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WORLD REPORT

'Reagan doctrine' stirs argument at home, battles abroad

Now it's U.S. backing rebels

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■ An emerging "Reagan doctrine" of aid to anti-Soviet guerrillas has set off bitter debate in every corner of the Washington political arena.

At the heart of the issue: The President's growing support for rebels against pro-Soviet governments around the world. U.S. funds already support guerrillas in Afghanistan and Kampuchea. In his budget on February 3, Reagan will ask for some \$70 million in military aid for the *contras* in Nicaragua. Still under debate within the administration are terms of aid to insurgents in Angola.

The controversy is developing as a key one between Reagan and Congress.

White House officials rule out commitments that might lead to direct U.S. military involvement. Even so, many lawmakers in both parties fear that the administration might let itself be drawn into conflict.

Lines of dispute do not follow the usual pattern of liberals vs. conservatives. In fact, the administration, while encouraging Kampuchean insurgents, resists giving them money advocated by Democrats.

There are divisions even within the administration. Secretary of State George Shultz, hawkish on behalf of rebels in Afghanistan and Nicaragua, is opposed to aid for those in Angola. Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger insists that the U.S. support anti-

Communist forces but cautions against anything that might lead to military involvement. CIA chief William Casey and Patrick Buchanan, the leading conservative in the White House, have fewer reservations about covert action.

Last year Lewis Lehrman, a conservative drugstore-chain magnate, underscored hardline pressure on Reagan by sponsoring a meeting of rebel factions in Angola. Later this month, conservatives are bringing Jonas Savimbi, the Angolan rebel leader, to Washington.

The President seems inclined to pursue, but cautiously, a doctrine spawned by a curious twist of political fates. Only a decade ago, support for guerrilla movements was the near exclusive province of the Soviets. But the very success of Soviet clients, leading them to power in several countries, has reversed superpower roles. The Reagan doctrine aims to recover lost ground and expand American influence in the Third World.

"We can hardly turn on those who have lost their freedom," Weinberger said in a January 14 speech detailing America's interests at a conference on low-intensity warfare—jargon that embraces guerrilla wars.

Although the doctrine's most dramatic manifestation is support for armed insurgents, U.S. officials emphasize its peaceful aspect as well. Washington remains committed, they say, to developing economies and democratic

institutions in troubled countries. The impulse for the doctrine appears rooted in Reagan's stated sense of moral obligation to export democracy and free enterprise and his resolve to roll back Soviet advances where possible. Yet the realities of limited resources, world opinion and internal debate work against outright success. Divisions within rebel groups, the ineffectiveness of some and the suspect politics of others have fueled the U.S. argument over who is worthy of support and the form it should take.

Four places where his doctrine already is at work, or could be soon—

ANGOLA

A clear test of Reagan's commitment is Angola, where South African-backed insurgents of Jonas Savimbi's UNITA have fought the Soviet-and-Cuban-

backed regime for more than a decade.

The administration voices sympathy for Savimbi, but has opposed legislation to grant open military or humanitarian aid. Instead, Reagan is leaning toward a request for some \$15 million in covert aid. His concern is that overt support would doom U.S. efforts to negotiate removal of 30,000 Cuban troops in re-

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