

Anthony Lewis
 SFChronicle JAN 19 1976
**Kissinger's
 Disaster** Angola.
 Original column, NYT 15 Jan, filed/

SUPPOSE THE UNITED STATES had immediately and vigorously objected when South African troops entered Angola in force last October. This country would now have a degree of credibility in Africa as a friendly, disinterested power. It might be able to play a useful role in easing the difficult African transitions that lie ahead.

Instead, Secretary of State Kissinger gave silent assent to the South African action. He kept American arms and money going to the Angolan factions favored by South Africa. He declared that Soviet support of the other side made the Angolan conflict a major test of East-West relations.



The results were predictable. The United States was tainted in most of Africa by association with the white supremacists of Pretoria. The USSR and Cuba, seeing a glorious opportunity to win credit for fighting racism, increased their intervention.

★ ★ ★

THE WORST EFFECTS of the Angolan policy will be felt, in time, in South Africa.

Until Angola, South Africa's policy towards its neighbors had been marked by caution and acceptance of change. Prime Minister Vorster's policy evidently was not to interfere with nearby black countries, in the hope that they would leave his internal situation alone.

Then, with uncharacteristic rashness, Vorster sent his forces into Angola. The action calls into question the good faith of his entire external policy. More important, it promises to arouse grave new problems for white rule at home.

South Africa's intervention seems likely to hasten the radicalizing of her own black population. It reduces the hope for peaceful change in that country.

★ ★ ★

THAT IS THE potential price to be paid for Kissinger's Angola policy. It has gone beyond the mistaken to the irrational and hysterical.

Item. Kissinger says he wants to prevent Communist influence in Angola. So he adopts a policy that assures a much greater and more lasting Communist role.

Item. When the Soviet Union intervened massively in the 1973 Middle East war, Kissinger saw no violation of detente. But now he says Soviet aid in Angola does threaten detente.

Why would a serious man want to dramatize unfavorable situations and make them worse? The only answer is that there is a gloomy self-punishing side to Kissinger — and enormous ego involvement. He has been trying to convince us for years that power in today's world can be balanced as it was in tiny 19th century Europe. When the theory is shown up in a place such as Angola, he tries to make the facts fit the theory. Many will pay, and heavily, for this egocentric folly.