ESe to the NEWS

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PORTUGAL & ANGOLA

It seems to be a reliable rule of thumb that the intensity of one's anti-Communism increases the closer one approaches the reality of Communist rule. Conversely, acceptance of the delusions of detente increases the farther one is removed from the possibility of actual experience with Communism.

A little more than a year ago, the Portuguese were so tolerant that they welcomed Communist Party leaders into a coalition government. Now, the Portuguese have discovered to their sorrow that these same Communists are suppressing political freedom and bringing the country to the verge of economic ruin.

Although the Communist received only 12½ percent of the vote in the last elections, they control the media and the labor unions, they have imprisoned hundreds of non-Communists, and closed newspapers and radio stations demanding democracy.

The gross national product has declined by six percent this year, compared to an eight percent rise during the last year of the old regime. The once-profitable tourist industry has collapsed, with resort hotels at only 25 percent occupancy. Most businesses have been nationalized, prices are expected to rise to 30 percent this year, and unemployment has risen to more than 10 percent.

The only thing saving Portugal from total economic disaster is the large gold reserve built up during the conservative years of the Salazar regime. Thousands of Portuguese are now willing to face

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bloodshed rather than continue under Communist control.

A year ago, there were half a million hardworking whites in the African Portuguese country of Angola. Portugal has been forced to pull out of Angola under a combination of Soviet-financed terror ist activity there and worldwide Soviet-inspired propaganda about the alleged evils of "colonialism." By definition, "colonialism" is bad only if practiced by Western countries, but never when prac ticed by Russia or Red China.

Some 300,000 whites in Angola, facing the immediate prospect of a Soviet-armed dictatorship, are now clamoring to get_ out, even at the cost of abandoning all the property and savings they anl.their familieshave acquired during several generations of hard work in a rugged country. Many of them are buying safe passage out of Angola

with watches, jewelry, radios,_ and their last remaining savings.

The situation in Portugal and Angola shows why Communism is advancing and freedom is in retreat. It is clearly not because Com munism wins the minds and hearts of the people, or because it pro vides superior political or economic benefits. It is because the Communists have a ruthless plan to achieve power at any cost, while the West is neutralized and afraid to act.

Any schoolchild can see the immense strategic importance of Portugal by looking at a map. If the wealthy countries of NATO and the United States haven't got the self-interest to match the money and weapons the Soviets are putting into Portugal and Angola, the West deservesto lose.

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