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EARLY ANGOLA AID BY U.S. REPORTED

Officials Say C.I.A. Received
Approval to Give Funds
Before Soviet Build-Up

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Dec. 18—The Ford Administration's initial authorization for substantial Central Intelligence Agency financial operations inside Angola came in January 1975, more than two months before the first significant Soviet build-up, well-informed officials report.

It could not be learned on what specific basis the agency approval to deepen its clandestine involvement in Angola at that point, but William E. Ligence, told a secret Congressional hearing two months ago that the January increase in C.I.A. activity was needed to match increased Soviet activity.

The Soviet Union has been involved in Angola since 1956 but, according to well-informed American intelligence officials, did not substantially increase its support for one of the liberation armies in Angola until March and April of this year. At that time at least two shiploads and two planeloads of Soviet war matériel were sent.

Told of the Administration's

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decision, of January, 1975 a number of Government officials and lawmakers contended that it was impossible without more information to determine whether the subsequent Soviet build-up had been purely aggressive and expansionist, as Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger and others have contended, or whether it might have been in part a Soviet response to the action by the United States.

\$300,000 for Roberto

The Administration's high-level intelligence-review panel, known as the 40 Committee, discussed Angola at its January meeting — the first such discussion of the African nation since the mid-1960's, officials said. They said the group agreed to permit the C.I.A. to provide \$300,000 clandestinely to Holden Roberto, the leader of one of three factions now seeking control of Angola.

At the time, Mr. Roberto, whose links with the C.I.A. began in 1961, was on a \$10,000-a-year agency retainer for "intelligence collection," the officials said. Mr. Roberto leads the National Front for the Liberation of Angola, which also has been aided by Zaire and China.

During the same 40 Committee meeting in January, the officials said, the C.I.A. unsuccessfully also sought authority to provide a \$100,000 subsidy secretly to Jonas Savimbi, leader of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola.

At the time, the movements led by Mr. Roberto and Mr. Savimbi—since merged—were trying to negotiate a settlement with the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, a third liberation group, which has been supported by arms and aid from the Soviet Union since its formation in 1956. Those talks failed.

There was a sharp division today among Government officials and some lawmakers about the significance of the 40 Committee's decision in January to increase the funds available to Mr. Roberto.

Link to Mobutu Seen

Some officials belittled its importance and argued that the funds, which reportedly were not meant for direct military support, were supplied merely to reassure President Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire that the Ford Administration was not going to permit the Popular Movement to win the Angolan civil war. Mr. Mobutu, who is Mr. Roberto's father-in-law, was an early advocate of American intervention.

Many others, including Senators and Representatives who have had access to secret C.I.A. briefings on Angola, believe that disclosure of the January decision to increase the American involvement raises new questions about which nation — the United States or the Soviet Union — initiated what inside Angola.

"I think it's very important," one well-informed official acknowledged. "That money gave him a lot of extra muscle. He'd been sitting in Kinshasa for nearly 10 years and all of a sudden he's got a lot of bread—he's beginning to do things."

Since the early 1960's Mr. Roberts had maintained his headquarters in Kinshasa, the capital of Zaire.

The official's point was that the C.I.A. source of the revitalized flow of funds for the Roberto movement would be quickly perceived by the Pop-

ular Movement and its Soviet supporters.

The disclosure further contradicts the insistence of Secretary Kissinger in Senate testimony that is still secret that the State Department's Bureau of African Affairs had, in effect, withheld information about Angola from him early this year. He suggested that the bureau had done so in an effort to limit the options available to the Ford Administration.

In January Mr. Kissinger was Secretary of State and also President Ford's adviser on national security. As adviser, he was chairman of the 40 Committee when the decision was made to increase greatly the C.I.A. cash subsidy to Mr. Roberto.

Behind the Decisions

In an extensive recounting of Washington's Angola decision-making, well-informed officials also made these points:

C.I.A. statistics as of early last month show that the agency had paid \$5.4 million to ship what was listed as \$10 million in arms to Angola between late July and October. The high shipping costs were described by many knowledgeable officials as evidence that the agency had been systematically underestimating the value of the weapons shipped thus far, in an effort to make the United States role appear as minimal as possible.

The intelligence agency was explicitly authorized by President Ford on July 27, 1975, to begin a \$500,000 information program inside Angola as part of a 40 Committee decision to begin major shipments of United States arms there.

The precise date of the 40 Committee's meeting in January, 1975, could not be learned, but January was a pivotal month in Angola.

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Joint Political Pact

On Jan. 5, leaders of the three liberation movements met in Kenya and signed a political accord that was viewed as paving a way for independence for the Portuguese territory. On Jan. 10 Portugal formally agreed to grant independence in Angola in the following November.

On Jan. 31 the three liberation movements agreed to share cabinets posts and power equally with a Portuguese contingent until the formal date of independence.

The three liberation movements further agreed to prepare for and hold national elections for a constituent assembly. Those elections were never held, however, as the coalition dissolved over the next few months and warfare broke out.

American officials were interviewed repeatedly by correspondents of The New York

Times in recent weeks, but none suggested what Mr. Colby and other C.I.A. officials have said in recent secret briefings in Congress—that Soviet build-ups in Angola before this year were in any way a factor in the subsequent United States decision to intervene directly in July 1975 with shipments of arms and aid.

100 Tons of Arms

More than 100 tons of arms were reported to have been landed by Soviet planes in southern Angola and the Congo in March and April. It was these shipments, American officials have contended up to now, that led to rapid military advances by the Popular Movement and the subsequent decision by Secretary Kissinger and President Ford to intervene directly.

Throughout the spring, a number of officials have said, the C.I.A. lobbied intensively for a larger United States role in Angola, justifying its argument on increased Soviet activities. Specifically, the C.I.A. was seeking high-level approval to begin supplying funds directly to Mr. Savimbi.

The matter was discussed at a 40 Committee meeting in June, officials said, with no

resolution, although a full-scale National Security Council study of the issues and the various options was authorized.

It was at this point, State Department sources said, that opposition to further United States involvement was repeatedly raised by Nathaniel Davis, then the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs.

Mr. Davis, who resigned in protest over the Administration's policies on Angola, is now Ambassador to Switzerland. He explicitly argued in June that the decision by the 40 Committee to support both Mr. Roberto and Mr. Savimbi would be perceived as an escalation by the Soviet Union and lead, in turn, to even more involvement by the Russians.

In Control of Luanda

Following the National Security Council review, officials said, the 40 Committee met on July 17, 1975. By then the Popular Movement, using the Soviet supplies shipped since March, had seized firm control of Luanda, Angola's capital, and had won significant victories elsewhere.

The Popular Movement was claiming control of 11 of Angola's 16 provinces.

The 40 Committee authorized the following steps:

¶The direct shipment of arms to the forces led by Mr. Savimbi and Mr. Roberto and the replacement of arms that had been previously supplied and would continue to be supplied by Zaire and Zambia; the two neighboring African nations that supported the American intervention. It was agreed to permit Zambia and Zaire to provide as much non-American equipment as possible at first in order to minimize the overt link with the United States.

¶Exposure through information programs and other means of the Soviet arming of the Popular Movement, with emphasis on the possible embarrassment of African nations relaying the Russian arms or in other ways serving as conduits for such aid.

¶The use of an information program to build the abilities and integrity of the forces controlled by Mr. Savimbi and Mr. Roberto.

¶The dispatch of cash in two stages to Angola, with \$6 million to be expended in Stage 1 and \$8 million in Stage 2. The significance of the two-tiered approach has not been made clear by the sources.