

Soviet Arms

To Angola

—A Theory

Washington

Last month's massive Soviet military airlift to the dominant faction in the Angolan civil war was in part a response to a covert arms supply from the United States that began last summer, intelligence sources here believe.

Despite public denunciation of the Soviet intervention by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and other U.S. officials, the initial decision to intervene in Angola with money and weapons might have been made in Washington, not Moscow, according to these sources.

The precise motivation for the Soviet decision, probably taken late in the summer, cannot be measured exactly. But sources close to policy-making levels in the administration believe that a decision by President Ford and Kissinger last June set the stage for the growing superpower rivalry in the former Portuguese colony.

"It is a standard action-reaction cycle," one source said. "Now the Soviets have reacted, and the administration will have to make a basic decision whether to up the ante and call them, or fold."

The Chinese, who supplied arms and advisers to anti-Soviet factions in Angola through the summer, virtually closed down their Angola operation last month, apparently fearing a "super power" image in black Africa.

The United States up to now has sent weapons to the two anti-Soviet factions in Angola by means of a clandestine airlift to Kinshasa, Zaire. The airlift has drawn on arms depots in the continental United States and NATO arsenals in West Germany.

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