Approved For Release 2002/08/21 : CIA-RDP85T00353R000100150006-4

125

Secret

25X1

OCI No. 0451/75

Central Intelligence Agency
Directorate of Intelligence
March 25, 1975

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Proposed Aid to Angolan Refugees

REFERENCE: Kinshasa 2329

The facts and assumptions set forth in the referenced cable are essentially correct. National elections may not be held by October 31, however, as called for in the independence agreement. If elections are not held, Angola will enter into independence with a fragile coalition government composed of the three liberation groups, without Portuguese participation. Moreover, the national election law still to be drafted could include a residency requirement that would render refugees ineligible to vote. The Popular Movement would certainly attempt to get such a provision enacted although its chances of doing so are probably less than even.

Holden Roberto and the National Front for the Liberation of Angola would be the major benefactor in any refugee resettlement and voter registration program in Angola. Although the exact number of refugees is unknown, US government agencies have accepted 500,000-700,000 as a reasonable estimate. The bulk of these refugees have lived in Zaire since the early 1960's and during the anti-Portuguese insurgency the National Front relied heavily on them for military recruits and financial support. If these refugees return to Angola in large numbers, they will represent a powerful bloc of political support for the National Front as well as a source of military personnel.

25X1

25X1

Secret

State Dept. review completed

Approved For Release 2002/08/21 : CIA-RDP85T00353R000100150006-4

Approved For Release 2002/08/21 : CIA-RDP85T00353R000100150006-4

25X1

The absence of US support would not result in the collapse of Roberto's plan to resettle the refugees nor would it seriously hurt his chances for a major political role in an independent Angola. However, Agostinho Neto, the president of the Soviet-backed Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola and Roberto's chief rival, could succeed in slowing down the refugee resettlement program through his movement's representatives in the transitional government. Thus, the US would stand to gain political credits with Roberto by making alternate sources of assistance available.

Although US assistance is to be offered openly and to all three liberation groups, Neto, a number of African nations that support him, the Soviets, and the Armed Forces Movement in Portugal will interpret the aid as an attempt to "stuff the ballot box" in favor of the National Front. This interpretation will gain credence from the fact that the National Front controls the ministries of agriculture, interior, and social affairs, on which it intends to rely heavily in administering refugee resettlement and voter registration.

Beyond a shrill propaganda campaign that is likely to sound self-pitying, there is little Roberto's opponents can do to discredit the US or impede Roberto's refugee program. The possibility exists that Neto, facing a landslide vote against him, will attempt a coup out of desperation. His organization, however, is outmanned and outgunned by the National Front and would lose a military confrontation even if it were to receive massive assistance from Moscow or Lisbon, which seems highly unlikely.

US relations with Zaire might also be affected by involvement in refugee resettlement. Zairian President Mobutu has sought to obtain US support for the National Front for many years, particularly since the Lisbon coup. The US has turned aside his requests. Our assistance at this point, however implemented, will be interpreted by Mobutu as endorsement of the National Front. He will probably be encouraged to pressure the US for other types of assistance for Roberto, including military. For the moment Mobutu has had to curtail his own support for the National Front because of his government's serious financial difficulties.

25X1

Approved For Release 2002/08/21 : CIA-RDP85T00353R000100150006-4

25X1A

Approved For Release 2002/08/21 : CIA-RDP85T00353R000100150006-4

Approved For Release 2002/08/21 : CIA-RDP85T00353R000100150006-4