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Administration fighting bill to block covert Savimbi aid

By Thomas D. Brandt
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Two key aspects of Reagan administration policy toward the Marxist government of Angola — trade and covert aid — today go before House committees where there are ambiguous signals.

The administration is opposing the Hamilton bill to block covert aid to the anti-communist resistance fighters of Angola, while supporting continued Export-Import Bank dealings with the Angolan government.

The Hamilton bill, named after Rep. Lee Hamilton, Indiana Republican and chairman of the Intelligence Committee, is to be voted on by the Foreign Affairs subcommittee on Africa today. It is tentatively scheduled to come up before the full committee on Wednesday.

"We're on a fast track," a staff official said yesterday about the unusually short time between committees. Opponents of the measure concede that it is likely to pass the Democratic-controlled subcommittee and full committee.

The Reagan administration is reported to be providing \$15 million in covert aid to Angolan rebels led by Jonas Savimbi. Mr. Savimbi was in

Washington in February for meetings with President Reagan, who endorsed his movement, and congressional leaders.

Mr. Hamilton opposes the covert aid program, which he said is intervening on one side of a civil war. His committee sent the bill to the Foreign Affairs Committee by a straight party-line vote of 10-to-6 in March.

Last year, the House voted 236-185 to repeal the 1976 Clark Amendment, which had prohibited covert aid to Angolan forces.

Mr. Hamilton has said passage of his bill would be difficult, but that it raised "an important procedural question — should the Congress of the United States participate in major foreign policy decisions?"

The Hamilton measure, called "Baby Clark" by one source, requires aid to Angola to be open and approved by both houses of Congress. Supporters of the Hamilton bill hope that casting the issue affirmatively will shift some of last year's votes.

The trade measure is in the House Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs Committee, where conservatives are at odds with the State Department over trade policy.

Rep. Bill McCollum, Florida Republican, succeeded in adding an amendment in subcommittee to the Export-Import Bank reauthorization bill that bars any bank activity with Angola until Mr. Reagan cer-

tifies that all Cuban troops have left the country.

The State Department opposed Mr. McCollum's move and wrote to the full committee chairman, Rep. Fernand St Germain, asking him to kill the amendment in full committee today when the reauthorization measure is considered.

Cuba is reported to have about 45,000 troops and advisers in Angola. Their duties include guarding oil fields, which are operated jointly by the government and the Chevron Corporation. Angola, besides facing Mr. Savimbi's rebel forces of 20,000 to 25,000, also is engaged in border fighting with South African forces.

"I am told the administration in the last few months has changed its position on Angola and now favors support for Jonas Savimbi's ... forces, [but] on the other hand I see an official State Department position letter opposing a legislative effort to put Congress on record opposing the Cuban troop presence in Angola." Mr. McCollum said in a letter to Secretary of State George Shultz on April 16.

State Department official James Dyer said in the letter to Mr. St Germain that, while the department opposes Mr. McCollum's amendment, no major Export-Import Bank projects have been approved for Angola since 1984.