

American Pilots Alleged in Angola

By Spencer Rich
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American pilots have been airlifting weapons from Zaire into Angola on U.S.-built C-130 cargo planes, Sen. John V. Tunney (D-Calif.) charged yesterday.

Tunney, author of the Senate-passed ban on weapons aid to the Angola civil war, also said representatives of a U.S. aircraft firm have "already come under fire while flying in a helicopter near Luanda in Angola."

"Although it has been known for some months that the United States has been providing weapons and money — up to \$32 million so far, according to congressional testimony — to the two factions it is backing in Angola, yesterday's allegation was the first that U.S. citizens are directly involved in Angolan military operations.

Tunney said his information came "directly from an eyewitness to operations in Angola." The informant is believed to be an official of a U.S. aircraft firm who has just returned from Africa.

Tunney didn't say whether the American pilots are members of the armed forces, employees of the CIA or any other government agency, or simply mercenaries. Nor was he able to say who owns and operates the planes or who pays for the flights.

At the White House, a press aide said that if there are any American pilots flying supplies, "They are not American-government sanctioned, they are not employed by or hired by the American gov government." He said, "We can't control the activities of some American bush pilot who may be there," but if any such pilot is involved, it is without the approval of the U. S. government.

Meanwhile, Sen. Dick Clark (D-Iowa), who teamed up with Tunney in December to push the Angola amendment through the Senate, 54 to 22 (it has yet to be voted on in the House), announced yesterday that his foreign affairs subcommittee will summon Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and CIA Director William Colby, to explain in open hearings Jan. 19 to 23 why the United States undertook covert weapons aid in the Angola civil war.

Clark had sharp criticism for United Nations Ambassador Daniel P. Moynihan, saying his attacks on African leaders like Idi

Amin and Julius Nyerere make it "extremely difficult" to get "much support for the U.S. position" in the forthcoming meeting of the Organization of African Unity.

"In terms of Africans, Moynihan has been a disaster," declared Clark. "He has lost the respect" of key African leaders.

Clark called the Angola conflict "a tribal civil war" and said it would be a "sure disaster" for U.S. interests in black Africa if the United States were to "stay (in Angola), and to stay with the South Africans" who are backing the same groups as the United States.

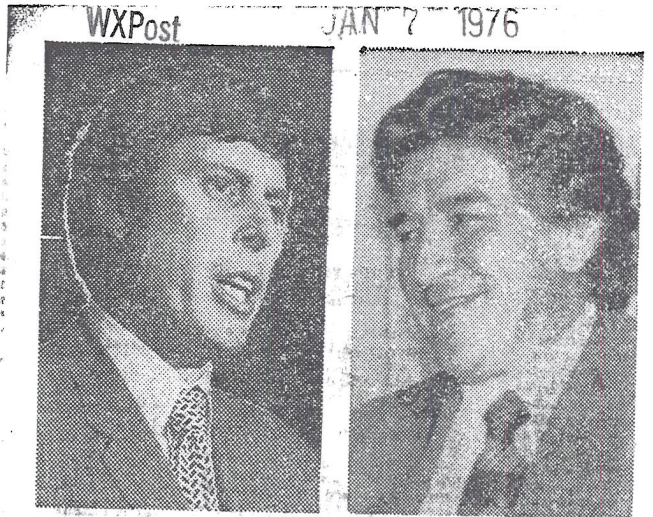
Clark said witnesses will be asked whether U.S. personnel or U.S.-financed mercenaries are being used, what the U.S. perceives to be its strategic interests in Angola, the precise character of the U.S. relationship to South Africa, who initiated the power escalation, and how far Kissinger is prepared to go in providing arms and money.

There is a strong indication that the Angola issue may become embroiled in domestic politics. In December, Senate Republican leaders suddenly reversed themselves and allowed a vote on the amendment cutting off Angola aid. Kissinger was quoted as saying "the vote would make clear to the public who should be held responsible for any U.S. losses in Angola.

Some Democrats believe that in the presidential campaign Republicans may try to blame the congressional Democrats for losing South Vietnam, risking Angola and damaging U.S. relations with Turkey — all by arms cutoff amendments.

Both South Africa and Zaire have American C-130 transport planes, obtained in earlier years, and South African pilots have been seen flying various aircraft into bases of the anti-Communist factions in Angola.

President Ford and Kissinger conferred yesterday about Angola, and on Kissinger's meeting with Soviet Ambassador Anatoly F. Dobrynin Monday night. White House press secretary Ron Nessen, asked to sum up the Kissinger-Dobrynin meeting on the American and Soviet differences on Angola, said, "I wouldn't say it was encouraging or discouraging."



SEN. JOHN V. TUNNEY

SEN. DICK CLARK

... sponsors of amendment cutting off aid to Angola.