President Ronald Reagan's comment on covert aid to UNITA in Angola (see THE NEW YORK TIMES 23 November story, enclosed) shows how far along the United States government is in entering this country into the conflict in southern Africa.

The effort is on two levels. First, there are a number of bills before the Congress which would authorize aid - military and non-military - for UNITA. Seemingly the most innocuous is that of Rep. Claude Pepper which would provide non-lethal support for the faction in Angola allied with the Pretoria regime. Other pieces of draft legislation would supply UNITA with military hardware or a mixture of military and non-military aid. These public measures give a 'respectable' cover for stealthy, heavyweight efforts. ALL THESE BILLS OUTLINED SHOULD BE REJECTED.

Beneath lies the covert program - partially revealed by President Reagan - which does not have to survive the usual legislative procedure and be under the scrutiny of the American people. Security agencies run their schemes past the intelligence committees in the two houses of Congress; it is up to committee members to speak out publicly about the dangers of the Angolan venture - which of course marks the entry of the USA into the southern African war - as a participant and a defender of the doomed Pretoria apartheid regime.

URGE THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES MEMBERS OF THE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEES TO CONDEMN OPENLY AND FIGHT AGAINST THIS ENTERPRISE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA —

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U.S. and Angolan Officials to Hold Talks
Reagan Administration to Examine Prospects for a Political Settlement of the Civil War

By John M. Goshko
Washington Post Staff Writer

A senior official of the Reagan Administration, which is considering the resumption of secret aid to non-communist guerrillas in Angola, is to meet with a high-level Angolan delegation today and Thursday in an effort to determine whether that country's Marxist government is willing to negotiate with the insurgents.

U.S. officials said yesterday that Chester A. Crocker, assistant secretary of state for African affairs, will investigate the chances for a political settlement of the Angolan civil war when he meets Angolan Interior Minister Manuel Duarte (Kito) Rodrigues in Luanda, Zambia. The officials, who asked not to be identified, said Crocker will also explore Angola's willingness to cooperate with U.S. proposals, made in March, for withdrawal of Cuban forces from Angola as part of a settlement of regional tensions that would include independence for the South African-controlled territory of Namibia. The State Department, in announcing the meeting yesterday, sought to emphasize that the talks will stress the Angola-Namibia link.

However, the Luanda meeting has potentially major implications for the internal Angolan conflict. It comes as the administration is deciding whether to resume covert aid to the country's UNITA insurgents, led by Jonas Savimbi, who have been fighting for years against the Marxist government supported by Cuba and the Soviet Union. The officials, while declining to give specifics of what Crocker will say, hinted that he might tell Rodrigues that the United States is prepared to hold off any new aid to UNITA if the Angolan government shows signs of willingness to negotiate with Savimbi about forming a national coalition government with a role for UNITA.

President Reagan told editors and columnists in an interview Saturday that the administration favors giving aid to UNITA, whose guerrillas in southern Angola have come under heavy pressure from the Soviet-backed Cuban and South African government forces.

On Sunday, Secretary of State George P. Shultz amplified Reagan's remarks, saying in a television interview that the administration supports UNITA's "freedom fighting" and wants to help its efforts "in a way that's effective." His remarks were understood to mean that the administration prefers secret aid for UNITA rather than a plan under consideration in Congress for $27 million in overt humanitarian aid.

The administration reportedly believes that open U.S. alignment with UNITA would force Washington into closer alliance with white-ruled South Africa, UNITA's principal source of support, and would undermine U.S. efforts to pressure Pretoria to change its apartheid system.

But Shultz added that "if there can be a political solution, a negotiated solution to the political problems of Angola ... linked as it is to the difficulties in southern Africa generally, that's the way to go. And we're trying to do that."

In response to questions about U.S. aims in the Luanda meeting, State Department spokesman Charles Redman referred yesterday to Shultz's statement that "we favor South Africa withdrawal. Angola, as well as South Africa, can be a political solution, a negotiated solution to the political problems of the region." In regard to Namibia, the administration, arguing that South Africa will not surrender its hold on the territory so long as an estimated 35,000 Cuban troops remain in neighboring Angola, called in March for talks on establishing a timetable for Cuban withdrawal, Angola, while saying it is willing to remove Cuban troops from the southern part of the country, has not agreed to send the Cubans home.

Redman said yesterday that "we expect Angola, as well as South Africa, to be prepared to respond to our ideas constructively and promptly. Both governments have assured us recently that they want to work with us on that basis."

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U.S., Angola Begin Talks; Aid to Rebels on the Agenda

LUSAKA, Nov 27—Senior African and U.S. officials began crucial talks on southern Africa here today as key regional power South Africa welcomed indications that Washington might resume aid to rebels fighting Angola's Cuban-backed Marxist government.

A U.S. Embassy spokesman said the talks began in earnest earlier today with U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Chester A. Crocker heading the American side. Luanda's delegation is headed by Interior Minister Alexandre Rodrigues Kito.

American and Angolan officials both said the talks would center on U.S. conditions for the independence of Namibia, formerly known as South-West Africa, the deteriorating political situation in South Africa and diplomatic relations between Luanda and Washington.

Another key issue is the possible resumption of U.S. aid to the rebel National Union for the Total Independence Angola (UNITA). The state-run Radio South Africa, which usually reflects government thinking, has called this "heartening news for the whole southern African region."

Congress last year repealed a nine-year ban on such aid. It has not yet allocated funds but several bills recently have been introduced that would provide UNITA with $27 million. The State Department declined to say whether the talks were intended to head off moves in Congress to aid UNITA.

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Pretoria's armour on Angola border

By our Foreign Staff

South Africa has massed 20,000 men and 150 tanks on the Angolan border in preparation for a new invasion, according to a senior Angolan army officer.

The force would be the biggest South African army deployment since Pretoria's Operation Askari two years ago which attempted to push north from areas of Angola's Cunene province. Last year, South Africa claimed to have withdrawn its ground troops from Angola, although the Angolans have repeatedly said that an unspecified number of troops have continued to fight inside their country.

The new invasion, if it takes place, would be the second phase of a South African effort to save its ally, Unita, from a recent series of counter-offensives by the Angolans. In September, South African commandos attacked by its ground forces along with Unita troops, some of whom were brought in by South African planes, managed to turn the Angolans back near Mavinga.

Word of the new massing of troops in northern Namibia came from Major Luis Faceira, the commander of the fifth police-military region of Lubango. He said that the South African force consisted of 150 tanks, 400 artillery pieces, 300 mortars, several hundred armoured personnel carriers, and 80 planes and helicopters.

The troops were ranged in three brigades, 18 infantry battalions, and two landing and assault battalions.