

FORD BARS CUTOFF OF GRAIN TO SOVIET IN ANGOLA DISPUTE

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But Warns Again, in a Talk to Farmers, That Moscow May Damage Relations

CALLS FOR CEASE-FIRE

Says U.S. Also Favors End to Outside Intervention and a Regime of Unity

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By PHILIP SHABECOFF

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ST. LOUIS, Jan. 5—President Ford warned again today that continued Soviet intervention in Angola would damage its "broader relations" with the United States but ruled out any withholding of American grain shipments as a retaliatory weapon against Moscow.

Speaking to a convention of the American Farm Bureau Federation on a chilly day in St. Louis, Mr. Ford said that "it is a serious mistake to assume that linking our exports of grain to the situation in Angola would serve any useful purpose whatsoever."

"In fact," he added, "withholding grain would produce no immediate gain in diplomatic leverage. American grain, while important to the U.S.S.R., is not vital to them."

[The Soviet Union has not given any clear public indication that it is willing to reduce its military involvement in Angola, some diplomats in Moscow said. In Angola, the independence movement supported by the Soviet Union claimed a major gain. Page 3.]

Cease-Fire Favored

President Ford declared that this country would continue diplomatic and other unspecified efforts to "stabilize the military situation in Angola." He said that the United States favored "an immediate cease-fire, an end to all outside intervention and a government of national unity, permitting the solution of the Angolan problem by the Angolans themselves."

In answering questions from a group of Midwestern editors and publishers, President Ford said that he did not assume that the Soviet Union would continue to pour arms and equipment into Angola. An aide said that the President, when asked what would happen if the Russians continued such support, replied:

"I don't assume that is going to happen. I don't think that will be the result. The situation there is better today than it was yesterday."

The aide said the President was using the words today and yesterday figuratively, meaning the situation had recently shown improvement.

Issue of Mercenaries

In an interview videotaped last Saturday and shown on NBC television tonight, Mr. Ford expressed reservations about an unsigned commentary in the Soviet newspaper Pravda, calling for "the termination of foreign armed intervention in Angola." The President expressed doubt that this meant Moscow was prepared to break off its military support of the Marxist-led government set up in the colonial capital of Luanda.

"I don't believe we can say categorically that that is their intention," the President said.

He also said, however, that the United States was continuing to work with the Soviet Union to find a peaceful solution in Angola.

In the interview, Mr. Ford said that while the United States was spending Federal

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funds in Angola "in trying to be helpful," this country is not training foreign mercenaries for combat there.

But when asked if the United States was financing the training of foreign mercenaries, he replied: "We are working with other countries that feel they have an interest in giving the Angolans the opportunity to make the decision for themselves and I think this is a proper responsibility of the Federal Government."

In his speech this morning to 5,000 members of the Farm Bureau Federation, Mr. Ford warned that "the Soviet Union must realize that the Soviet attempt to take unilateral advantage of the Angola problem is inconsistent with the basic principles of Soviet-American relations."

However, curtailing grain shipments to the Soviet Union, he reiterated, would not be a part of United States policy. One reason is, he said, "that there is not the slightest doubt that if we tried to use grain for leverage, the Soviet could get along without American grain and ignore our views."

"The linkage of grain with diplomacy would mean disruption and hardship for you, the farmer, a serious increase in tensions between the two superpowers and no effect on Angola," Mr. Ford said.

A White House aide said that Mr. Ford's remarks on Angola were made with several audiences in mind. One was his immediate audience of conserva-

tive farmers, some of whom have been urging the United States to take a firm approach to Soviet intervention in Angola, but not at the expense of grain sales. Another group to whom the President reportedly directed his remarks was the Organization of African Unity, which is meeting next Saturday. Mr. Ford wanted to get across to this audience his desire for a peaceful settlement and freedom of choice for the Angolans, the aide said.

Finally, the aide said, the President was seeking to give, through his remarks, added impetus to what is perceived as a growing Soviet readiness to adopt a more conciliatory position in Angola.

Suspension Explained

Mr. Ford noted that today's speech was his first major address of the Bicentennial Year. The White House has said that this was a "Presidential" rather than a political speech and, accordingly, the costs of this trip to St. Louis are being paid out of the President's travel funds rather than by the Ford campaign committee.

However, many of the remarks made by Mr. Ford today sounded very much like appeals for farm support for himself and his policy.

He explained at length why he had twice suspended grain exports to the Soviet Union, actions that aroused sharp protests by farmers at the time and that continue to be regarded as a political liability. He said that he did so to head off action by Congress to set up a permanent grain export control board and thus save farmers from having the Government "running your

business, 365 days a year, year in and year out."

His actions, he said, also helped stabilize the international grain market and assured American growers of export sales over an extended period.

The long-term agreement to sell grain to the Soviet Union, he said, "is in the interest of both the American farmer and the American consumer."

The President said that while he would not use grain sales to the Soviet Union as a lever in Angola, a new "agri-power" could be wielded by this country. This power, which he defined as the "power to grow," would be even more potent than "petro-power, the power of those nations with vast exportable petroleum reserves."

Virtues of Farmer

Mr. Ford, in his speech, praised the traditional virtues of the American farmer and identified himself with those virtues.

"You stand for hard work—and so do I," he said. "You stand for the basic morality and dependable qualities that have long characterized rural America—and so do I."

Mr. Ford also said that farm income in 1976 would approach \$25 billion. He noted that this would be the fourth consecutive year that net farm income would exceed the 1972 level—a record up to then—of \$17.3 billion, a figure that included