

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE **A1**NEW YORK TIMES
26 January 1986

Reagan to Offer Angolan Rebels Moral Backing

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Jan. 25 — The Reagan Administration has decided to seek a joint Congressional resolution to provide the anti-Communist rebels in Angola with moral support, Administration and Congressional sources said today. At the same time, they said, the Administration will oppose legislation giving the rebels military or economic aid.

With Jonas Savimbi, the head of the leading rebel group in Angola, due in Washington next week to seek military aid, Secretary of State George P. Shultz outlined the Administration's latest approach for the first time in an interview on Friday night.

The goal of the policy, aides said today, is to show sympathy for the Angolan rebels while keeping alive American efforts to bring about a diplomatic settlement in southern Africa, which might be jeopardized by outright aid.

The Angolan rebels have wide backing among American conservatives.

In the interview in his seventh-floor office at the State Department, Mr. Shultz made these other points:

¶The latest Soviet arms control proposals, as amplified at the negotiations in Geneva, have "a lot of problems" but indicate that "potentially we're in a possibly productive phase."

¶No date has been set for the second summit meeting between Mr. Reagan and Mikhail S. Gorbachev, the Soviet leader, which is to take place in the United States. Mr. Shultz said the Administration wanted to hold the talks no later than July to avoid conflicts with August vacations and the fall election campaign. The Russians have not responded officially, he said, but privately some Soviet diplomats have said the fall would be preferable.

¶"Progress has been made" in arranging Middle East peace talks involving Israel and Jordan, although the two major issues — which Palestinians would take part and the format for the negotiations — "remain difficult." Mr. Shultz said the prospects had been enhanced by recent discussions in Europe by Richard W. Murphy, the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian affairs, with King Hussein of Jordan and Prime Minister Shimon Peres of Israel.

¶The pending sale of nearly \$2 billion in military equipment to Jordan is "very much in the national interest of the United States," although Mr. Shultz said he knew "full well" that many in

Congress do not want to proceed with the sale until peace talks with Israel begin. Indicating that the sale, due to go ahead on March 1, might be put off, Mr. Shultz said that "we want to win" if there is a vote in Congress, "so we're struggling with the problem."

¶It is proper for the United States to strike at military targets in countries supporting terrorism, even if the target has no direct connection with a particular terrorist act. "I think we're developing our kit bag of tools," Mr. Shultz said, "and increasingly, I sense a readiness to use those tools when we find the appropriate occasion."

Goals in Southern Africa

Mr. Shultz has been seeking an effective way to show support for Mr. Savimbi's rebel group — which the Administration recently called "a legitimate nationalist movement" — without compromising American efforts to achieve a diplomatic solution between Angola and South Africa.

Such an accord, as envisaged by Washington, would lead to the independence of South-West Africa, known as Namibia, and the withdrawal of 30,000 Cuban troops from Angola along with the pullback of South African forces from Namibia. South Africa controls Namibia in defiance of United Nations resolutions.

Conservatives in Congress, in advance of Mr. Savimbi's arrival, have proposed military and economic aid packages for his group, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola, commonly called Unita.

The White House has talked of a possible covert military program for Unita, despite opposition in Congress. Mr. Shultz indicated that he believed that for the diplomatic efforts to succeed, the United States had to have "a strong position," meaning a show of support for Mr. Savimbi.

A Congressional aide said Mr. Shultz had been looking into the possibility of covert military aid with the intelligence committees in Congress and had found considerable opposition from the committee leaders.

Congressional aides said Mr. Shultz believed that it was important for Mr. Savimbi to receive strong public backing here, even if he left without any aid commitments. During his visit Mr. Savimbi is scheduled to meet with Mr. Reagan, Mr. Shultz and key members of Congress and to appear at public meetings and on television.

Pretoria's Role Is a Factor

Mr. Savimbi's group is supported militarily and economically by South Africa. One of the objections raised in Congress to aid to Mr. Savimbi is that it would be regarded as backing for the Pretoria Government and apartheid.

Mr. Shultz acknowledged that he opposed legislation extending military or economic aid to Unita because it would not promote a diplomatic solution. "I think it would be well," Mr. Shultz said, "if Congress expressed itself in a general way, without any particular, precise commitment, but just in the general nature of what they support — including support for seeing a sensible settlement of the whole matter, including Namibia."

He said a Congressional resolution on the subject was being "worked on" by the Senate majority leader, Bob Dole, Republican of Kansas, and by Senator Richard G. Lugar, Republican of Indiana, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. He said the resolution would provide "a general expression of sentiment" in support of Unita.

An aide to Mr. Lugar confirmed that such a resolution might be introduced next week while Mr. Savimbi is in Washington. He said Mr. Shultz had suggested a general statement of support for Unita and for a negotiated settlement in southern Africa.

Senior Official's Remarks

A senior Administration official, asked to amplify Mr. Shultz's comments, said today that "one of the foundations of our policy is the belief that military solutions to the region's problems are not viable, and that a negotiated agreement is the only way to attain durable peace and stability."

He said that it is "essential that Angolans resolve their differences."

"The Administration does not believe that legislation mandating aid to Unita would be an effective way to proceed," he said. "The question of how best to achieve our goals is under constant review, and we are consulting with the Congress with regard to the best means of doing so."

Chester A. Crocker, Assistant Secretary of State for African affairs, recently met with Angolan and South African leaders to discuss the drawn-out negotiations. Mr. Shultz said in the interview that a negotiated accord definitely remained possible.

"It's a long, hard process," he added, "and I don't want to give any impression that we're about to find a solution. But the process is alive, and the exchanges are of such a nature that movement is discernible."

Angola has proposed, as part of a wider accord, that many of Cuban troops in that country would be withdrawn and that the rest would be moved to the north, away from South Africa. But the United States and South Africa are both calling for a total Cuban withdrawal.

The Cubans were sent to Angola in 1975 to combat the South Africans, who had entered the country in support of Mr. Savimbi's forces. At the time, Mr. Savimbi's group received covert American aid through the Central Intelligence Agency, but Congress then passed a law banning American assistance to groups in Angola.

That law, known for its sponsor, Dick Clark, then a Democratic Senator from Iowa, was repealed last summer, opening the way to intensive discussion in Congress and within the Administration on whether and how to aid the Savimbi forces.

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'We Are Isolating Libya'

On Libya, Mr. Shultz said he was satisfied by the efforts being made to punish Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi's Government. He said that "we are in the process of gradually isolating Libya on this issue and forcing them to change or become increasingly isolated." He declined to discuss the ultimate mission of the Sixth Fleet carriers whose planes are carrying out exercises north of Libya.

As for his agenda for this year, Mr. Shultz said that "we have to give a great amount of attention to the U.S.-Soviet relationship in all its dimensions, arms control of various sorts, and regional issues and bilateral problems, human rights problems, and so on — the full plate."

He said that to prepare for the next summit meeting, he would probably meet twice with the Soviet Foreign Minister, Eduard A. Shevardnadze, once here and once in Moscow.