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Some congressmen move to halt arms to Savimbi

By Thomas D. Brandt
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As American weapons begin filtering into the Angolan bush country to bolster Jonas Savimbi's rebels against the Marxist government's latest offensive, plans are evolving on Capitol Hill for a floor fight to stop the U.S. aid program.

The upcoming squabble parallels the recent fight in the halls of Congress over \$100 million in aid to the Contras trying to depose the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua.

In both cases, the Democrat-controlled House holds the linchpin vote on the Reagan doctrine of providing arms to anti-communist insurgencies.

"I don't think there's a chance in the world that we will approve any kind of military aid," said one House specialist working on the Angolan aid proposal.

The debate over military aid for the Angolan rebels will take place after the House resumes debate on the Senate's version of the aid package for the Nicaraguan resistance. A vote on Contra aid is scheduled for April 15.

Rep. Lee Hamilton, Indiana Democrat and chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, has

drafted a bill that would allow aid to Mr. Savimbi's forces "only if the provision of that support is the openly acknowledged policy of the United States."

A joint congressional resolution to that effect is now before the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Mr. Hamilton's measure faces Senate opposition from Majority Leader Robert Dole, Kansas Republican, and Sen. Richard Lugar, Indiana Republican and chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. Under Senate rules, however, they cannot block an effort by Democrats to offer the proposal as an amendment to legislation pending on the Senate floor — probably after it passes the House.

After Mr. Savimbi's high-profile, 10-day visit to Washington in February, Mr. Dole sponsored a resolution of support for aid to UNITA, Mr. Savimbi's National Union for the Total Liberation of Angola. But the measure died because supporters could not muster enough votes to pull it out of Mr. Lugar's Foreign Relations Committee.

Mr. Dole and several colleagues have sent Mr. Reagan an artfully worded letter intended to lend the administration political support for aid to UNITA.

Despite concerns from Mr. Ham-

ilton and the Senate Intelligence Committee, the Reagan administration is thought to have taken the highly unusual step of proceeding with covert aid for the Angolan rebels.

Since the administration's Angolan aid program of \$10 million to \$15 million is covert, no approval of Congress is required. No details are available about what type of hardware is being offered to Mr. Savimbi's rebel forces.

Prohibited by House rules from publicizing classified committee business or details of the covert aid program, Mr. Hamilton decided to introduce a generally worded bill that would allow only open aid to Angola.

One House source said the parallel between Nicaragua and Angola aid won't be played out and members' votes on aid in one region won't indicate support — or opposition — to aid in the other. The wild card for the Angola aid package is the apartheid government of South Africa.

Mr. Savimbi receives support from South Africa. Some members of Congress object to U.S. aid to Mr. Savimbi because they believe his ties to Pretoria may not be compatible with U.S. interests in the region.