US SUPPORT OF ANGOLAN REBELS OPPOSED

New York, NY, May 25, 1978—The Carter administration was criticized for plans put forward over the last two months by the National Security Council and the Central Intelligence Agency to aid one of the losing factions in the struggle for power in Angola. George Houser, executive director of the American Committee on Africa, issued a statement calling the administration’s reported plans “tantamount to a declaration of war against the Angolan government.” His statement follows:

It appears that the Carter administration is preparing to adopt a policy tantamount to a declaration of war against the Angolan government. This is the meaning of the reported desire of President Carter to give military assistance to one of the factions which unsuccessfully contested for power in Angola. Such a policy represents a major shift in the administration’s approach to Africa, reverting to the bankrupt policies initiated by Henry Kissinger in the Nixon-Ford administrations.

If this approach is pursued, it will resurrect a policy which has been nothing short of disastrous to U.S. relations with Africa for so many years—a policy focused first on countering appearances of a Soviet presence while ignoring the complex African realities.

It was this approach which placed the United States at odds with virtually every African liberation movement which successfully took up arms to win national independence from Portugal, including the MPLA in Angola. It was this approach, outlined in Kissinger’s secret National Security Study Memorandum #39 of 1969, which aligned the U.S. with the white minority regimes of John Vorster and Ian Smith. It was this approach which led to CIA covert actions in Angola, recently exposed, that provoked the Cuban presence and precipitated a major, but unsuccessful, invasion of Angola by the racist South African regime.

The U.S. government must not repeat the mistakes of the past and reinvolve the U.S. in an effort to destabilize the independent government of Angola, a member state of the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations. We call for: 1) the Congress to stand firm behind the Clark amendment prohibiting U.S. military aid in Angola; 2) the Congress to initiate a full-scale investigation of the possible CIA-National Security Council plans to reinvolve the U.S. in Angola; 3) the administration to formally recognize the government of the People’s Republic of Angola; and 4) the U.S. government to lift its restrictions on aid going to Angola and Mozambique.

Founded in 1953, the American Committee on Africa is a major, private organization concerned with U.S. policy towards Africa and working to support African independence. Mr. Houser has travelled regularly to Africa and met with leaders on the Angolan independence movement many times over the last two decades. He has presented testimony concerning U.S. policy toward Angola before committees of Congress, most recently in 1976 before the Senate Sub-committee on African Affairs chaired by Senator Dick Clark. He is author of pamphlets and articles concerning the independence struggle in Angola and U.S. policy. ACOA actively worked to oppose U.S. involvement in the Angola conflict, initiating a coalition of church, trade union, student and peace organizations in 1976, and placing an advertisement in the New York Times signed by prominent Americans, among other activities.