or exactly who is sponsoring it.

The MPLA backed by an estimated 12,000 Cuban troops, has scored a series of military victories in recent months in southern Angola against UNITA, which is supported by both the United States, and South Africa. In northern Angola, the MPLA and Cuban forces have destroyed FLNA defenses and captured almost every important town.

It has been reported that the MPLA sent a secret message to Secretary of State Henry Kissinger asking for talks with the United States.

The MPLA leaders have been reported saying they would ask Cuban and Soviet troops to leave Angola once the civil war is over and their government fears no armed opposition.