

Luanda Confident

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—This is now a self-confident city.

Two months ago, when this reporter was last here, the newly proclaimed capital of the People's Republic of Angola was in the grip of a jittery vigilance and mounting corrosion. Ten-year-old

boys with machine guns served at checkpoints all over town along with older soldiers in camouflage fatigue uniforms. Stores were closed and shop windows were barred. Food was hard to obtain, and hundreds of Portuguese were sleeping at the airport and jamming into the last of the refugee flights.

Now the children with their weapons are gone. There are no checkpoints. Civilian policemen in new blue uniforms direct traffic. And street cleaners with brooms far outnumber the soldiers with Kalashnikov automatic rifles.

The port, which was badly

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congested, is now shipping out coffee. Stores are well stocked, not only with food but also with fashionable gowns, bikinis, industrial saws, motors and air conditioners.

And the Portuguese are coming back. The return is only a trickle compared with the exodus of 350,000, and the authorities here are being selective with the returnees. But a 747 jet that arrived last night brought back some 200 people from Lisbon, almost all of them white, and many with young children.

"The reason for the change here is obvious," said a Government official, "it has come with the realization that victory is near."

More specifically, he added, the threat of an attack on Luanda from the north, the major source of skittishness at the time the Portuguese left in November, has all but disappeared as forces of the Soviet-supported Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola moved deeply into territory held by the Western-backed National Front for the Liberation of Angola. The line dividing the forces, which had been stationary for months near Caxito, a scant 35 miles from the capital, has been pushed far to the north.

According to sources of the Popular Movement here, its troops are now continuing to chase the National Front forces and are moving toward three remaining National Front concentrations—at the towns of San Antonio do Zairen, São Salvador and Maquelo do Zombo, all near the Zaire border. They have already captured the National Front's former principal garrison towns of Ambriz and Uige.

Gain in South Reported

In the south, where the Popular Movement is fighting the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola and South African regulars, military spokesmen here said today that Popular Movement forces had advanced 50 miles in the last three days on the road to Huambo, the capital of the government formed by the National Front and the National Union.

The Popular Movement says that its troops, with Cuban support, have taken Cela and are on the banks of the Queve River, about 15 miles south of Santa Comba.

[[On Wednesday, reports from Huambo, the capital of the pro-Western forces, said that Cela was still in their hands but that it was under severe pressure from the north. Reports from the pro-Western forces Thursday made no mention of Cela.]

A group of English journalists who were permitted to travel alone—another sign of the relaxed atmosphere here—returned today from a trip toward this area. They were able to reach the outskirts of Cela before being turned back by Cuban soldiers at a checkpoint there.

The journalists said that during their three-day tour they neither heard nor saw fighting. They did see overgrown farms being tilled as people apparently returned to their villages. And while they said that the stores in Quibala, a scene of heavy fighting a month ago, were burned and looted, there were no signs of hunger.

The journalists said they had spoken with M'betto Tra-A, the Popular Movement's political leader for the south-

ern front. They said he had told them that Cuban units were taking an active role in the fighting. The journalists quoted him as having said: "Why not, but they are all under our command and respond to our orders."

The journalists said that Mr. M'betto had told them that the National Union troops were in disarray and that most of the fighting was against South African regulars. The journalists viewed the wreckage of a Cessna plane with South African markings that had crashed after reportedly being shot down near the town of Ebo.

A second South African plane, they were told, had been downed at Catete, killing the four persons aboard, including a South African brigadier general named Pottgeiter. Two weeks ago the South African Government confirmed that General Pottgeiter had been killed in a crash. But they gave the site of the crash at a point near Angola's southern border, some 500 miles south of Catete.

Air Force Set Up

Here in Luanda, Jornal de Angola, the daily organ of the Popular Movement, reported that a national air force had been formed. Except for noting that three planes had put on a display of precision flying to mark the formation of the force, the article did not specify the numbers or types of planes involved.

In announcing establishment of the air force, Dr. Agostino Neto, the Popular Movement's leader, said it would serve to "protect national integrity against foreign ag-

gressors and imperialists who have allied themselves with divisive elements and secessionists in Angola."

Dr. Neto and other leaders here have in their public statements developed an approach to the United States in which Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger and his Angolan policies are depicted as advancing imperialist designs while the Senate and to some extent American companies that have holdings here are carefully praised. For example, in a recent speech Dr. Neto said he "saluted the Senate for reflecting the sincere attitudes of the American people who are in disagreement with the Angolan policies of their leaders."

Yet in that same speech he asserted that the real enemy was "imperialism at whose head stood the U.S."

"It is they," he said, "who are arming the Zairans, South Africans and their Angolan lackeys."

This position is often advanced here by partisans of the Popular Movement who insist that the South Africans would not have intervened in Angola unless they had received prior assurances of support from Washington. Both the United States and South Africa deny any such arrangement.

The ambiguous attitude toward the United States is being underscored by the reception here of Mark Moran, an aide to Senator John V. Tunney, Democrat of California, who has been given access to top leaders during his fact-finding visit here. Another of Senator Tunney's aides is now conferring with leaders of the National Front.