

Kissinger, Aides Clash on Angola

Washington

The Ford administration's decision to conduct a stepped-up covert intervention in the Angolan civil war was the occasion of sharp disagreement between Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and some of his most senior African affairs advisers.

Among the official dissenters to the increased level of U.S. participation in what by now must be the most widely publicized secret intervention in recent history was Nathaniel Davis, who resigned in August as director of the State Department's Bureau of African Affairs.

Sources in the department familiar with the long-concealed internal dispute attributed Davis' departure from the top African affairs policy-making post to his conflict with Kissinger over the U.S. position on Angola.

"Davis wrote a memo last spring saying in effect, 'Let these guys fight it out among themselves and when the dust clears we will find we have not lost very much,'" according to one department source.

The conflict between Kissinger and the specialists at the policy-desk level stems from contradictory perceptions of how the conflict in Angola affects long-term U.S. interests.

Kissinger has dramatically denounced Soviet support of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola as a seriously "destabilizing" development on the continent.

There have been published reports attributed to high-ranking but anonymous officials in Washington that the United States has authorized \$50 million in arms and supplies to the opposing National Front for the Liberation of Angola and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola.

According to the terms in which the conflict has been widely portrayed in Washington, the Soviet Union along with Cuban volunteers have enabled the Popular Movement to make unacceptable headway against the two rival American-supported and supposedly "non-Communist" organizations.

Senior analysts in the Bureau of African Affairs, led by Davis,

tended to take a less-alarmed view of the consequences of the civil strife in Angola than Kissinger and his top advisers.

The Kissinger view of the crisis as a significant U.S.-Soviet quarrel in Africa appears to be shared by the Pentagon and the top management of the Central Intelligence Agency, according to sources familiar with the internal governmental deliberations on.

"The CIA and Defense Department are tending to look at this in global, cold war ideological terms," said one nongovernmental specialist in African affairs. "There seems to have been no disposition at the top to interpret events in African terms."

The United States through most of the 1960s supported Holden Roberto, head of the National Front, which was fighting for independence from Portugal when it was ruled by a military dictatorship. In 1969, however, the Nixon administration ended assistance to Roberto because of its desire to improve relations with the government of Antonio Salazar, which was overthrown last year by a military coup, according to a government official with access to secret intelligence information.

Davis, who was appointed ambassador to Switzerland after quitting the African affairs post, found himself a figure of controversy because he was ambassador to Chile in 1973 when a military coup overthrew the late President Salvador Allende, who was opposed by the Nixon administration. And now, once again, the mild-mannered diplomat finds himself the embodiment of a major internal U.S. policy dispute — only this time in opposition to the policies chosen by his superiors.

When Davis left the Bureau of African Affairs in August, State Department officials were quoted as saying that the move was prompted by opposition from the congressional Black Caucus as well as adverse liberal reaction to his role in the Chilean coup. At the same time, word was being passed from the State Department to individual members of the Black Caucus that Davis was "ineffective" and had "no basic policies" for Africa, according to one veteran State Department specialist in African affairs.

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