

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

2727

5/16/76

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ (GDS)

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT
FROM: Brent Scowcroft *BS*
SUBJECT: Application for UN Membership by Angola

The Problem

The MPLA, as the Government of Angola, has submitted an application for UN membership to UN Secretary General Waldheim. The application has been forwarded to the President of the Security Council for consideration (France became Security Council President on May 1), and the members of the Council are expected to be asked to meet to consider the application as early as Tuesday, May 11. If the Council approves the application, it would then be submitted to the UN General Assembly this Fall and Angola would be formally admitted to the UN at the time of the General Assembly concurrence.

In view of the application, Ambassador Scranton needs your instructions on how the United States should vote in the Security Council. There are three options: to support, veto, or abstain.

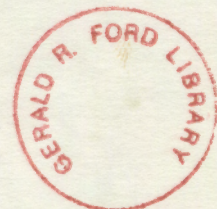
Discussion of the Options

A. Vote for MPLA application for membership

Our vote would not constitute an act of recognition and Ambassador Scranton could so state. There is adequate precedent for concurring in UN membership for states with which we do not have diplomatic relations, for example, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique. Nevertheless, an affirmative vote would be generally interpreted as a shift in US

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policy of withholding recognition of the MPLA given the continued presence of Cuban troops there. We could, of course, give an affirmative vote while at the same time calling for the departure of the Cubans. While this is a theoretically feasible option, it would represent such a sharp departure from our present posture that I strongly recommend against its consideration.

B. Veto the MPLA application

A veto would dramatically emphasize our position of non-recognition of the MPLA and would be consistent with our posture toward Cuban presence. Our act could be accompanied by a statement that the continuing presence of Cuban forces makes Angola less than independent, thus underscoring our opposition to that presence. A veto, however, would be heavily criticized in the Council and in Africa, and would be considered inconsistent with the positive achievements of Secretary Kissinger's recent trip to Africa. It would contrast sharply with the overwhelming support the application is expected to receive by the non-aligned and even by our European allies. While the veto would point up the Cuban role in Angola, it would highlight that all members of the Security Council except the United States are willing to accord UN membership to Angola despite the Cuban and Soviet role there. Since it would prevent MPLA membership, it would maintain this issue in high profile over the coming months.

C. Abstain on the MPLA application

An abstention would be consistent with our position of non-recognition of the MPLA. It would also be consistent with the statement that Secretary Kissinger made in Monrovia with regard to Angola: "We are willing in principle to open discussion with the Angolan authorities with a view toward normalizing our relations and seeking means of cooperating -- including on economic development. We wish Angola well as a unified and independent state. But before we can go far down that road, we want to know Angola's intention with respect to the presence of foreign forces on its soil." An abstention would probably avoid a bitter debate which a veto could provoke and in which the Cubans and Soviets could gain propaganda advantage. Ambassador Scranton could be instructed to make a tough statement



pointing out our continuing non-recognition of the MPLA and our insistence on the Cuban withdrawal from Angola. An abstention, however, could be criticized as being inconsistent with our strong position on Cuban presence in Angola. We could be accused of shifting from pressing for military measures against the MPLA to allowing them to enter the UN, without any change in the objective situation. The current estimate is that the only company we might find in an abstention would be the Chinese communists, although they have reportedly told the French UN Mission they have "no problems" with the application.

RECOMMENDATION:

Given Secretary Kissinger's recent trip to Africa, what he said about Angola in Monrovia, and our desire eventually to normalize relations with Angola, I recommend that Ambassador Scranton be instructed to abstain, with a tough statement reiterating our uncompromising opposition to the continual presence of Cuban troops.

APPROVE _____ DISAPPROVE _____

If you disapprove the above, that you authorize Ambassador Scranton to veto the MPLA application for membership in the UN.

APPROVE _____ DISAPPROVE _____

