WAR IN SOUTHERN AFRICA - THE U.S. ROLE AND THE CLARK AMENDMENT


Military or Paramilitary Operations in Angola - Section 118
(a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no assistance of any kind may be provided for the purpose, or which would have the effect, of promoting or augmenting, directly or indirectly, the capacity of any nation, group, organization, movement, or individual to conduct military or paramilitary operations in Angola unless and until -
(1) The President determines that such assistance should be furnished in the national security interests of the United States;
(2) If the President issues such a determination, he shall submit to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate a report containing -
(A) a description of the amounts and categories of assistance which he recommends to be authorized and the identity of the proposed recipients of such assistance; and
(B) a certification that he has determined that the furnishing of such assistance is important to the national security interests of the United States and a detailed statement of the reasons supporting such a determination;
(3) The Congress enacts a joint resolution approving the furnishing of such assistance.

On the surface it appears everything is safe, for the time being. The Clark Amendment was preserved at the last minute in the waning days of the Congressional session which ended just before Christmas. But we are into a new session, and the cocky, restless, aggressive Reagan administration still nurses its grievance against that unique piece of legislation which stays the wonton hand of a chief executive. Make no mistake - Clark is targeted.

A case could be made that the present US government has openly violated this law. In August 1981 the US - acting alone - vetoed a UN Security Council draft resolution which castigated South Africa for its latest assault upon Angola. Is that not 'promoting...the capacity of, Pretoria 'to conduct military or paramilitary operations in Angola'?

What is a presidential certification worth these days? President Reagan has declared that the regime in El Salvador was ending human rights abuses and making progress toward political and economic reform - in the face of the most appalling on-the-spot press and eye-wit­ness accounts of repression and massacre by the junta Washington supports in San Salvador. Is it too much to imagine a certification that the 'national security interests' of the US demand 'assistance' for UNITA and COMRA in attempts to overthrow the government of Angola? And that this be justified in furtherance of the 'delicate negotiations' on Namibia which the US government is now engaged in with Pretoria? Reagan told CBS newsmen Dan Rather on 27 January: 'You cannot settle the matter of Namibia without South Africa's cooperation.'

There are many disquieting news - the persistence of reports of ongoing direct US involvement with groups intent on destabilizing the Angolan government. Some of the press stories are reproduced herein. They will be dismissed by the US government as examples of Soviet 'disinformation' (a rationale, by the way, the Pretoria regime gives for introducing in parliament a bill to control the press and journalists even more tightly).

We Americans do not know what our government is doing in its relations with South African officials and with anti-government groups in and alongside Angola. If the law is being defied just as the Congress has restated that law then we must know.

Contact your Representatives and Senators, in Washington or at their home offices, and demand a thorough investigation.

US has recognised us, says Dr Savimbi

Dr Savimbi was interviewed in Rabat, Morocco, on his way back from talks in the US The Unita leader, who has been fighting to win control of southern Angola since he was defeated by U.S. and MPLA forces in 1976, claimed the US was engaged in diplomatic efforts to win wider recognition for Unita. Washington had now realised that Unita's participation in an Angolan government of national unity was inevitable once the estimated 18,000 Cuban troops had left Angola, Dr Savimbi said.
Ready to oust Luanda Govt or force it to negotiate US-backed Angolan rebels group in Zaire

LISBON. — About 2 000 armed, US-backed Angolan rebels assembled in Zaire, it was claimed yesterday.

The left-wing evening newspaper, Diario de Lisboa, considered close to the Portuguese Communist Party, said the rebels were ready to try to overthrow the Angolan Government or force it to negotiate.

It said the array of the Military Committee for Angolan Resistants (Comitra) had 15 training camps along Zaire's southern frontier with the former Portuguese colony and had US, Israeli, Egyptian and Belgian instructors.

"They flew in a DC-3 and a DC-4 provided by the Reagan Administration which has been transporting military equipment to Angola where they land on secret airstrips built under the direct supervision of American servicemen and European mercenaries," the paper said in the first of a two-part series of articles.

The Diario de Lisboa said Comitra was working with the best-known Angolan rebel group, Unita.

In giving details of Comitra's alleged operations, the newspaper said 120 Egyptian, Moroccan, Israeli and West German mercenaries had flown from Libreville, Gabon, to Zaire in September to train Comitra and take part in joint actions with the guerrillas in northern Angola.

It said Washington's aim was to bring the Angolan government round to the US viewpoint.

"If diplomatic efforts fail Comitra enter the game on a large scale in co-operation with Unita," it said.

The newspaper quoted diplomatic circles as saying Comitra's US military advisers had so far refused to give the movement permission to launch any big attack in Angola.

"Over 2 000 heavily armed and carefully trained men are ready to take action in northern Angola to try to overthrow the MPLA government or force it to negotiate," it said — Sapa-Reuters.

Blames South Africa

Angolan Official Defends Cuban Presence

THE WASHINGTON POST

Saturday, January 23, 1982

Writer

LISBON, Jan 22 — Constant South African attacks on Angola are preventing the Angolan government from negotiating the withdrawal of Cuban troops from its territory, according to a senior Angolan leader.

The official Angolan news agency Angop today quoted Lucio Lara, the country's top ideologist, as saying during a visit to Moscow that constant South African attacks "have prevented the Angolan government from planning with the friendly government of Cuba the end of the military aid that has been given us."

In a speech Wednesday, Lara added: "The new Washington-Pretoria alliance, however, does not see the question this way." The United States and South Africa insisted on linking a Cuban withdrawal to the problem of an independence settlement in Namibia (South West Africa), he said.

Lara also made the first authoritative comment on the recent talks in Paris between Angolan Foreign Minister Paulo Jorge and U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Chester Crocker. He said the talks represented a first step toward the normalization of relations between the two countries.

Jonas Savimbi, who heads the National Union or the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), a guerrilla group opposing the Angolan government, said in an interview published today that withdrawal of Cuban troops would allow negotiations to begin between his forces and the governing Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA).

The MPLA denied yesterday that the MPLA was seeking talks with UNITA and other rebel groups.

"Material help is not dependent on, nor limited by, the Clark amendment," Mr. Hue was quoted as saying.

In an interview with the Portuguese conservative weekly Tempo in the Moroccan capital of Rabat, Savimbi indicated that he was receiving U.S. aid in spite of the Clark amendment barring the U.S. government from assisting Angolan rebels.

"The Clark amendment means nothing," he was quoted as saying.

US 'offer' to rebels

Lisbon: A pro-Communist Portuguese newspaper said yesterday that the US Secretary of State, Mr. Haig, had offered to supply military advisers, anti tanks and aircraft missiles to Angolan rebel groups.

The newspaper, Diario de Lisboa, said it had learnt from diplomatic sources that "the North Americans at present have a 24 military experts with Unita in the south of Angola preparing estimates for supplying the agreed aid."

The State Department in Washington refused to comment on the claims.

The paper said Mr. Haig had offered "large quantities of anti-tank weapons, anti-aircraft missiles and some military advisers if necessary." The meeting was held with a delegation of Unita rebels in Washington last July.

The US Government is barred from supplying military aid to Angolan rebels by the so-called Clark amendment.

The article said the six-man Unita delegation received by Mr. Haig was led by the group's military commander, Miguel Sao Fuma. — Reuters.