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Bill to force hearings on Savimbi aid passes

By Thomas D. Brandt
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A bill that would force the White House to submit plans for U.S. aid for military or paramilitary operations in Angola to Congress for open public debate and vote was approved by a House subcommittee yesterday.

"Simply stated," said Rep. Robert Dornan, a California Republican who voted against the bill, the bill "takes away the president's authority to assist anti-communist forces in Angola through covert means."

The Reagan administration has been widely reported as providing \$15 million in "covert" assistance to a rebel group of 20,000 to 25,000, led by Jonas Savimbi, that is seeking to overthrow the Marxist government of Angola.

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Lee Hamilton, Indiana Democrat, was approved on a 6-4 vote by the Africa subcommittee of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

The bill was sent to the full House Foreign Affairs Committee, which is scheduled to vote on the measure today.

Existing law requires that Mr. Reagan notify the intelligence committees of the Senate and House before providing covert aid to foreign insurgents. But there is no requirement that such covert aid be submitted to a congressional vote.

The chairman of the Africa panel, Rep. Howard Wolpe, Michigan Democrat, said U.S. aid to Mr. Savimbi would be "playing directly into the hands of the Soviets and the Cubans" by forcing Angola to rely on them more.

Mr. Hamilton — who is chairman of the Intelligence Committee, which oversees covert operations — said yesterday that the foreign policy implication of U.S. involvement in the Angolan civil war is so great that Congress needs to be involved in the decision making.

The bill "simply requires the

president to follow normal procedures in dealing with the Congress on an issue with major foreign policy ramifications," Mr. Hamilton said.

The intelligence panel voted 10-6 for Mr. Hamilton's bill in March.

Rep. Mark Siljander, Michigan Republican, opposed the Hamilton bill, which he said has little chance of clearing both houses of Congress, and would certainly be vetoed by President Reagan if it did.

Last July the House voted 236-185 to repeal the 1976 Clark Amendment, which had prohibited assistance of any kind to Angolan rebel forces.

Mr. Hamilton said that since that vote the Reagan administration made a decision to involve the United States in the Angolan fighting and has made that support publicly known. He says it is now a major foreign policy issue that should be debated by Congress if it is to be "politically sustainable in the long run" in the United States.

However Rep. Dan Burton, Indiana Republican, said "the House of Representatives has been a permanent stumbling block to stopping Soviet expansionism" in efforts like the Hamilton bill.

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