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Portugal
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To MPLA

From News Dispatches

BRUSSELS, Jan. 28 — The foreign minister of Portugal, which gave Angola independence last November after 500 years of colonial rule, said today that his government is "convinced" the Soviet-backed liberation faction will win the Angolan civil war. He accused Western countries of being passive.

Ernesto Melo Antunes also told a news conference in the Belgian capital, where he was attending two days of talks here at European Common Market headquarters:

"The Portuguese government is convinced that in a short time, with or without the support of the Soviet Union and Cuba, the MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola) will win because it has the support of a majority of the population."

Asked if Portugal would soon recognize the Luanda-based Popular Movement government, he replied: "We are waiting for the right moment to recognize a government in the capital which is in a position to control most of the territory with the support of the people."

"I think at the moment the MPLA is well-placed for being that government."

He added that the Popular Movement had no alternative

but to turn to the Soviet Union for support because it had been abandoned by everyone else.

Melo Antunes said he had found the attitude of the West to the war "passive . . . there has been no real initiative."

At the time of independence, the Portuguese government was widely expected to recognize the Popular Movement. Instead, it sought a coalition government of the three Angolan liberation groups — an arrangement that soon collapsed.

Melo Antunes has been a strong advocate of recognizing the Popular Movement. The foreign minister, who recently met with U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Arthur A. Hartman, suggested that the Popular Movement would diversify its own diplomatic contacts if the West showed more flexibility toward it.

The Movement has been making strong advances against its two Western-backed adversaries, the National Front for the Liberation of Angola and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola.

In Lisbon, meanwhile, the military police announced that six army officers detained since the abortive coup attempt last Nov. 25 have been provisionally released. Numerous detainees have been released in the last week.

Observers believed that other officers allegedly involved in the leftist coup attempt, including Maj. Otelo Saraiva Carvalho, would also be freed in the near future.