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Congress Divided
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Over Angola Aid

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Disclosures of secret American assistance to two of the three factions fighting in Angola has sparked a battle in Congress over whether that funding should continue.

The factions each control a separate portion of the African nation and are fighting for dominance. Two of them have been receiving U.S. money and supplies, reportedly funneled through neighboring Zaire. The third has been receiving support from the Soviet Union.

State Department and Central Intelligence Agency officials have argued to Congress that Moscow's growing support for one faction makes a U.S. response essential to counter the threat of a Soviet takeover in an area vital to future U.S. interests.

After Congress returns Jan. 19 from its holiday recess, the House is to vote on a Senate amendment to the defense appropriations bill that would forbid any further covert military aid to Angola.

Supporters of channeling some assistance to the U.S.-backed Angolan factions generally express little enthusiasm for the Ford administration's covert military supply program. But they have refused to join efforts to cut off the aid, fearing such a move would lock the executive branch into an inflexible foreign policy.

"I am not ready, frankly, to endorse the use of funds for covert purposes in Angola," said Senate Minority Whip Robert P. Griffin (R-Mich.), "but neither am I ready to say that the executive branch should not have some flexibility."

Opposing the amendment to terminate U.S. assistance, which has been estimated at up to \$60 million, Griffin asked: "Should there be no way that we can provide any assistance to the majority of the people of Angola who are resisting Soviet imperialism at the present time?"

Soviet intervention is the reason cited most frequently for continuing U.S. aid. "I am not overenthusiastic about any of this," declared Senate Appropriations Chairman

John L. McClellan (D-Ark.), "but I do think we are going to put ourselves in a position where . . . every time Russia wants to expand, and we are in that area, then we start retreating."

Daniel P. Moynihan, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, warned in a recent news conference that Russian domination of Angola would threaten international shipping routes. If the United States unilaterally withdrew, he said, the "Communists would take over Angola and will thereby considerably control the oil shipping lanes from the Persian Gulf to Europe. They will be next to Brazil. They will have a large chunk of Africa, and the world will be different in the aftermath if they succeed."

The cutoff amendment passed the Senate, 54 to 22.

Opponents of continued U.S. support for Angolan factions argued that the involvement carries all the possibilities of turning into another Vietnam for the United States—an ever-growing commitment to a no-win situation.

"I am sorry that we . . . have to enter into a . . . dialogue with respect to American intervention in underdeveloped areas of the world," Sen. John V. Tunney (D-Calif.) told the Senate. "I am tired, the Congress is tired, the American people are tired of the United States intruding into areas where it should not be."

He contends that the strife in Angola is an internal conflict growing out of generations of tribal animosity, rather than a struggle of communism versus democracy. This runs counter to State Department arguments that the Soviet Union has chosen Angola to mount a challenge to the United States.

Tunney and others argue, too, that Washington is jeopardizing future relations with other African nations because it is backing factions supported by the white-minority government of South Africa and that any outside intervention is resented.