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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 9, 1976

ADMINISTRATIVELY CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR:

— BRENT SCOWCROFT

FROM:

JAMES E. CONNOR JEC

The attached newspaper clipping was returned in the President's outbox with the following notation:

"Tell the Secretary this Department of State officer sounds good to me."

Please follow-up with appropriate action.

cc: Dick Cheney

Attachment:

Clipping from THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS  
January 6, 1976 entitled : "Former Local Man  
Favors Money and Arms for Angola"

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Brent Snowcroft

Tell the Sec. This  
Dept of State offer  
sounds good to me.

# Former local man favors money and arms for Angola

Marc Baas says the U.S. should give some aid to Angola

By Brian Malone

The United States should supply money and equipment to the two anti-Russian liberation forces fighting in Angola, says a former local man who is now a State Department employe in Africa.

Marc Baas, son of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Baas of 1707 Cambridge Ave. SE, said that Angola's pro-Western neighbors are "concerned and worried" about the situation and "nervously" are watching the United States' role in the conflict.

Baas, a 1966 graduate of Ottawa Hills High School, is the economic and commercial officer at the U.S. embassy in Libreville, Gabon, a small country a few hundred miles up the west coast of Africa from embattled Angola. He's been here the last two weeks visiting his parents.

But the bearded, 27-year-old Grand Rapids native emphasizes that the United States should stay away from any Vietnam-style involvement in the former Portuguese colony.

Liberals in the U.S. Senate, meantime, are trying to head off even "covert" aid to Angola.

"I think the Senate is wise in making sure there is no troop involvement or even advisers sent there," Baas said. "That's how we got started in Vietnam."

But there the similarity ends. Baas believes. Unlike Vietnam, various so-called pro-Western movements in Angola have been in existence years, before any U.S. aid. It isn't as though the United States set up these groups to take control of the government, he said.

"I think we could live with any Angolan government as long as it isn't controlled by outside forces," Baas said.

But with the massive Russian aid and the presence of Cuban soldiers there now, chances of having an independent regime, marxist or democratic, appear slim, he feels.

Baas said that with U.S. arms and financial aid to the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) and the National Unity for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), the civil war there eventually will reach a stalemate, which in turn could lead to negotiations and a coalition government.

He said that countries like Gabon, which already has two leftist leaning neighbors,

definitely favor the pro-Western movements in Angola and would welcome a nation governed by anti-Russian leaders. He said the "friendly" countries are anxious to see if the United States stands behind its friends.

Baas also believes that a firm showing by the United States in Angola will be important in maintaining detente with the Russians; "You can't have detente when one side is going ahead and doing as it pleases. We should cut off aid to Angola only after the Russians do."

Baas added that the United States should explore other diplomatic avenues in attempting to discourage the massive Soviet involvement in the African government.

After graduating from Ottawa, Baas attended American University's School of International Service in Washington, D.C. During his undergraduate years, he worked in then-Congressman Gerald R. Ford's office, answering constituent mail.

He earned a bachelor degree in International Relations in 1970 and joined the Foreign Service in October of that year.

His first foreign assignment was with the American embassy in Tunisia, where he met and eventually married Belen Oyarzun, daughter of the Spanish ambassador to Tunisia.

He was transferred to Gabon in September of 1974 and will remain there until May, 1977. After that, he plans to return to the United States for advance study in economics.

Baas describes Gabon as having the highest standard of living in Black Africa. It is a country rich in oil, manganese and uranium deposits and holds a virtual monopoly on a special type of timber that is made into plywood.

Even though Gabon is a member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and has third world leanings, those ties do not get in the way of pro-United States feelings, Baas said.

Baas said the capital city of Libreville is clean and modern, but that the year-round heat and humidity (it is practically right on the equator) takes some getting used to.

His duties at the embassy include preparing economic and commercial reports on American dealings in Gabon, briefings for American businessmen there and processing passports and other legal documents.

Baas is with the U.S. Department of State in Gabon