

JOHN V. TUNNEY
CALIFORNIA

John Tunney

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20510

January, 1976

Dear Californian:

The scars of Vietnam are still deep in our country, and that's why I introduced the Tunney Amendment to cut-off funds for covert American operations in another civil war a continent apart from ours. Of immediate concern, of course, is the bloody civil war in Angola in southwestern Africa, where the administration planned to spend at least \$60 million for undercover CIA activities. In late December, the Senate approved my amendment by an overwhelming vote of 54 to 22. The amendment will have to be confirmed by the House of Representatives, and efforts are being made there for swift and conclusive action.

Additionally, I plan to follow-up in the Senate with a resolution to require Congressional approval for all funds for paramilitary operations in foreign countries. Our country should not entangle itself in overseas warfare without the full understanding and acceptance of the Congress and the American people. Secretary of State Kissinger vigorously lobbied for continued funding for Angola, but the amendment to cut off funds was pressed for the following reasons:

- 1) As a matter of policy, the United States should not involve itself in civil wars. The strife in Angola originates not in ideological differences but in ancestral power struggles that in no way affect our own strategic security.
- 2) The Soviets have intervened, but an isolated civil war is not the place to face them down. That comes by not letting them make detente simply a lace curtain to hide their old iron curtain. The United States has direct leverage on the Soviets through the arms limitations talks, investments and grain and technology shipments.
- 3) By choosing sides among warring factions, the administration has joined with the repressive and apartheid government of South Africa. Moderate African nations, like Nigeria, from whom we receive 10 percent of our imported oil, have made quite clear their opposition to South African involvement in the Angolan civil war. By ignoring them, our country is risking damage to our policies and national interest throughout Africa.
- 4) At a time when we're trying to curb inflation and cut government spending, dumping some \$60 million into jungle battlefields seems profligate.
- 5) Finally, our country must, once and for all, prevent any administration, whether Democratic or Republican, from secretly involving our nation in distant wars. We must reassert the Constitutional principle that the war-making power resides with Congress, and Congress is a partner with the President in shaping American foreign policy.

When it comes right down to it, I don't want to see our country slip gradually into another quagmire like Vietnam. If vital national interests are involved, then the President should come to the Congress and openly and directly seek funds rather than keeping the American people in the dark about American military involvement abroad.

Certainly, in opposing CIA covert operations in Angola, I am not suggesting for a moment that, as a nation, we should not maintain our alliances overseas that serve the interest of the free world and our national security. But getting involved in ancient rivalries in Angola in no way fortifies our defenses but simply drags us into a civil war that we didn't start.

Thank you so much for your careful attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

John V. Tunney
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United States Senator

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