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Beyond Profit In Angola

It has become a familiar scene. The same House and Senate members who have consistently opposed significant U.S. aid to resistance fighters everywhere have now mounted a new effort to block American assistance in Angola's struggle against incorporation into the Soviet system. They have rallied behind an amendment that would effectively bar aid to Angola, an amendment that could come up for a House vote as early as Tuesday.

The anti-freedom fighter bloc has mobilized to support Rep. Lee Hamilton's (D-Ind.) amendment to the Intelligence Authorization Act of 1987. The amendment provides that no forces fighting in Angola could receive any covert assistance unless Congress first passes a joint resolution "publicly specifying in detail all assistance and all recipients." The stated purpose of this amendment is to provide for public discussion and debate of aid to Jonas Savimbi's anti-Marxist UNITA forces. The effective consequence—as most amendment supporters understand—would be to prevent any U.S. assistance to Angolans fighting for their country's self-government and sovereignty.

But this time there is a big difference from most previous congressional struggles over aid to resistance fighters. This time it is two *Democrats*, Reps. Claude Pepper and Dante Fascell, who are leading the fight to block the people who would block assistance to UNITA.

On Sept. 8 Pepper and Fascell wrote to House colleagues alerting them that the amendment would "erode our prospects to bring freedom to Angola . . . provide valuable information to the MPLA [Angola's pro-Soviet government] . . . increase the potential political cost to nations and groups who are discretely giving aid to UNITA . . . and encourage the Soviet Union to further increase its level of support. . . ."

This latest chapter in the struggle over U.S. policy in southern Africa is, of course, part of a much larger issue with a much longer history. The struggle in southern Africa is as complex as it is important—to the people of the region and to us.

At stake in Angola is the national independence of the Angolan people vs. that country's incorporation into the Soviet bloc. The outcome of that struggle will have serious consequences for the future of Namibia and the whole of southern Africa, including South Africa, where a struggle for democracy is also under way.

The United States is properly seeking a southern Africa made up of independent, self-governing nations. No other outcome is consistent with our principles and our interests.

People who oppose U.S. aid to UNITA argue first that we should not seek to overthrow an existing government (the MPLA), and second that to aid UNITA is to associate ourselves with the South Africa government—which provides military assistance to UNITA.

These arguments will not wash. The government of Angola is a de facto government imposed by the force of more than 40,000 Soviet military personnel and approximately \$2 billion in Soviet military assistance. It was not chosen by the Angolan people, and it is unable to govern more than two-thirds of the country because the Angolan people do not support it. In this context it is disingenuous to speak in opposition to "outside interference" in Angola.

The argument that by aiding UNITA the United States would associate itself with South Africa's government is tantamount to claiming that to aid the Allies in World War II was to help Joseph Stalin.

It is true that the struggle in South Africa is related to that in Angola. Savimbi represents the armed forces supporting self-government by Angolans. Zulu Chief Gatsha Buthelezi and his allies represent unarmed forces supporting self-government and democracy in South Africa.

The United States should firmly ally itself with the supporters of self-government in both countries. Just as we should not support the racist government of South Africa, neither should we permit ourselves to be gulled into believing the struggle for self-determination, democracy and human rights is served by helping communist forces consolidate power. Yet that is what Angola's MPLA government and its friends would have us believe.

Those friends include an all-too-familiar coalition of certain corporate and banking interests willing to work with any government that will permit them to make a profit, and some benighted "progressives" who still believe the people of the Third World are not capable of effectively governing themselves.

Unfortunately some of the latter are found inside the U.S. Department of State, where various efforts are under way to assist the Marxist governments of Angola and Mozambique by helping them upgrade their transportation systems, and where plans are already afoot for Secretary of State George Shultz to visit the area in October and meet with regional leaders, probably including Oliver Tambo, leader of the African National Congress.

If these corporate interests, State Department bureaucrats and congressional activists succeed in blocking aid to UNITA, the Reagan Doctrine would be undone in southern Africa.

The political and strategic stakes are very high in this rich region, where our principles and our interests are engaged. They are threatened by Hamilton's sleeper amendment.

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