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OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

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THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

THE BRIEFING ROOM

4:58 P.M. EST

The Senate decision to cut off additional funds for Angola is a deep tragedy for all countries whose security depends upon the United States. Ultimately, it will profoundly affect the security of our country as well.

How can the United States, the greatest power in the world, take the position that the Soviet Union can operate with impunity many thousands of miles away with Cuban troops and massive amounts of military equipment, while we refuse any assistance to the majority of the local people who ask only for military equipment to defend themselves.

The issue in Angola is not, never has been, and never will be a question of the use of U.S. forces. The sole issue is the provision of modest amounts of assistance to oppose military intervention by two extra-continental powers: namely, the Soviet Union and Cuba.

This abdication of responsibility by a majority of the Senate will have the gravest consequences for the long-term position of the United States and for international order in general. A great Nation cannot escape its responsibilities. Responsibilities abandoned today will return as more acute crises tomorrow.

I, therefore, call upon the Senate to reverse its position before it adjourns. Failure to do so will, in my judgment, seriously damage the national interest of the United States.

END (AT 5:00 P.M. EST)