

WXPost JAN 8 1976
Nigeria Hits Ford Letter



MURTALA MOHAMMED
...received U.S. note

From News Dispatches

LAGOS, Jan. 7 — The official Nigerian press has used a letter from President Ford seeking support for U.S. policy in Angola to launch the fiercest attack on a foreign government since the new military government took power here in July.

Nigerian External Affairs Minister Col. Joseph Garba said he would ask the summit to resist U.S. pressure for withdrawal of all foreign troops.

The Ford letter, which a State Department spokesman called a simple statement of U.S. Angola policy, said "we cannot...stand idly by if the Soviet and Cuban intervention persists," according to the Nigerian text.

Government-owned Nigerian newspapers said Mr.

Ford's letter to head of state Murtala Mohammed, a text of which they printed, insulted

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S. Africa Seen Near Pullout

United Press International

South Africa has informed the Ford Administration that it is prepared to pull its troops out of Angola in the next 48 hours, before a summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity begins Saturday, authoritative administration sources disclosed last night.

Officially, the State Department would say only that it had not been informed on South Africa's willingness to withdraw its troops.

NIGERIA, From A1
"the intelligence of Africans and the dignity of the black man."

The mass-circulation Daily Times began its commentary on U.S. Angola policy with the headline "Shut Up." The Nigerian Herald used half of its front page for the words "To Hell With America" superimposed on a photograph of Mr. Ford.

"Africa must stand up squarely to the crude bullying and insulting logic of the U.S. government," the Herald said. "President Ford's double-quick march to the right wing for the purpose of a Presidential election cannot be done at the expense of innocent Angolan people."

The vehemence of the attack on President Ford was particularly surprising coming from a country that has pursued a pro-Western policy and been one of the leading exporters of oil to the United States.

In its public rejection of the Ford letter last night, Nigeria called its message "overbearing" and "patronizing." Militarily and economically the most important country in black Africa, Nigeria recently announced its support for the Soviet-backed Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, an action that helped persuade other African governments to recognize the leftist group based in Luanda instead of two rival Angolan movements.

Saturday the 46-nation Organization of African Unity is to meet on Angola add decide whether to recognize the Popular Movement as the sole legitimate government of Angola.

Mr. Ford, according to the Nigerian text, said in his letter that "As President of a country which has global responsibilities I want you to know how seriously we regard this Soviet intervention 8,000 miles from its borders, outside its traditional area of security interests. The Soviet action could have grave implications elsewhere in the world."

"I wish to assure you," the Nigerian text of the Ford letter said, "that we see the (Popular Movement) as one of the three legitimate factions in Angola. We seek neither the destruction nor the defeat of the (Popular Movement)."

"But we do believe that it should not be allowed to assume total power by force of Soviet and Cuban arms," the text said. "We hope a government of national unity will emerge and we stand ready to provide reconstruction assistance when that happens."