

U.S./Africa, Gulf Oil Under Fire Again For Angola Business

GREENVILLE [AN] R. Marshall Helms, a retired professor of physics at East Carolina University, was reading through his mail on January 5 when he came across an item that prompted him to sponsor, that evening, "A Resolution Against Recognition of Communist Angola", at the regular monthly meeting of Pitt County Republicans. The resolution singled out Gulf Oil Corporation for special criticism.

The statement was adopted and sent to Gulf headquarters in Pittsburgh, where over the past several months, a steady flow of similar protests has been received.

For the fifth largest U.S. oil producer, this is the second time in a decade that its activities in southern Africa have caused a public outcry. In the early 1970's, when Angola was still a Portuguese colony, Gulf was the target of a campaign organized by supporters of Angolan independence.

That effort, which included credit card turn-ins, shareholder resolutions, and picketing, was spearheaded by a church-sponsored Gulf Boycott Coalition in Dayton, Ohio and the Pan African Liberation Committee of Boston, headed by Randall Robinson, who is now executive director of the black lobby TransAfrica.

The current campaign against Gulf comes from the other side of the political spectrum. Critics on the right — accusing Gulf of lobbying to soften U.S. policy toward Angola, and of aiding the country's Marxist government — have filed stockholder resolutions, brought law suits, and called for public challenges.

Marshall Helms is an example of those whose protests were induced by calls to action in conservative magazines and special mailings.

"I have a great fear of the U.S. becoming communist," he said in an interview in his study. "I think it's very probable that we in North Carolina and the other states will have a communistic government before this century's over. And so this is something, in Angola, that is maybe not real vital but is sure to be an important step toward the United States being communist."

Helms has conveyed his views to both of the state's conservative Republican senators — his former campus colleague John East and Jesse Helms, who may be a "distant cousin".

Americans for a Sound Foreign Policy in Washington, D.C., has sponsored several mailings on the issue. "An American company, in open defiance of our president, allied with Communists" reads the teaser on the envelope of a letter signed by New York Republican Rep. John LeBoutillier. Another mailing from the foreign policy group is signed by retired Admiral B.N. Streen.

Recipients are asked to return a pledge card to Gulf threatening to boycott the company's products if it does not "Stop paying the Communists of Angola."

Leading the shareholder campaign is the U.S.-Namibia (South West Africa) Trade and Cultural Council, which is registered with the U.S. Justice Department as a foreign agent for the South African-sanctioned administration in Namibia.

The resolutions filed by the Council would prohibit expansion of Gulf's operations in Angola as long as the government there supports the South West African People's Organization of Namibia (SWAPO), whose guerilla wing is fighting South African control of

After purchasing ten Gulf shares last year, the Trade Council submitted three resolutions to the company for inclusion in the proxy statement distributed to stock owners before each annual meeting.

Gulf decided to omit the proposed resolutions and explained its reasons in a December 22 letter to the Securities and Exchange Commission, the government regulatory agency responsible for

the activities of publicly-owned corporations.

Calling the statements "false and misleading", Gulf argued "that the Council is engaged through the proxy solicitation procession propagandizing political positions on behalf of its client, Namibia, presumably for remuneration."

"It is the company's position that the Council's proposals relate to the enforcement of a per-

sonal political claim and grievance on behalf of its client," the letter said.

On January 8, the Council contested Gulf's action in a suit filed in federal district court in Washington. The court has not acted, and the SEC has refrained from ruling in the case since it is now being adjudicated.

Unlike the earlier boycott, the attack on Gulf from the right is well-financed and

technologically sophisticated.

"We have a Systems 6 computer in here — 130,000 names and addresses of what we call the leadership group in the U.S.," said Marion Smoak, president of the U.S.-Namibia Council, during an interview in the group's Washington office.

"It has all libraries, all college presidents, all daily papers, all weekly papers. It has principal

church leaders, chief executive officers of all states, all legislators. Every important leadership position in this country we've entered in to this computer," he said.

"We send especially directed letters couched in different terms to various groups depending on who they are, and so this word has gotten out."

Phillip Abbott Luce, founder of Americans for a Sound Foreign Policy and editor of the

biweekly *American Sentinel*, is also trying to build public pressure on Gulf. He has appealed for support to such groups as the Young Americans for Freedom, which is currently holding a series of regional conferences around the nation.

In a telephone interview, Luce accused Gulf of "aiding the enemy" by providing "hard currency" indirectly to the Soviet Union, while the company has "Cuban troops guarding their

facilities."

Gulf senior executive Charles Wooten chuckled when asked about this frequently-voiced charge. "That's just not the case. We don't really see the Cubans ourselves. We're way up in a little enclave to the north. There certainly are not Cubans protecting Gulf installations in Cabinda. There simply aren't any."

Wooten said Gulf has found the Angolans to be "pragmatic" part-

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WASHINGTON — President Reagan shares light moment with President Mohamad Siad Barre of Somalia as they meet in the Oval Office at the White House March 11.

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