

African View of U.S., Soviet Aid to Angola

Nairobi, Kenya

Some African leaders and journalists who are not Soviet sympathizers are publicly condoning Moscow's assistance to an armed political group in Angola while condemning America's smaller and less blatant help to the opposing camps.

"The issue, put simply," said the leader of an international African Christian church group, "is that the Soviets have had a historical involvement with the African liberation struggle against the Portuguese while the United States was on the other side."

The minister, who asked not to be identified, has been active in conciliation efforts with the Angolan groups.

For 15 years, he said, the Soviets have assisted the Popular Movement for the liberation of Angola in its fight against Portuguese rule, both directly and through the Organization of African Unity.

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the minister noted, Moscow has backed the Mozambique Liberation widely known as Frelimo, and, in Guinea-Bissau, the African Party for the Independence of Portuguese Guinea and the Cape Verde Islands.

Until November 11, when the Portuguese left Angola, the Soviets were "allies in the liberation struggle," the minister said.

He added, however, that the large scale of Soviet and Cuban assistance to the Popular Movement has alarmed some of those who favor their support.

As for the United States, the minister said, even though the American Gulf Oil Corp. has given nearly three times as much money to the Popular Movement, for oil leases, as the Central Intelligence Agency had hoped to give to the Popular Movement's two rival groups, it is generally viewed as a meddling newcomer to the Angolan scene.

"Even moderate Africans are aware that, during the long struggle against the Portuguese, the Americans were backing the Salazar government" in Lisbon, the minister said.

Tanzania, which was one of the earlier African countries to recognize the Popular Movement, is regarded as being in the leftist camp as a result of Chinese assistance. The government-owned Daily News rejected the idea that Popular Movement leader Agostinho Neto would become an instrument of Soviet imperialism.

"It is ridiculous," said an editorial, "to equate acceptance of Soviet aid with being a 'stooge.' Algeria received some arms from the Soviet Union during her liberation struggle. Is that country a Soviet stooge today?"

"Egypt is probably Africa's largest recipient of Soviet armaments. Is she in any way a Soviet satellite? Nigeria has been receiving some arms from the Soviet Union as has Uganda. Do any of these countries look like stooges of the Soviet Union?"

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