

Luanda Regime Reported Seeking Better U.S. Ties

NYTimes By MICHAEL T. KAUFMAN JAN 26 1976
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LUANDA, Angola, Jan. 25—An aide to a United States Senator left here today after a week-long visit and said that he "got the distinct impression" in talks with leaders of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola that "they would like to have better relations" with the United States.

Mark Moran, an aide to Senator John V. Tunney, Democrat of California, said before departing for Zambia to continue his Angolan fact-finding mission, "My reception here has been very good and the people have been very frank and cooperative, though they obviously have their own line to sell." He characterized the conversations he had had here as reflecting "an attempt on the part of those I spoke with to strike a delicate balance between their desire for future U.S. technical assistance and their reliance on Soviet and Cuban military aid."

"I got the distinct impression that they would like to have better relations with the U.S. and that they are not demanding recognition as the price of this," said the young Senate aide, who met with a number of high-ranking officials, including the Prime Minister. But his appointment with President Aghostino Neto was canceled on the ground that Dr. Neto was ill. Since the President spoke at a new hospital here, his illness may have been essentially diplomatic.

Contacts With Moderates

Mr. Moran suggested that the sources he spoke with here may all have been from what he termed the moderate faction of the Popular Movement, men he believed currently held sway in the politically diverse movement.

"My impression," he said, "is that there are several positions in the M.P.L.A. and that the moderates are in a bit of a quandary over what they recognize as the need for eventual U.S. economic and financial assistance. They need a softening of Washington's position to legitimize their own standing in the movement."

Mr. Moran said that "the differences within the movement have been submerged because of the war."

He added that it was his impression that no single policy line had yet been articulated in terms of future development.

"There seems to be a general commitment to socialize sectors of the economy and to advance cooperative farming," Mr. Moran said. "But the people I spoke with went to great lengths to indicate that their position was not against the multinational companies, which they felt should operate here in a mutually profitable arrangement with the Government."

Mr. Moran suggested that presumably there were other

voices in the movement that he had not heard and that may oppose even limited political and commercial rapprochement with the United States, despite the traditional reliance of Angola's oil, diamonds and coffee on Western markets.

During his last day here, Mr. Moran was taken to a depot and shown what were described as stores of weapons captured by the movement forces from the National Front for the Liberation of Angola. He said he saw hundreds of crates of ammunition and machine guns, though no sophisticated equipment. He described seeing several dozen crates of 60 and 80 millimeter mortar shells that had Hebrew markings. Another group of boxes he saw contained 130 millimeter artillery shells of Chinese origin.

Mr. Moran said that one box of mortar shells bore the distinctive clasped-hand shield of the United States Agency for International Development. British correspondents who toured a similar stockpile of captured weapons in the northern town of Ambrizete reported seeing hundreds of crates bearing this shield.

Mr. Moran said the discovery of the American insignia could be significant in light of the refusal of agency spokesmen to tell Senate investigators how many men the agency had working in southern Zaire.

Today the Popular Movement quoted monitored radio reports from the rival Huambo regime as having said its forces were "strategically retreating" in the south and there is a still skeptical but growing belief here that the South Africans may be withdrawing there.