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The United States and the Portuguese Decolonization

(1974 – 1976)

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I

The relationships between the United States and Portugal had always had a special cast to them as the result of the Azores base. And one of the most peculiar aspects of the U.S. role in Portugal and the former Portuguese territories in Africa, is that the Azores base not only contributed to the longevity of Portugal's African empire, but also, because of the economic consequences of the U.S. use of that base to re-supply Israel in 1973, became one of the most important immediate causes of the coup d'état of April 25, 1974, which brought about its demise.

Between the 1940s and the 1970s, there had been a succession of quite distinct turning points, particular moments when a variety of possibilities and options existed in the situation on all sides—in Portugal, in the United States, in Europe in general, in South Africa—that might have helped produce some change in Portugal's intransigent stance in Africa. But on each occasion when a "window for change" occurred, Portugal, rather than compromising in the face of the inevitable, instead took a more stubborn stance. And on each occasion the Azores were an ingredient in the equation.ⁱ

Between 1944 and 1947 in Portugal, for instance, those opposed to the Salazar dictatorship had expected that a process of democratization would follow the end of the Second World War and the victory of the Allies. Within Portugal there was a good deal of political mobilization. The Roosevelt administration in the mid-1940s, moreover, had espoused a very strong anticolonialist position. So strong, in fact, that the British Colonial Office took the American policy seriously enough to initiate planning for a "transfer of power" in their own African colonies.ⁱⁱ The Portuguese had to be aware of this as well. The Salazar regime itself was compromised. It was a regime with the trappings, less muted at this time than they became afterward, of national socialism and of Italian fascism. The regime, therefore, was far from comfortable in post war democratic Western Europe. The Cold War had not yet begun, so that anti-Communist arguments exploited so effectively later on by Salazar did not yet have the credibility in American eyes they would require after 1947.

To the dismay of the Portuguese democrats, however, the complication for the United States and its allies in the 1940s and the opportunity Salazar exploited was the Azores settlement. Salazar brilliantly manipulated the forces at play. During the war, the British, in order to combat German naval activity in the Atlantic, had been quite prepared to seize the Azores if Salazar had persisted in denying them bases on the islands, and this option was also discussed privately by U.S. policymakers. Indeed, an ultimatum was given to Salazar by the British. In the negotiations which brought the United States into the Azores base agreement, initially under the auspices of the British, a critical concession was made which committed the United States to respect the territorial integrity of the Portuguese territories. This concession was the first break in the anticolonial position espoused up to that time, and was the starting point for many of the

problems which were to bedevil U.S. policy with respect to Portugal and Portuguese Africa thereafter.ⁱⁱⁱ

Once the territorial integrity of the Portuguese empire had been assured and linked to access to the Azores bases, the moment when a conjunction of favorable circumstances existed internally and externally had passed. By the late 1940s the Cold War had begun, and for the next twelve years or so—which brought with them Portugal's entrance into NATO, the United Nations, and "respectability" within the Western community—the Portuguese took full advantage of the fear of communism within the United States and Western Europe to sustain their undemocratic regime within an alliance dedicated ostensibly to protecting democracy in Europe.

The second period when important options for change emerged in Portugal occurred between 1958 and 1962. The election campaign of General Humberto Delgado in 1958 led to large-scale popular mobilization throughout Portugal, and the regime was also shaken by disgruntlement within the military. There were favorable external conditions, too, between 1958 and 1961; this was the grand period of African independence, with former British and French colonies stampeding toward nationhood. The Kennedy administration, which took office in 1960, as noted earlier, adopted an activist policy in Africa, going so far as to give help to Holden Roberto and Eduardo Mondlane, as well as maintaining liaison via the CIA with disaffected generals in Portugal itself.^{iv} But by 1962-63 the opportunity for change passed again. Salazar thwarted the military plot against him, a major motive of which had been the military's reaction to his intransigent position on Africa. The various opposition pressures in Portugal faltered. In 1962 the attack on the army barracks at Beja by a group of military and civilian dissidents was quite clearly identified in the minds of the CIA as being Communist-influenced, a concern which had not been preeminent in their minds even a year or two years before. The Congo, the Bay of Pigs episode, the Cuban Missile Crisis, had all hardened people's attitudes. Again, the possibilities had been lost. Admiral George Anderson, the U.S. ambassador in Lisbon during the mid-sixties, devised an ingenious scheme to "buy" Portugal out of Africa, but the plan was a foregone failure because the moment for change had slipped away again and old intransigence dominated Portugal's position.

There was another dramatic period of open options—1968 and 1971. A combination of internal and external factors again existed to create a "window for action." The internal factors were the incapacitation of Salazar and the accession of Marcello Caetano, with a great deal of hope for change, bringing as he did younger, more European-oriented, modern people into the government and the National Assembly. It was hoped that they might be able to effect some change both domestically and externally. Caetano himself hoped for some liberalization of colonial policies, and had been identified by the CIA as a potential leader at the time of the 1961 plotting against Salazar, had that plot succeeded. The irony is that in this case the external factors changed. In Washington, at the precise point when in Portugal some pressure might have produced results, the Nixon

administration concluded that (as the National Security memorandum puts it) “the Portuguese are in Africa to stay.” This period ends with the murder of Amílcar Cabral in 1973, which foreclosed any possibility of a negotiated settlement with the PAIGC. The “liberals” in Portugal had already resigned from the National Assembly in Lisbon, wiping out the possibilities of liberal reform in Portugal and an orderly disengagement in Africa.^v

Given the background of pressures from Washington, the irony of the final period from 1974 to 1976 is that when, as a result of the April 1974 coup, the Portuguese eventually recognized that decolonization was inevitable, the United States received the Spínola regime with great caution. Spínola’s, in fact, was precisely what the United States had been pressing for thirty-four years in its more enlightened moments—a liberal, capitalist, modern, Europe-oriented regime, promoting a slow, moderate transition in Africa. Yet, because the United States was petrified, in fact panic-stricken, over Communist participation in Spínola’s government, it gave no support until it was too late and Spínola was forced into exile.

Portugal’s long delay in following her European neighbors in coming to terms with African nationalism had another consequence. In the 1940s the Soviet Union and its clients had no possibility of involvement in African affairs; by the 1960s the Soviets were an element, but a marginal one; by the 1970s the Soviet Union’s capacity to influence events in Africa was substantial. The role of the United States had also grown with time. The arrival of the United States and the USSR on the African scene in fact marked a broader shift in international power. Africa had already become a focus of intense rivalry between them in the early 1960s, in the former Belgian Congo. The Congo also became the focus of Cuban interests.^{vi}

In the Portuguese territories, however, during the decade between 1963 and 1973 neither the Soviet Union nor the United States pushed hard for major changes in the status quo. Soviet aid for the liberation movements in the Portuguese territories was modest in scale—much less than either the Portuguese claimed or the liberation movements wanted; and the same can be said for what Western support the Portuguese managed to squeeze out of their NATO allies.^{vii} General Spínola, in his book *Portugal and the Future*, concluded that neither the West nor the East seemed to have any real interest in bringing the conflict to a resolution one way or the other.

This situation began to change marginally in the 1970s. In early December 1970, after Portugal launched a small amphibious attack by some 350 soldiers on Conakry, Guinea, intended to overthrow the government of President Sekou Touré and assassinate the leaders of PAIGC. The Soviet Union dispatched a group of naval combatants to the West African waters to deter similar adventures.^{viii} The raid had been planned by General Spínola in hope of striking a decisive blow against both his enemy within Portuguese Guiné and his enemy’s sanctuary in

Guinea Conakry. Like the Bay of Pigs, the whole affair misfired, objectives were not taken, and the expedition was a disaster for the Portuguese. Yet by revealing the vulnerability of Guinea-Conakry to Portuguese intervention, the result was a quiet escalation of outside support from Sekou Touré and the PAIGC from non-African countries—Cuba and the Soviet Union.

Castro had been personally interested in the PAIGC since Amílcar Cabral's participation in the 1966 Havana Tricontinental Conference of African, Asian, and Latin American leaders. By the late 1960s, the Cubans had assumed responsibility for several PAIGC training camps in Guinea and Senegal and were entering Portuguese Guiné with guerrilla raiding parties. General Spínola claimed in September 1971 that each PAIGC operations unit was led by Cuban officers. The Soviets, after the initial dispatch of a destroyer from the Mediterranean fleet in late 1970, had by September 1971 stationed a Soviet destroyer, tank landing ship, and oiler permanently in the Conakry area. The Nixon administration had also been asked by Sekou Touré for assistance after the Portuguese raid on Conakry, but Nixon was strongly, if surreptitiously, committed to the Portuguese cause. The White House and the State Department, in fact, imposed a news blackout on the Soviet role in Guinea in the interests of maintaining a working relationship with both Guinea and Portugal. Only when the Soviet navy used Conakry for long-range reconnaissance missions during the 1973 Middle East war was word of Soviet military activity in Guinea leaked by the Pentagon. In 1973, partly to offset setbacks in Egypt, the Soviets began providing sophisticated ground-to-air missiles to the PAIGC. At the end of the year, again partly for reasons that related to superpower interest in the Middle East, Kissinger promised sophisticated weapons to the Portuguese.

In southern Africa, the experience of the early 1960s was to have important ramifications for later U.S. reactions to the process of decolonization. The choice made by the Kennedy administration in 1960 of Holden Roberto as a recipient of covert American aid was a bold measure placing Washington's support behind an armed insurrection against the government of one of its NATO allies. At the time Roberto was supported by the then two most radical independent African governments—those of Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana and of Sekou Touré in Guinea. He was in many respects a protégé of the American Committee on Africa.^{ix} Despite the later withdrawal of Washington's support and the Nixon-Kissinger decision in 1970 to move closer to Lisbon and the white minority regimes in southern Africa, these early connections remained. When in 1974 Portugal's position in Africa disintegrated, the alliances forged in the early Kennedy years surfaced almost unaltered as if nothing had happened during the intervening fifteen years.

The United States government, on the other hand, was suspicious of Agostinho Neto, who had a long record of arrests for political activity. He had been imprisoned while a medical student in Portugal, first in 1951 and again between 1955 and 1957. He returned to Angola in 1959 and was arrested and deported to the Cape Verde Islands. International protests led to his transfer to

Lisbon, where he was incarcerated and later placed under house arrest. In 1962 he escaped from Portugal and resurfaced in Leopoldville (now Kinshasa). In December 1962 he became president of MPLA.^x

The MPLA itself was never a monolith. Among the groups in its genealogy was the Angolan Communist party (ACP), and the MPLA's union organization was affiliated with the Prague-based World Federation of Trade Unions. In essence, however, the MPLA was a broad coalition, and it was led by a strong but often divided cadre of radical and Marxist intellectuals. The centrifugal tendencies within it were so strong that they seriously weakened its effectiveness and on several occasions threatened to destroy it altogether. Toward the end of the 1960s, an attempt was made to form within the MPLA a disciplined and ideologically reliable cadre while the movement itself would remain a catch all front intended to mobilize the broadest possible support. But this effort increased rather than diminished contention, and by the early 1970s Neto's position was challenged by two major competing groups, each reflecting the divisions within the international Communist movements resulting from the split between Moscow and Beijing. The first faction was associated with Mario de Andrade, a founding member of the MPLA and former member of the ACP, but seen as being close to Chinese orientation. The second was led by one of the MPLA's most successful field commanders, Daniel Chipenda, a former professional soccer star considered closer to Moscow.

In early 1974, President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, concerned that the MPLA's internal struggles had so weakened its ability to fight that Lisbon had been able to shift 10,000 troops to Mozambique from Angola to face FRELIMO's 1973 persuaded China to begin to provide technical assistance to the MPLA's Zaire-based rival, Holden Roberto's FNLA. The Chinese had already had considerable success in Mozambique, where they had aided the reorganization of FRELIMO following the setbacks and internal splits that racked the movement following the 1969 assassination of Eduardo Mondlane, FRELIMO's president. The division between the factions within MPLA became so severe that by 1974 Neto's survival as president of the MPLA seemed problematical, and he was reinstated in the presidency at the MPLA conference in Lusaka in mid-1974 only at the insistence of Kenneth Kaunda.

The MPLA had one considerable advantage over its rivals; it enjoyed exclusive relations with the major liberation fronts in Portuguese Guiné and Mozambique. Neto's personal relations with the leaders of both PAIGC and FRELIMO went back to his student days in Lisbon, and they had been fortified by a formal structure of mutual consultation among the three movements since 1961 (CONCP). Amílcar Cabral, president of PAIGC, while working as an agronomist on a sugar estate in Angola, had been a founding member of the MPLA. Neto himself, since the assassinations of both Mondlane (1969) and of Cabral (1973), enjoyed the dangerous distinction of being the last of the founding fathers of the liberation movements in Portuguese Africa. Because of this, there was never any

doubt that Neto, in the event of dispute, the other newly independent Portuguese colonies would recognize as the legitimate aspirant to the government in Luanda.

All three movements had long-standing formal relationships with leading members of the nonaligned Afro-Asian and Latin American Solidarity Organization, founded in Havana in 1966. Cabral's most important public statements of revolutionary theory were delivered at the Havana conference. Cabral observed then that the Cuban revolution "constitutes a particular lesson for the national liberation movements, especially for those who want their national revolution to be a true revolution." There was never any mystery about these views, or about the fact that ideological affinity had been translated into concrete aid.^{xi} The establishment of diplomatic ties between Zaire and China in late 1973 and the decision of the Chinese to train the FNLA in 1974 had also served to galvanize Soviet concerns about Chinese objectives in Africa. The Soviets had consistently supported the national liberation movements: and despite a cooling of the Soviet relationship with Neto in the early 1970s, Soviet support continued through the late 60s to the early 70s to one or the other of the MPLA's factions. Soviet long-term strategy placed considerable emphasis on Angola, a strong Soviet influence there would give the Soviets considerable influence in Zaire—a primary object of Soviet interest since their intervention in the early 1960s. Zaire was seen to be a vital link to Zambia, Namibia, as well as to South Africa itself.

The lines of conflict and alliance in Portugal and Africa were in fact clearer than they appeared to be on the surface. When the Armed Forces Movement (MFA) overthrew the decrepit dictatorship in Lisbon in April 1974 because of exhaustion by colonial wars, the pressure of economic problems at home, and irritation with an unbending autocracy, the repercussions of their actions were almost bound to be startling. Portugal was a NATO ally, anachronistic and at times embarrassingly stubborn, but nevertheless an ally that had no doubt whatsoever on which side it stood in a bipolar world. The United States, because of the intimacy of relationships with the dictatorship, was unsettled by change in Portugal and especially unprepared for the sometimes bewildering reversals and turmoils that were the immediate consequences of the coup. And the United States, unlike its geopolitical rivals, had next to no relationships with the old clandestine opposition in either Portugal or in the African territories.

II

In the first months after the April 25, 1974, coup d'état in Lisbon, the young officers of the Armed Forces Movement stayed very much in the background, preferring to remain as anonymous as possible. This did not mean they had any desire to see the fruits of their victory taken away from them. In a conversation

with David Martin of the *London Observer*, Major Victor Alves commented pointedly that the problem with the military coup of 1926, which was preempted by Salazar to establish his own dictatorial rule, had been “that although the soldiers knew what they did not want, they did not know what they did want. They had no program.” In 1974 Major Alves’s coordinating committee had already rectified the error of their predecessors. The problem was how the program which envisioned a settlement of the colonial wars in Africa was to be interpreted and by whom. The question of interpretation was especially acute concerning the issue which had been largely responsible for causing the coup d’état in the first place: the futile attempt to avoid decolonization. And on this central question there were very deep divisions.

The MFA’s ambiguous phrases about colonial policy and the “need of a political not military solution” had been if anything, gross understatements. The MFA program and General Spínola’s book in fact set out positions so diametrically opposed that they contained seeds for a conflict that could be resolved only by the victory of one over the other.

The rapid success of the coup disguised for some months the seriousness of the divergences within the new regime, and particularly the degree to which the young officers who had made the coup were intensely political men. But the conflict staked out at the beginning was at its heart a conflict between revolutionary and evolutionary change in Europe and between immediate decolonization and gradual disengagement in Africa. Major Vitor Alves, however, regarded Spínola’s federative scheme, outlined in his book *Portugal and the Future*, as “his personal dream.” Yet during his first months in office Spínola spoke privately of a timetable for decolonization over “a generation or so,” during which time the people “would be given democracy and equipped to choose.”^{xii}

But to retain Mozambique and Angola even in the short term meant to continue the war the MFA had made the coup to end. Many officers of the MFA, who had all fought in Africa, were totally opposed to a solution that merely changed the terms of the game. They did not believe that Portugal as a whole benefited from retaining the African territories. Nor did they think, even in the improved international climate following the coup, that the Portuguese army could sustain the holding operation necessary if Spínola’s model was to work. “We have no desire to construct a neocolonial community,” one of them told Jean Daniel of *Nouvelle Observateur*, “we are interested more in the formation of a Socialist interdependence, and that only to the extent that our brothers in Guiné, Mozambique, and Angola accept, desire, and demand.”^{xiii}

The political solution for Africa the MFA was talking about thus signified much more than the type of autonomy within a “Lusitanian Federation” which Spínola foresaw. As the bulletin put out by the MFA explained with some bluntness: “Those who benefited from the war were the same financial groups

that exploited the people in the metropolis and, comfortably installed in Lisbon and Oporto or abroad, by means of a venal government obliged the Portuguese people to fight in Africa in defense of their immense profits.”^{xiv}

In Guiné, Mozambique, and Angola the liberation movements always made a careful distinction between the Portuguese people, on whom they counted for support, and the dictatorial government that was trying to crush them. PAIGC, MPLA, and FRELIMO had all feared from the first that a political revolution in Portuguese Africa could still leave them in a condition of neocolonial dependence on Lisbon, and on the European economic interests to which Lisbon was tied and for which it sometimes acted as agent. The emergence of “Third World” notions within the military establishment of their enemy, as well as the growing *de facto* alliance between the radical wing of the MFA and the Communists was, therefore, watched by the Marxist movements in Africa with considerable interest. It provided them with a wedge to speed up the process of decolonization and guarantee that, where competing nationalist groups existed, those which enjoyed long-time connections with the old Portuguese clandestine opposition such as the MPLA would receive special consideration. There existed to good basis for convergence between the PAIGC, MPLA, and FRELIMO on the one hand and the MFA on the other and this unique, if temporary, alliance between the colonialist officer corps and its opponents was made possible both by the timing and the special circumstances of the liberation movement struggles and by the backwardness of Portugal which the MFA officers so resented. The alliance was bound to be temporary because, whereas the liberation movements had clear objectives, the MFA did not. Moreover, the liberation movements were committed by necessity to a permanent condition—national independence—while the MFA’s commitment, important as it was, remained a commitment to a process that would end once the colonies were free. Nevertheless, temporary though it might be, the momentum which the convergence of views between former enemies brought to the internal politics of Portugal and to the timetable of decolonization in Portuguese Africa proved to be irresistible.^{xv}

Over the course of the year following the coup of 1974 three crises moved Portugal decisively to the left and Portuguese Africa equally decisively toward independence. They appeared as a series of sometimes lengthy struggles in which political tensions in Portugal, developments in Africa, and external pressures, both overt and covert, combined to force major confrontations.

Each crisis in Lisbon was connected with critical moments in the negotiations in Africa, where the liberation movements combined military pressures with diplomatic inducements to allow them a free hand. In Mozambique especially, FRELIMO stepped up its fighting while arranging local cease-fires. The MFA in Africa was already acting with a large degree of autonomy, each colony having a different MFA organization linked only informally to the others and, through Captain Vasco Lorenço, to the coordinating committee of the MFA in Lisbon. These arrangements prefigured independence, and they allowed a great deal of flexibility in local arrangements with the guerrillas.^{xvi}

In Portuguese Guiné, local peace came long before its recognition in a formal settlement. The circumstances of that settlement are extremely revealing. In May 1974, Spínola's friend and Council of State member, Colonel Almeida Bruno, went to London with Foreign Minister Mário Soares to negotiate with the PAIGC. When they failed to make a deal in June, a decisive shift took place. The negotiations moved out of the European orbit and shifted to the secret diplomacy carried out in Algiers by Major Melo Antunes of the MFA. (Melo Antunes replaced Soares as foreign minister in March 1975). A settlement was finally arranged at the end of July, but only after a new cabinet had been installed with a Communist sympathizer, Brigadier General Vasco Gonçalves, as prime minister and after the MFA had consolidated its military power in Portugal by setting up a security force, COPCON (the Operational Command for the Continent, organized July 8, 1974), under the effective command of Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho, the military mastermind of the April 25 coup who also became commander of the Lisbon military garrison.

This was a crucial blow to Spínola's power, perhaps the most important one: the MFA and its leftist allies in Lisbon were able to make an African settlement that he could not, as it sustained a momentum toward African independence that he opposed. Similar crises erupted over Mozambique in August and September of 1974 and over Angola from January to March 1975. Both were complex, but in each case the settlements shored up the power of the MFA and allowed it to drive from power the moderate and conservative forces in Lisbon that wanted to hold on to Portuguese Africa or slow the pace of decolonization.

Developments in Guiné were central to what happened in Portugal over the summer of 1974. A tiny, poverty-stricken territory with small economic and only indirect strategic importance, it was central to the drama. No other colony could have been a more poignant symbol to mark the end of Europe's imperial adventure, as more than five hundred years prior to its discovery by Portuguese mariners in search of a sea passage to the Guinea coast in order to capture control of the commerce in gold and slaves that previously reached Europe from West Africa along Saharan caravan routes, who, edging around the difficult African littoral at Guinea, found the systems of winds and currents which opened the way to the New World, the Cape of Good Hope, and the Indian Ocean. In a sense it had all begun where it ended.

For the Portuguese, the war in Guiné was a patent absurdity, but for reasons of precedent and prestige it could not be abandoned. The conflict tied down a vast army in proportion to the population, yet toward the end Portuguese troops were restricted to enclaves, coexisting in the same small territory with a state that had already declared its independence. It was a war where the head of the Portuguese government, Marcello Caetano, could tell the country's leading general, António de Spínola, then military commander in Guiné, that he preferred defeat to a negotiation that might provide a precedent for Mozambique and Angola. More than anything else this comment by Caetano drove Spínola to opposition.^{xvii}

After the 1974 coup in Lisbon, the liberation movements had long-time supporters in influential places who proved to be highly effective allies. Spínola's views of a Lusitanian commonwealth were totally inappropriate to the real situation in which Portugal found herself. The armies in Africa were simply unwilling to act in any way which prolonged their stay in the overseas territories. Brazil, a supposed partner in Spínola's concept, had decided to cut her losses and make her own approaches to the new Portuguese-speaking states emerging in Africa. Brazil recognized Guinea-Bissau on July 18, one week before Spínola himself made his declaration of July 27. Portugal would begin an immediate transfer of power in its African colonies. By then, 84 countries had already recognized Guinea-Bissau.^{xviii}

Amílcar Cabral, founder of the PAIGC, held an important place in Third World mythology. In a desperate bid to split his movement and vitiate his cause, the Portuguese secret police (PIDE) and its sinister friends killed Cabral on January 10, 1973, thereby making him one of independent Africa's most important martyrs. Cabral had also been a serious internationalist, who had gained the support of the independent African states, established close relations with Castro's Cuba, and was well-known and respected among the nonaligned nations. These connections proved vital in 1974. It was insufficiently appreciated at the time that the decolonization of Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique was a quiet triumph for African and nonaligned diplomacy. While Kissinger muttered about the Portuguese Communist party (PCP) and sought to stir up right-wing opposition in Portugal, a strenuous secret diplomacy was laying the basis for settlements with both PAIGC and FRELIMO. The diplomacy that arranged them emanated largely from Algiers and from Lusaka in Zambia. The process of making the settlements helped to bring Spínola down.

The underlying reasons for this African success were that Washington and Western Europe could not distinguish the forces at play in the Portuguese situation; they blundered into associations with groups so intransigent that they were doomed to help destroy the very solution that the United States and its NATO partners dearly wished to arrange. No such misjudgment took place within the liberation movements. They, after all, knew the Portuguese, appreciated their strengths, and were aware of their weaknesses. They knew the leaders involved—some of them only too well—and above all they knew that real power in Portugal was held by the MFA leaders and that a tacit alliance with them could be made against Spínola.

These connections had decisive impact in Angola, recognized by all sides as the most difficult and most important test of Portugal's intentions. Several of the factors that contributed to MPLA's weakness as a guerrilla organization proved to be sources of strength in the different circumstances which emerged after the Lisbon coup. The MPLA's urban intellectual and cosmopolitan leaders had always strongly opposed tribalism and racism, and had enjoyed long-term relationships with the old antifascist opposition in Portugal, especially the Communists. *Assimilados*, mulattoes, and whites had from the beginning found places in its

higher echelons. The MPLA enjoyed wide support from urbanized Africans, who tended, whatever their ethnic or linguistic backgrounds, to form a distinct group in relation to the rural majority. MPLA had always had difficulty appealing beyond this base, especially in the FNLA-dominated Bakongo backlands of the north. MPLA support was concentrated, however, in the strategically located central zone of the country, along the 263-mile railway from Luanda to Malange, among the 1.3 million Kmbundu-speaking peoples, one of Angola's four main ethnic-linguistic groups. MPLA support was almost monolithic among the African population of Luanda and in its teeming slums (*musseques*). But above all, the MPLA enjoyed exclusive relations with the major liberation fronts in Portuguese Guiné and Mozambique, both of which by the autumn of 1974 had successfully negotiated settlements with the Portuguese.

Angola was always close to the center of the struggle between General Spínola and the Armed Forces Movement during the first turbulent months following the Lisbon coup. Outmaneuvered in July 1974 in the agreement with PAIGC over Guinea-Bissau, and thwarted in early September over Mozambique, Spínola attempted to retain personal control of the Angola negotiations.

The Spínola plan for Angola depended heavily on the collaboration of President Mobutu of Zaire. On September 14, 1974, Spínola flew to the island of Sal in the Cape Verde archipelago and met secretly with President Mobutu. Spínola's formal proposals for an Angolan settlement, which were made public at this time, envisioned a transitional two-year period during which a provisional government would be formed of representatives from the three nationalist groups (FNLA, MPLA, and UNITA), together with representatives of the major ethnic groups and the white population. Elections would follow for a constituent assembly, with the franchise based on universal suffrage. The private understanding reached between Mobutu and Spínola at Sal remained secret but was based on their common desire to see MPLA neutralized, and if possible eliminated. Vice Admiral Rosa Coutinho, Portuguese high commissioner in Angola, who had not been informed of the meeting, described the objectives later as being "to install Holden in first place, with Chipenda and Savimbi at his side, and to eliminate Neto." Spínola, when insisting that no negotiations take place with the MPLA, said of Neto, "He receives his orders from Moscow."

Like so many of Spínola's projects, his plans for Angola were not without shrewdness. In 1974, the Portuguese military was under less pressure in Angola than in either Guiné or Mozambique. At the time Spínola met with Mobutu, there were still 60,000 Portuguese troops in the colony, and beyond that an extensive paramilitary network. The secret police (PIDE/DGS) continued to operate in Angola under the authority of the chief of staff, and were renamed the police of military information (PIM). Like the MPLA, Holden Roberto's FNLA had not yet agreed to a cease-fire, and in terms of the military struggle, the FNLA was by far the most formidable opponent of the Portuguese army. Mobutu was the obvious person to deal with, since Roberto depended entirely on Zairian support and

certainly could not function without it. Jonas Savimbi of UNITA had already agreed to a cease-fire in June and opened negotiations with a variety of white civilian and business groups. UNITA in mid-1974 consisted of less than a thousand trained guerrillas (probably closer to four hundred) with ancient and inadequate weapons. Savimbi appears to have enjoyed covert “protection” from Portuguese military intelligence and PIDE for some years, the objective being to split nationalist groups along tribal lines in eastern and southern Angola following the early successes of MPLA penetration into these regions after 1966.

On August 8, 1974, moreover, four hundred MPLA militants meeting in Lusaka had split three ways: 165 delegates supporting Neto; 165, Chipenda; and 70, Mario de Andrade. Chipenda’s group represented the major fighting force of the MPLA within Angola proper, and Chipenda himself had been elected president of MPLA at a rump session of the conference. Chipenda, despite his temporary role as a Moscow protégé, had also at various times been a protégé of almost all the outsiders who had fingers in the Angolan pie, including, it would seem, the Portuguese secret police. At any rate, both Spínola and Mobutu regarded Chipenda as persuadable, given the right inducements. The scenario laid out between them at Sal was thus not entirely implausible, and shortly after his meeting with Spínola, General Mobutu attempted to persuade both Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia of the merits of the project.

The plan failed, however, and for reasons that lay in Lisbon as much as in Luanda. On September 30, 1974, Spínola resigned from the presidency, having failed in his attempt to bypass the MFA and the Communists by a popular appeal for support from “the silent majority.” Between October 1974 and January 1975, effective power in Portugal was in the hands of the MFA. It strengthened its hand by forming a broader-based group to oversee its affairs called the Committee of Twenty, and by constituting an assembly, the so-called Assembly of Two Hundred, to act as a quasi legislative body where major policy issues could be discussed. During these five critical months, the MFA remained united in its commitment to immediate decolonization, since all the diverse leftist elements within the movement agreed on the need for a rapid disengagement from Africa. The ascendancy within the movement of its leftist elements also brought the Portuguese authorities ideologically closer to the MPLA than to either of the MPLA’s two competitors. The period was a critical one because it allowed the MPLA to recuperate from its mid-1974 nadir. Above all, it allowed Agostinho Neto a breathing space to reestablish leadership over his badly divided movement.

Not least of the elements working in the MPLA’s favor during these months was the aid the movement received from the Portuguese high commissioner in Luanda between July 1974 and January 1975, Vice Admiral Rosa Coutinho, soon dubbed by the white settlers the Red Admiral. Rosa Coutinho had a pathological hatred of the FNLA and made no secret of the fact that he regarded President Mobutu as a “black fascist.” The most important result of Rosa Coutinho’s intervention was to thwart a key element in the Mobutu-Spínola plan—the

substitution of Agostinho Neto. Although the Andrade faction was reintegrated into the MPLA during the latter part of 1974 (friction reemerged after the MPLA's victory in early 1976), Chipenda, despite a brief reapproachment, was expelled from the MPLA in November.

The temporary resolution of the MPLA's internal squabbles, however, provided a basis for settlement. Under the patronage of President Boumediene, Agostinho Neto and Major Melo Antunes met in Algiers between November 19 and 21, 1974, and negotiated a cease-fire agreement. A week later, the FNLA and the Portuguese made a similar agreement in Kinshasa. The Organization of African Unity (OAU), which had at different times recognized both FNLA and MPLA as the sole legitimate nationalist spokesmen for Angola, now extended last-minute recognition to Jonas Savimbi's UNITA. In early January 1975, the three nationalist leaders, Roberto, Neto, and Savimbi, came together under the chairmanship of Jomo Kenyatta in Mombasa. They agreed to mutual recognition and the speedy opening of negotiations on Angolan independence with the Portuguese government.

On January 10 the negotiations were moved to the Algarve in Portugal. The leaders of the three movements and their delegations met with the Portuguese government at the heavily guarded Penina Hotel, and by January 15 had thrashed out a delicately balanced and highly precarious agreement. Leading the Portuguese side were General Costa Comes, who had replaced General Spínola as provisional president of Portugal the previous September; Mário Soares, the foreign minister; Major Melo Antunes; and the high commissioner, Admiral Rosa Coutinho.

The settlement, which became known as the Alvor Agreement, set the date for Angolan independence at November 11, 1975. During the transitional period, the country would be administered by a coalition government composed of the three nationalist groups and the Portuguese. The transitional administration would be headed by a presidential college of three, each "president" representing one of the three movements. Lisbon's high commissioner was to control defense and security and to "arbitrate differences." Each movement and the Portuguese would hold three posts in the cabinet. A national army was to be formed, the movements contributing 8,000 men each, while the Portuguese retained a 24,000-man force in the country until independence. The Portuguese troops would be withdrawn by February 1976. Elections for a constituent assembly were to be held prior to independence. Meanwhile, the three movements agreed to place a freeze on their January 1975 military positions.

The settlement was no mean achievement. It had been brought about preeminently by the MFA, then at the height of its power and prestige. Agostinho Neto, president of the MPLA, paid the Armed Forces Movement a quiet tribute at the end of the Alvor meeting, which was little noted at the time but was extremely

significant in its implications. He called the MFA “the fourth Liberation Movement.”

III

Until January 1975, the rapidly moving situation in Africa contributed to the dramatic shift to the left in Portugal. Events in Europe and in Africa coincided in a manner which strengthened the radical forces in each region. After March 1975, these circumstances were dramatically reversed. One of the keys to the implementation of the Alvor Agreement, which had established the date, November 11, and the framework for Angolan independence, was the MFA's ability to control the situation until the transfer of power could take place. The intrinsic problems in Africa were formidable enough. But the weaknesses of the MFA, and its inability to fulfill its side of the bargain, also doomed the settlement. The MFA, even as late as January 1975, remained a mystery to many both inside and outside Portugal. Above all, it appeared much more united and formidable than in fact it was.

Agostinho Neto was, as always, especially sensitive to the political situation in Portugal. Unlike Holden Roberto and Jonas Savimbi, who left Portugal quickly once the agreements had been signed in January, Neto remained in MFA-ruled Portugal, traveled extensively throughout the country, and had lengthy meetings with political and military leaders. It was a critical time in Portugal. The euphoria that followed the fall of the old regime was passing. January 1975 saw a fundamental change in the atmosphere, a beginning of the long struggle between the Communists and the Socialists; and within the military itself conflicts were developing—indeed had already developed—which would later split the MFA into warring factions. As shrewd and well-informed a politician as Neto must have seen the storm warnings; they were not hard to recognize. Thus, while the ink on the Alvor Agreement was barely dry, the forces that would undo it were already gathering.

Between November 1974 and January 1975, some ten thousand FNLA troops moved into the northeast of Angola, occupying the northern Uíge and Zaire districts and forcing out all MPLA and UNITA rivals. The Portuguese, their soldiers unwilling to become involved in armed confrontation, had virtually abandoned the frontiers. Behind the FNLA regulars came thousands of refugees, returning to the lands they had abandoned in the aftermath of the bloody rural uprising in 1961. As a result, thousands of Ovimbundu workers on the coffee estates were expelled from the region, and some sixty thousand fled south to their tribal homelands on the central highlands.

On the crowded Benguela-Bie plateau in southern Angola there were serious social and racial tensions too. The Portuguese army's counterinsurgency

measures had uprooted thousands of peasants, concentrated them in “secure” village compounds, and in many cases opened up their lands to white settlers. In the capital, Luanda, the tension that had remained after serious racial clashes of the previous summer was aggravated by the arrival in February 1975 of heavily armed contingents from the rival nationalist movements.

The uneasy standoff between these factions lasted only until March when, coincident with the *intentiona* by Spínolista soldiers in Portugal, widespread fighting broke out between the MPLA and the FNLA in the Angolan capital. In Caxito, to the north of the capital, the FNLA rounded up MPLA sympathizers and shot and mutilated them. It was the old nightmare of massacre and reprisal that had been a constant theme in the long Angolan struggle. To the massive internal ebb and flow of people and refugees was now added a mass exodus abroad. First to leave were Cape Verdians caught between the rival African movements and deprived of their role as intermediaries and small tradesmen. Then followed the exodus of whites. In Lisbon the airport began to fill with large boxes, crates, tattered suitcases, dejected huddles of old women and young children, and the heavy humid smell of Africa, as the settlers returned. First the official jargon referred to them as the “dislocated”; then, the “returned.” But they were refugees, and several hundred thousand of them poured into Portugal from Africa throughout the summer. Their arrival was a rude awakening for many of those army officers who a few months before had been speaking naively about a Socialist commonwealth. In consequence, the process of decolonization—which, as it interacted with the internal situation in Portugal, had done so much to propel the country to the left in the months following the coup—now faltered.

The decolonization process, therefore, which until March had helped cement the MFA’s internal solidarity became, after March 1975, a major irritant and divider as the situation in Angola proved increasingly intractable and as outsiders intervened there at will. There had also been an unforeseen consequence of the March nationalizations in Portugal which subtly altered attitudes toward Africa. The state, by taking over the banks and industries which had been the core of the oligarchy’s power, also assumed responsibility in the former overseas territories for vast assets. Ironically, the revolutionary governments held a more important economic stake in Angola than had the governments of the old regime. After March in Angola, it was obvious to all that the Portuguese could not contain outside intervention or control internal security, both obligations which Portugal had assumed under the Alvor accords, and any pretense at a bipartite transitional government collapsed. There was open fighting in Angola, and in Portugal too, the military factions were beginning to eye each other ominously. The initiative that had rested in the hands of the revolution for almost twelve months was gone.

The rapidly deteriorating situation in Angola was especially dangerous because it opened up opportunities for interference by outsiders which had not existed to the same degree in either the case of Guinea-Bissau or Mozambique. In Angola, three nationalist groups, all battle hardened, each with strong ethnic

roots, competed with each other as much as they did with the Portuguese. The movements in Angola had regional bases: the FNLA in the northeast of the country; the MPLA in the western center and Luanda; and UNITA in the central highlands. The zones of influence were not clearly demarcated however, and clashes between the rival movements were frequent. Fragmentation and rivalry within each organization was also common. In February 1975, Neto forced out Daniel Chipenda, who had been a key element in the Mobutu-Spínola stratagem to circumvent Neto's leadership the previous year. His removal was thus hardly surprising; but Chipenda, leader of the "Eastern Revolt," had been one of the more successful field commanders the MPLA possessed, and was the only prominent non-Mbundu or non-Mestizo leader in the MPLA.

The schisms among and within the national liberation movements in Angola were partly ethnic, partly regional, partly the result of Portuguese colonial policy. The Salazar regime had ruthlessly rooted out nationalists, the educational system in the territory was woefully inadequate, and years of clandestineness, exile, and infiltration had left psychological scars. Each of Angola's main ethnolinguistic communities was represented by a political movement and a guerrilla army. The FNLA was rooted in the 700,000-strong Bakongo community of northern Angola. After a bloody rural uprising in 1961 and the subsequent brutal repression vented on the Bakongo by the Portuguese, over 400,000 Bakongo refugees had crossed into Zaire, where they lived among kinsmen. The FNLA, led by Holden Roberto, was deeply embedded in the Zairian political system and enjoyed sanctuary and support from President Mobutu. In 1973, the FNLA received military assistance from the Chinese. The movement was militarily strong but politically weak, and its leadership personalistic. UNITA, rooted in the two million Ovimbundu of the central Berguela plateau, was led by a former Roberto aide, Jonas Savimbi, the charismatic, Swiss-educated son of a Benguela railroad worker. After the Lisbon coup UNITA had made overtures to the Angolan whites, who provided it with important support until the white presence and power collapsed as settlers fled from Angola in increasing numbers during 1975.

The MPLA's roots were the 1.3 million Mbundu (Kimbundu-speaking) people of Luanda and its hinterland. Denied bases in Zaire, the MPLA had operated from headquarters in Congo-Brazzaville, conducting military incursions in Cabinda, the oil-rich enclave, and in the grasslands of eastern Angola. The MPLA's leadership was urban, leftist, and racially mixed, with strong popular support from the rural Mbundu and the city slum-dwellers. The leader of the MPLA, Agostinho Neto, like Roberto but unlike Savimbi, owed his survival largely to outside support. The MPLA had been the exclusive recipient of Soviet and East European aid, and the MPLA had long been close to the Portuguese left. The Liberation Committee of the OAU, assessing the strengths of the three movements in early 1975, found that UNITA enjoyed the most support and the MPLA the least, with the FNLA falling somewhere between them. The OAU at the

time (early 1975), like the Portuguese and the Soviets, supported the idea of a coalition government.

Partly as a consequence of the factionalism within and among the liberation movements in Angola, the Portuguese had been much more successful there from a military point of view than they had been in either Guinea-Bissau or Mozambique. With the exception of UNITA, which in 1974 was a very poorly armed and small organization, each of the other nationalist movements, the FNLA and MPLA were as much coalitions of exiles as they were effective insurgency forces. This was, of course, in striking contrast to both PAIGC, in Guinea-Bissau or FRELIMO in Mozambique which had formidable offensive capacity, controlled large areas of territory, and had developed rudimentary administrative structures. Angola had, in 1974, the largest white population in Africa outside South Africa, and whites almost totally dominated Angola's agricultural, transportation, and administrative infrastructures. It was partly as a result of these differences from the other territories that Angola took on the importance it did when Lisbon's inability to control the decolonization process became apparent.

The speed with which the transfers of power to PAIGC and FRELIMO took place during 1974, therefore, proved to be deceptive precedents when it came to the complexities of the Angolan situation. Kissinger claimed after the event that the United States did not oppose the accession to power by "radical movements" in Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique. This is only partly true: the United States, in fact, was extremely disturbed about the consequences of the independence of the Cape Verde islands under the auspices of the PAIGC, and there is evidence that it did contemplate support for anti-FRELIMO movements in Mozambique. It was not the lack of desire but lack of capacity that prevented the United States or anyone else from interfering with the decolonization process in either country. The rapidity of the process, the recognition by the Portuguese Armed Forces Movement of the necessity to deal exclusively with PAIGC and FRELIMO, and the firm action of the Portuguese in suppressing diversionary attempts, meant that in each situation, because the liberation movements and the Portuguese army worked in close collaboration, the opportunity for any effective interference never arose. In Angola, no single movement had the capacity to act with the effectiveness of either PAIGC or FRELIMO, and by the time Angolan decolonization became the prime order of business, the Portuguese were so divided among themselves that they, too, were unable to provide any consistent or effective opposition to the rapid internationalization of Angola's crisis.

Angola, moreover, with a population of about five and a half million, was different in other important ways from all the other Portuguese territories. It was immeasurably rich in natural resources (oil, diamonds, iron) and agricultural production (cotton, coffee, sisal, maize, sugar, tobacco). Unlike all the other territories, Angola had a favorable trade balance with the rest of the world and a firm basis for real independence. Yet the whole structure of Angola was so

dominated by and dependent upon whites that the rapid deterioration of the security situation, the burgeoning and at times bloody confrontations between the three nationalist movements, soon created panic among them. After March 1975, as the Angolan whites began to stream out of Angola, they took with them almost everything that made the system of government and the economy work, throwing an already confused situation into chaos. Angola, by the summer of 1975 in fact, had the misfortune to recreate some of the worst characteristics of two previous African crises, the Congo and the Algerian War, combining militarized, battle-hardened nationalists with an environment where the mechanisms which made society function had almost totally collapsed.^{xix}

The importance of stressing this chaos in Angola is to point out the contrast it presents to the situations which had transpired in much of the rest of Africa in the period of decolonization. Almost everywhere—except, perhaps, for the Congo, Algeria, and Guinea Conakry—the transfer of power occurred with the acquiescence (albeit sometimes reluctant) of the colonial powers; and in consequence, disruption in administration and in the economies had been surprisingly small. The experiences of outside powers in their relationships with the new African states were therefore not appropriate to the situations that had developed in Angola. There, new circumstances required new policies, which would have to be formulated within an international environment that had itself changed dramatically since 1962.

The decolonization of Angola was of special concern to the South African government, even more than the rapid withdrawal of the Portuguese from Mozambique. In Portugal's east African colony there was very little South Africa could do to influence the outcome once it became clear in September of 1974 that the Portuguese military in the colony, under the leadership of Admiral Vitor Crespo, would tolerate no interference with the smooth transfer of authority to FRELIMO. An independent Mozambique, however, even if ruled by a Marxist government, would be extremely vulnerable to South Africa and economically dependent on the goodwill of Pretoria.

Mozambique and South Africa were bound together by a mutual dependency. Much of Mozambique's foreign earnings depended on the use of its port and rail facilities by South Africans and the earnings of Mozambique workers in the South African gold mines. South Africa relied on Mozambique for more than 25 percent of its mining labor force and needed the energy that would come from the Cabora Bassa dam. South Africa's own ports were overcongested. The South African government also hoped that good relations with FRELIMO would discourage any aid to guerrillas in Zululand and the eastern Transvaal. In Angola, by contrast, South Africa could exert very little economic leverage over any nationalist government in Luanda, and because of Namibia, South Africa was vulnerable where its own position was weakest. The temptation to interfere militarily was thus very great, and on the surface seemed to be relatively risk-free, given the divisions between the nationalist movements in Angola and South Africa's own logistical advantages.

The South African response to developments in Angola had thus to rely more on military capabilities than economic persuasion. The defense posture which South Africa's military strategists had adopted during the 1970s therefore set important conditions to South African options in Angola. While Dr. Vorster, the South African prime minister, had been talking of "detente" with neighboring black nations, he had also been rapidly building up the South African defense forces. South African military strategists, meanwhile, increasingly evoked the Israeli precedent of swift preemptive action, a doctrine that in the South African context was called "hot pursuit." Ironically, "hot pursuit" was first used against Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia in 1971 as a result of clashes in the Caprivi strip, when Pik Botha, the South African defense minister, threatened to "hit him so hard he will never forget." The doctrine of "hot pursuit" was used to justify the first armed South African incursions into Angola in the summer of 1975. The "defense" of the Cunene Dam complex in Namibia's border was used to justify the first permanent installation of South African regular forces inside Angola in early August 1975.

The deteriorating situation within Angola was also of concern to Zaire and Zambia. The closure of the Benguela railway over the summer of 1975 as a result of hostilities in Angola could not have come at a worse time for both countries. Each was in deep political and economic trouble—mainly, though by no means exclusively, as a result of the dramatic drop in world copper prices. Zaire, with an external debt of some \$600 million, faced a chronic debt service problem and began in July 1975 to fall behind in obligations to its international bankers, among them the Export Import Bank, First National City Bank, Chase Manhattan Bank, and Continental Illinois. Its foreign exchange reserves were sufficient for only about three weeks' imports. For Zambia the economic problems were no less acute. The decline in copper prices had made the industry totally unprofitable since the cost of production surpassed the market return. The result was to reduce the country's foreign earnings to nil. The social impact of this economic condition was very serious indeed. Copper exports had sustained an exceptionally high level of trade. In addition, 40 percent of direct government revenues came from the mining sector, and a large part of the food supply was imported from outside the country.

It was these complex interrelationships in the region which made the escalating conflicts in Angola so dangerous. But it was the Zaire connection which entrapped the United States in the Angolan crisis and revived the old plan that General Spínola and President Mobutu had concocted the previous September.

In Zaire the special sensitivity to President Mobutu's desires and his effectiveness in promoting them had five causes. First, through late 1974 and 1975, Zaire was facing a major economic crisis, one result of which was to give the viewpoints of the international financial community, especially in the United States, France, and Belgium,^{xx} unusual weight where Zairian affairs were concerned. Second, Mobutu possessed some very influential private lines of

communication with Washington, and by using them succeeded in circumventing and neutralizing realistic assessments of the situation being made by many experienced African specialists within the intelligence community and the State Department.^{xxi} Third, by the end of the summer of 1974, Mobutu had already preempted the strategy to be followed by the West, providing the FNLA with a privileged access to sources of Western support. This was an inevitable consequence of acting in Angola through Zaire. Over the years, the FNLA had become little more than an extension of Mobutu's own armed forces, and Holden Roberto, the leader of the FNLA, was a man linked to Mobutu by marriage and obligated to him for many past favors. Fourth, Zaire played a key role in the overall structures within which the Nixon administration had sought to organize its international relationships. Recognition of the limits to the United States's power and ability to engage herself worldwide was the original rationale underlying the Nixon doctrine—in effect, a policy of selective involvement in building up friendly states in important regions.^{xxii}

The fifth reason for the deference accorded to Mobutu's schemes was that, despite the fact that Zaire had been accorded a prime place in U.S. relationships with Africa during the 1970s, top policymakers in Washington remained largely ignorant about what was happening there. The reason for this ignorance had much to do with the personal style of the most influential U.S. policymaker of the period, Henry Kissinger. The problem well into the summer of 1975 was not that Kissinger gave Zaire and Angola too much attention but that he gave them too little. He held Africa, Africans, and African specialists in low esteem, and they had been frequent butts for his jokes and humiliations. Moreover, between 1974 and 1976 there were four different assistant secretaries of state for African affairs, and two of them were forced out within less than a year for warning Kissinger that he was creating a debacle in Africa. Portuguese Africa, moreover, had been something of a Nixon specialty. The Spínola-Mobutu decolonization plan, in fact, had its roots in the Nixon-Spínola summit held on June 19, 1974, in the Azores, when Spínola had painted an extraordinary picture for Nixon of Communist subversion in Europe and Africa.^{xxiii} But Nixon was out of office within two months, and Spínola only survived in his until the end of September. It should have been obvious that there was a debilitating weakness in an enterprise which had inherited its rationale from a dead colonialism, which sought to exercise power through informal influence over tenuously controlled clients, and where European predecessors who had possessed the formidable advantages of long local experience and formal sovereignty had just failed.

IV

When belatedly top U.S. policymakers began taking a serious direct interest in what was happening in Angola, it was largely as a result of the direct and serious measures the Soviet Union was taking to counteract the all-too-obvious attempts by Zaire to exclude the MPLA and Neto from the fruits of the victory which they, with Soviet encouragement, had fought twenty years to achieve. But by then, with respect to Africa, the United States was already trapped within a framework of alliances, assumptions, and barely comprehended past failures from which it was difficult to escape. The salience given in Washington to the fact of Communist support for the MPLA served to cover up the fact that the roots of escalation lay in actions in which the United States had been indirectly involved (and after January 1975, directly, when the CIA reactivated its connection with Holden Roberto) through her Zairian client. The African dimension became almost irrelevant in the process. As Helmut Sonnenfeldt, counselor in the State Department and Kissinger's closest advisor on Soviet affairs, explained later, the United States "had no intrinsic interest in Angola as such." But "once a locale, no matter how remote and unimportant for us, becomes a focal point for Soviet, and in this instance, Soviet-supported Cuban military action, the United States acquires a derivative interest which we simply cannot avoid."^{xxiv}

Preoccupation with Soviet intentions, therefore, overwhelmed the warnings that were pouring in from, among others, the U.S. consul in Luanda, an interagency task force, and two assistant secretaries of state for African affairs on the inside; from such respected African specialists as Jolin Marcum and Gerald Bender on the outside; and from Senator Dick Clark in the Congress—all of whom argued that unless a broad-based political strategy aimed at conciliating the factions in Angola was substituted for the attempt to favor some at the expense of others, the United States was doomed to face escalating demands with no certainty of success. Doomed indeed to help create a situation where the resolution of the conflict would come through military means, with the United States unprepared and incapable of acting to aid the very forces it had egged into the conflict. At no time, until too late, did the United States give any serious thought to what a purely military solution to the Angolan crisis would involve, so great was the belief that the old and trusted formula of clandestineness, mercenaries, and cash would still work as they had in the past. By the time it became obvious that this was not enough, the only alternative power with the capacity and desire to intervene was South Africa, which was the last thing the West or the anti-MPLA nationalists should have permitted to become obvious. South African intervention at a stroke undermined the Western group's credibility in African opinion, overwhelmed the doubts that many African states (Nigeria in particular) had about the MPLA and its friends, and made large-scale Soviet and Cuban assistance to Neto respectable.

The Soviets, who have long memories, had their own special reasons for being sensitive to the role of Zaire in the Angolan crises. Zaire had been the scene of Soviet humiliation during the early sixties. It had been precisely because of the unhappy Soviet experiences in places like the former Belgian Congo that the

Soviet Union embarked on a major buildup in long-distance support capacity to prevent the reoccurrence of such a humiliation. The Soviets, who had only been able to provide Lumumba with sixteen transport planes and a few trucks in 1960, were able in 1975 to provide Agostinho Neto with \$200 million in military assistance by sea and air, to establish an air bridge with some 46 flights of Soviet medium and heavy air transports, and to airlift in Soviet IL-62's, a sizable part of the 11,000 Cuban combat troops sent into Angola during this period.^{xxv}

In late October 1975, the remnant of the old Spínola-Mobuto plan went into operation. The U.S.-backed Zairian forces moved from the north, as did a combined operation from the south by Portuguese right-wing extremists, South African regulars, and a motley collection of UNITA, FNLA auxiliaries, and Daniel Chipenda. When these forces attempted to take Luanda before November 11, 1975, much to their surprise they came up against Cuban regulars flown in during the previous weeks in old Britannia transport planes at Agostinho Neto's urgent request. The West's hodgepodge forces thus failed to prevent the MPLA from declaring the independence of Angola under their exclusive auspices in the Angolan capital on November 11.

The Soviet Union's intervention in aid of Lumumba in 1960, despite its small size and dubious results, had nevertheless been an important turning point. It had marked the first use of transport aircraft in a crisis situation outside the immediate Soviet bloc countries. The creation of the West African naval patrol in late 1970 in order to protect Conakry, and indirectly to protect the headquarters of the PAIGC, was also an important step in the Soviets' increased willingness to support clients militarily and to take risks on their behalf. Large-scale Soviet airlift capacity had been much in evidence during the 1973 Middle East war, when the Soviets had made 934 flights to Arab nations, delivering 15,000 tons of material in addition to the much larger tonnage shipped by freighter. The U.S. airlift by C-5 and C-141 to Israel via the Azores in the same period had comprised 568 flights and delivered 23,000 tons of supplies. The Middle East experience, however, had given the Soviets much greater confidence in their ability to influence events successfully in the Third World. In April 1974, Marshal Grechko said that "at the present stage, the historical function of the Soviet armed forces is not restricted merely to their function in defending the motherland and other socialist countries. In its foreign policy activity, the Soviet state actively and purposefully opposes the export of counterrevolution and the policy of oppression, supports the national liberation struggle, and resolutely resists imperialist aggression in whatever distant region of the planet it may appear."^{xxvi}

In 1975, direct Soviet aid to the MPLA began in the form of arms deliveries by sea and air via Brazzaville; in March, Russian cargo planes began delivering military equipment, which was later transshipped to Cabinda or Luanda; in April, some hundred tons of arms were delivered, in chartered Bristol Britannias, from Dar es Salaam to MPLA-controlled airfields in central Angola. Two Yugoslavian freighters unloaded weapons in Angola, followed by two East German vessels and an Algerian one. In April, Paulo Jorge of the MPLA visited Cuba in search of

specialists to assist with the sophisticated equipment now arriving from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe which the MPLA's own forces were not yet trained to handle.^{xxvii}

Cuban military men knowledgeable enough to use sophisticated equipment were beginning to take part in combat operations by the late spring of 1975. Cuban "advisers" were involved in the fighting at Caxito at the end of May, an engagement where the first tanks were used by the MPLA. In May and June, some 230 Cuban military advisers established training camps at Benguela, Cabinda, Henrique de Carvalho, and Salazaro. All these early Cuban arrivals entered via Congo-Brazzaville. By mid-August, UNITA found its units facing Cubans at Lobito. In July the MPLA approached the Soviets for a Soviet troop presence in addition to military training experts. The Soviets balked at the suggestion as being too provocative and advised the MPLA to seek such assistance from Cuba. In early August a MPLA mission visited Havana to urge Castro to supply them with troops. In mid-August Castro authorized the logistical planning necessary to mount the sea- and airlift of troops, equipment, and supplies across the Atlantic to Angola. The operation was a complex one, involving the simultaneous arrival in Angola of troops from Cuba and armaments from the USSR.

The East Germans and the Soviets were also active between mid-August and November. Twenty-seven shiploads of military equipment and forty supply missions by Soviet AN-22 military cargo planes were unloaded at Brazzaville, to be transshipped to Angola before independence. The number of Soviet military advisers in Angola reached two hundred. The East Germans had, since 1972, enjoyed a military cooperation agreement with Congo/Brazzaville—the first such agreement between the GDR and an African country. Brazzaville had been the center of the MPLA's activities prior to the Alvor settlement and up until the time when the MPLA leadership moved to Luanda in February 1975. The East Germans, like the Cubans, had an important collaborative role in the "counterimperialistic" strategy of the Soviets and, also like the Cubans, the GDR's security forces were subordinated to the KGB apparatus. The East German SED party chairman, Honecker, reported to the party congress in May 1976 that "in view of the present relationship of forces. . . the GDR's mission in Africa and the Third World was thoroughly substantial. In Angola in 1975, East Germany supplied heavy weapons and other war material to the MPLA, military instructors, pilots for the ports of Luanda and Lobito, and medical personnel. The GDR's state security service provided training for the MPLA's own security and intelligence services.

The crisis in Angola escalated in July. On July 18, the United States decided to step up support to the anti-MPLA forces. The "40 committee" (the high-level interagency policy group that advised the president on covert action and to which the CIA was responsible) authorized \$14 million in covert assistance to be paid in two installments to the FNLA and UNITA (a sum increased to \$25 million in

August and \$32 million in November). A week before, on July 14, in Angola, the MLA had expelled its rivals from Luanda. By taking the offensive, it had by October seized control of twelve of the sixteen district capitals of Angola. In July, Zaire sent a commando company and armored car squadron across the border into Angola and into combat. Daniel Chipenda had flown to Namibia in June to meet in Windhoek with General Hendrik van den Bergh, chief of the South African Bureau of State Security (BOSS). South Africa's support for the FNLA seems to have begun in July and its support for UNITA, in September. In mid-August two Zairian paratrooper companies joined the action in support of the FNLA. At the same time, regular South African troops occupied the Ruacana and Calacque pumping stations and the Cunene Dam complex. In September, Soviet 122-millimeter rockets were used for the first time in fighting north of Luanda. These so-called Stalin-organs sent the FNLA and Zairian regulars into a panicky retreat. Three Cuban merchant ships left Cuba for Angola in early September after urgent appeals from the MPLA, which now feared a large-scale South African invasion augmented by U.S. assistance, via Zaire, to the FNLA and UNITA. The Soviets had abandoned the idea of a political coalition in March; they were now portraying the FNLA and UNITA in their propaganda as "splintists" and describing the war in Angola not as a "civil war" but as a "war of intervention." Unfortunately for Angola, the war was both a civil war and a war in which outside intervention occurred on a massive scale. The Chinese, looking on from their vantage point in Zaire, decided to cut their losses. On October 27, 1975, they withdrew all their military instructors from the FNLA.

By November, the Portuguese army in Angola was a helpless bystander. The last official Portuguese representative, Commandor Leonel Cardoso, and his staff scuttled quietly away from Luanda the day before independence. In fact, at the moment independence was declared in Luanda, the MPLA held little more than the capital and a strip of central Angola inland toward Shaba.^{xxviii} South African advisers and South African antitank weapons had helped to stop an MPLA advance on Nova Lisboa (Huambo) in early October. Nova Lisboa was the center of UNITA strength and the site of a declaration of an independent state (the "Social Democratic Republic of Angola") by UNITA and FNLA on November 11. By October, the South Africans had helped turn the tide in the south against the MPLA. A South African-led combat group (Zulu) with armored cars and mortars had traveled four hundred miles from the Namibia border in two weeks, overwhelming the MPLA and Cubans in Benguela and Lobita, thus seizing control of the terminal of the Benguela railroad. In central Angola, a second South African combat unit ("Foxbat") with a squadron of armored cars had moved five hundred miles north toward Luanda and inflicted a severe defeat on the Cubans at Bridge 14 (North of Santa Combo), killing over two hundred of them as well as two hundred MPLA troops. North of Luanda, the FNLA and Zairian troops had again reached Caxito, within a short drive of the capital.

A big Cuban buildup started on November 7, when 650 combat troops were flown to Angola via Barbados and Guinea-Bissau. On November 27, a Cuban

artillery regiment and a battalion of motorized and field troops landed on the Angolan coast after a sea crossing of twenty days. The Soviets had meanwhile deployed a naval force in Angolan waters which provided protection to the ships unloading and transshipping arms from Pointe-Noire (Congo) to Angola. Soviet military transports were airlifting reinforcements and arms from late October. The Russians provided MIG-21's, T-34 and T-54 tanks, armored personnel carriers, antitank and SAM-7 missiles, rocket launchers, and AK-47 automatic rifles, in addition to the 122-millimeter rocket launchers, which proved totally effective against the Zairians in particular. (After October, it was said that Zairian regulars went into battle driving in reverse, the better to drive away again when threatened by the Stalin-organs' awesome power.) The Soviet and Cuban intervention was decisive. It saved the MPLA and their regime, and it profoundly altered the balance of power in southern Africa.

U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, like the South Africans, was shaken by the scale of the Soviet and Cuban response. The CIA's Angolan task force at CIA headquarters at Langley had been so confident of success by the Zairian and South African regulars, that on November 11 the members had celebrated Angolan independence with wine and cheese in their crepe-paper decorated offices. The arrival of Soviet and Cuban ships and planes at Pointe-Noire and Brazzaville was observed by U.S. intelligence surveillance, but the unloading of troops had taken place at night, and strictly imposed discipline during the sea voyage concealed the presence of troops. Not until November did the CIA realize that 4,000 Cuban combat troops were deployed in Angola, a figure which had grown to 15,000 by January 1976. By February 1976, the combined Soviet-Cuban sea- and airlift had transported 38,000 tons of weapons and supplies to Angola. Although South African foreign policy had consistently played up the Communist threat to Africa, it had clearly not given serious attention to the consequences of a strong conventional Communist military presence in the form of some 20,000 Cuban troops. Although South Africa lost only 43 dead in Angola of its over 2,000 troops deployed there, it had by the end of 1976 concluded that, for military and political reasons, it was not in a position to take on a superpower. As a result of press leaks in the fall, the United States was effectively removed from the Angolan competition on December 19, 1975, when overwhelming majorities in both Houses of Congress banned covert aid to the FNLA and UNITA. The OAU, in response to the fact that South African intervention had become public knowledge in November, swung from its former neutrality to support of the MPLA as the legitimate government of Angola. South African intervention was especially decisive in the case of Nigeria, the MPLA going so far as to send captured South African prisoners to the OAU meeting in Lagos to prove that South African regulars were in fact involved in the Angolan fighting.

Throughout the Angolan civil war the West had found itself at cross purposes. French objectives were not the same as those of the Americans. The Portuguese whom the Americans supported in Angola were the same groups they opposed in

Portugal. South Africa, while useful as a source of intelligence, was a disaster as an ally in conflict.

Two of the major multinationals in Angola showed themselves more than willing to work with the MPLA. Diamang, which held diamond concessions in the Luanda area, had for some years employed former Katanga gendarmes, who had fled to Angola following the collapse of the succession movement in neighboring Katanga during the mid-1960s, as its own private security force. With encouragement and financial support from sympathetic Portuguese officers and with Diamang's acquiescence, the gendarmes, an effective fighting force, had joined with the MPLA's depleted military units in 1975; they were important in the defense of Luanda in November. The Katangans were bitter enemies of Zairian President Mobuto, the main outside supporter of the MPLA's rivals, Holden Roberto and the FNLA. The other multinational was Gulf Oil, which after the transitional tripartite government collapsed in July 1975, continued to pay its royalties to an administration in Luanda which to all intents and purposes was composed of the MPLA alone. Kissinger intervened to stop these payments for a time in November, but Gulf paid the royalties into escrow, and the MPLA later collected the \$100 million in question with interest.

The West's position was also fundamentally flawed by the failure to provide any clear objectives for its actions other than the negative one of denying the MPLA victory. What sort of Angola, for example, did they think a FNLA/UNITA victory would create? The South Africans seem to have been thinking of setting up some sort of buffer state in the central south of the country. Zaire seems to have coveted Cabinda. The MPLA, in contrast, stood firm with the concept of a unitary state; they held the capital, and their main source of ethnic support lay in a broad belt at the heart of the country. So conscious, in fact, was Neto of the risks of Balkanization implicit in the FNLA/UNITA offensive, that on the day of Angola's independence he refused to cut the celebratory cake for fear that it would be a bad omen for the division of Angola. Several likely allies were also noticeably absent from the Western lineup: Brazil, for example, which had been among the first to recognize the Neto regime, and Israel, which, despite Kissinger's entreaties, had the good sense for once to keep clear of the conflict.

As to the scale of aid, it is very difficult to find accurate figures. Kissinger has repeatedly used the \$200-million figure as representing the value of arms transfer from the Soviets to the MPLA in 1975. Other sources place the figure at \$300 million; the U.S. arms control agency says \$190 million. U.S. aid prior to the prohibition by Congress was in the region of \$32 million, but investigators from the House Select Committee on Intelligence discovered this figure was based on bookkeeping devices that grossly underestimated the value of the arms provided. But arms imports to Zaire, over the period of the civil war, rose to \$126 million in 1976 as compared with a mere \$27 million the year before. The Chinese also provided support directly to FNLA, and permitted Chinese arms held by the Zairian army to be released to them also. France and Britain are estimated to have committed the equivalent of several million dollars each to Angolan

operations, and the South African defense expenditures rose to nearly 19 percent of all public expenditures (1,711.7 million Rands 1977-78) to accommodate the costs of intervention in Angola, the actual expenditures exceeding the budget estimates by some 228.7 million Rands. There was also considerable support from government and private sources for Portuguese right-wing forces that were active with UNITA and the South Africans in the south of Angola in 1976-78 and in the north with the FNLA during the same period. Further funds were also later available in Europe to recruit mercenaries. And some part of the moneys which various NATO governments poured surreptitiously into Portugal in 1975 went to protect Western objectives in Africa. It seems likely, therefore, that in total these diverse subventions from Western sources matched, and may even have surpassed, the \$200-million figure the Soviets spent. The problem in any case was not how much was spent on armaments but the quality of the soldiers who used them.^{xxix}

The wars in Angola or in Mozambique for that matter did not end in 1976, but the end of Portugal's rule in Africa had far-reaching international consequences. In southern Africa it was very soon apparent that the position of the white minority government in Rhodesia was no longer tenable; and within five years of the independence of Angola, Rhodesia emerged as the independent black-ruled nation of Zimbabwe, something Ian Smith, the former Rhodesian prime minister vowed would not happen within a century. The fiasco of South Africa's intervention in the Angolan war shook Pretoria's confidence, awakened the African townships, and dramatized the isolation of the apartheid regime. By 1994 the white regime was gone, and national movements had elected South Africa's black president.

The active involvement of the two superpowers and their clients in the Angolan imbroglio also set precedents for the future. U.S. Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger in 1976 called Angola one of "the decisive watersheds" in Soviet expansionism in the Third World.^{xxx} For once Kissinger had understated the case. Ironically the perception of U.S. failure in Angola did much to fuel the vast military build up to the Reagan years, encouraged the U.S. to provide clandestine support to anti-soviet Muslim insurgents in Afghanistan, creating sufficient pressure on the Soviet Union so that with in less than two decades the Soviet Union itself had imploded.

Notes

ⁱ For background on the Azores agreements, see J. F. Sweeny, “The Luso-American Connection 1941-45,” (unpublished paper presented to 2nd International Conference on Modern Portugal, Durham, New Hampshire, June 1979); see also Kay, *Salazar and Modern Portugal*, and Minter, *Portuguese Africa and the West*. For Nogueira’s views, see Franco Nogueira, *Diálogos interditos: A política externa portuguesa e a guerra de África*, 2 Vols. (Braga: Intervenção, 1979), Vol. 1. The “Anderson Plan” is discussed by Michael A. Samuels and Stephen M. Haykin in “The Anderson Plan: An American Attempt to Seduce Portugal out of Africa,” *Orbis* (Fall 1979), pp. 649-669. For the original negotiations between the U.S.A. and Portugal, George F. Kennan, *Memoirs: 1925-1945* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1967) and his dispatch, Lisbon, February 19, 1943, 740.0011 EW 1939/28173, National Archives, Washington, D.C. Also J. K. Sweeny, “Portugal, the United States and Aviation, 1945,” *Rocky Mountain Social Science Journal* ix (April 1972), pp. 77-83.

ⁱⁱ See Roger Louis and Prosser Gifford, eds., *The Transfer of Power in Africa: Decolonization 1940-1960* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982).

ⁱⁱⁱ See Carlos Bessa, *A Liberação de Timor na Segunda Guerra Mundial; Importancia dos Açores para os Interesses dos Estados Unidos* (Lisboa: Academia Portuguesa de História, 1992).

^{iv} See José Freire Antunes, *Os Americanos e Portugal: Kennedy e Salazar* (Lisbon: Difusão Cultural, 1991).

^v See José Freire Antunes, *Os Americanos e Portugal: Nixon e Caetano* (Lisbon: Difusão Cultural, 1992).

^{vi} See Ernesto ‘Che’ Guevara *The African Dream: The diaries of the Revolutionary War in Congo* (New York: Grove Press, 1999) and Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington and Africa 1959-1976* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

^{vii} Portugal received 280 million dollars-worth of arms transfers between 1967 and 1976. Most of it came from France: 121 million dollars-worth. Fifty million dollars-worth came from West Germany, and only 30 million dollars-worth from the United States.

^{viii} For an excellent discussion of this episode, see Stephan S. Kaplan, “Naval Diplomacy in West African Waters,” in *Diplomacy of Power: Soviet Armed Forces as a Political Instrument* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1981), pp. 519-69.

^{ix} Hollis R. Lynch, “Pan-African Responses in the United States to British Colonial Rule in Africa in the 1940s,” in *The Transfer of Power in Africa: Decolonization, 1940-1960*, ed. Roger Louis and Prosser Gifford (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982), pp. 57-86.

^x On MPLA and Neto, see Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution*.

^{xi} At the time of the Lisbon coup, the CIA was attempting to exchange Captain Pedro Peralta, a Cuban captured by the Portuguese in Guinea, for Lawrence K. Lunt, an American businessman held in Havana. Peralta was elected to the central committee of the Cuban Communist party in late 1975, and represented Cuba at the declaration of the Peoples Republic of Angola in Luanda on November 11, 1975.

^{xii} For Spínola’s own account of this period, see António de Spínola, *Pais seen rumo: contributo para a história de uma revolução* (Lisbon: Scire, 1978). For other analyses of the first year of the

revolution, see: Robin Blackburn, "The Test in Portugal," *New Left Review* Vols. 87-88 (September-December 1974); Paul M. Sweeny, "Class Struggles in Portugal," *Monthly Review* Vols. 26 and 27 (September-October 1975); Michael Harsgor, "Portugal in Revolution," *The Washington Papers*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1976). Also Kenneth Maxwell, "The Thorns of the Portuguese Revolution," *Foreign Affairs* (January 1976), pp. 250-70, and Kenneth Maxwell, "The Transition in Portugal," Working Papers No. 81, (Washington, D.C.: Latin American Program, The Wilson Center, Smithsonian Institution, 1981).

xiii Jean Daniel, *Le Nouvelle Observateur* (Paris, 1974).

xiv *Bolletim do MFA* (Lisbon, 1974).

xv There are several important works on the origins of the MFA, as well as accounts by the leading participants in the movement. The best overview can be found in: Avelino Rodrigues, Cesario Borge, and Mario Cardoso, *O Movimento de capitães e o 25 de Abril: 229 dias para derrubar o fascismo* (Lisbon: Moraes, 1974); *Insight on Portugal* (London: *London Sunday Times*, 1975); Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho, *Alvorada em Abril* (Amadora: Livraria Bertrand, 1977); Dinis de Almeida, *Origins e Evolução do Movimento de Capitães: Subsídios para uma Melhor Compreensão* (Lisbon: Edições Sociais, 1977); George Grayson, "Portugal and the Armed Forces," *Orbis* 19 (Summer 1975), pp. 335-78. See Márcio Moreira Alves, *Les Soldats socialistes du Portugal* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975), and Douglas Porch, *The Portuguese Armed Forces and the Revolution* (London: Croom Helm; Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1977). Alves and Porch take differing views as to the importance of the African experience, Alves giving it a primary role in stimulating the MFA's radicalism, Porch arguing against the importance of Africa as a radicalizing influence. Porch, however, exaggerates his case, and the disagreement in this author's view is more to do with chronology than substance. The African component was vital to explain the process of politicization, not its ultimate outcome, about which Porch, by stressing the strength of the corporate identity of the officer corps, is undoubtedly right. Both authors draw heavily on my articles written at the time for the *New York Review of Books* 21, No. 10 (June 17, 1974), pp. 16-21; 22, No. 6 (April 17, 1975), pp. 29-39; 22, No. 9 (May 29, 1975), pp. 20-30.

xvi For a useful view of the MFA of this period, see Dinis de Almeida, *Asensão, apogeu e queda do MFA* (Lisbon: Edições Sociais, 1978).

xvii Al Venter, *Report on Portugal's War in Guinea-Bissau* (Pasadena: California Institute of Technology; Munger Africana Library, 1973) and Lars Rudebeck, *Guinea-Bissau, A Study of Political Mobilization* (Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies; Stockholm: distributed by Almquist & Wiksell, 1974). For accounts of the war from the side of the PAIGC, see Basil Davidson, *The Liberation of Guiné: aspects of an African revolution* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969). Marcello Caetano's own account of the meeting with Spínola is in *Depoimento* (Rio de Janeiro: Distribuidora Record, 1974).

xviii For Brazilian policy I have relied on "Palestra proferida na Escola Superior da Guerra por Italo Zappa," May 31, 1976. For the texts of the independence agreements and related materials, see Orlando Neves, comp., *Textos históricos de Revolução*, 3 Vols. (Lisbon: Diabril, 1974-76).

xix On Angola in this period, see: Ernest Harsch and Tony Thomas, *Angola: The Hidden History of Washington's War* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1976); Jim Dingeman, "Angola: Portugal in Africa," *Strategy and Tactics*, No. 56 (May/June 1976); Colin Legum and Tony Hodges, *After Angola: The War over Southern Africa* (New York: Africana Publishing Co., c1978); Gerald J.

Bender, "Angola, the Cubans, and American Anxieties," *Foreign Policy*, No. 31 (Summer 1978), pp. 3-33; John A. Marcum, "The Lessons of Angola," *Foreign Affairs* 54, No. 3 (April 1976), pp. 407-25; Kenneth Adelman and Gerald J. Bender, "Conflict in Southern Africa: A Debate," *International Security* 3, No. 2 (Fall 1978), pp. 67-122; Gerald J. Bender, "Kissinger and Angola: Anatomy of Failure," *American Policy in Southern Africa*, ed. René Lemarchand (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1978), pp. 65-143; and John Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution*, Vol. 2 (which deals with this period); Robert Moss, "Castro's Secret War Exposed," *The Sunday Telegraph* (London), January 30, 1977, February 6, 1977, February 13, 1977; Gabriel Garcia Marquez, "Operation Carlota: Cuba's Role in Angolan Victory," *Cuba Update*, No. 1 (New York: Center for Cuban Studies, April 1977). This is an excerpted account based on the original in Spanish published in Mexico. A good overview is Arthur Jay Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War: A Study in Soviet Policy in the Third World* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1980).

xx Excellent accounts of the tense negotiations over Zaire's debt and economic problems can be found in Nancy Belliveau, *Institutional Investor* (March 1977), pp. 23-28, and Crawford Young, "Zaire: The Unending Crisis," *Foreign Affairs* (Fall 1978), pp. 169-85.

xxi On private lines of communication and their impact on Zairian-U.S.-Angolan relations, see Bruce Oudes's reports in *Africa Contemporary Record*, ed. Colin Legum (New York: Africana Publishing Company), especially Vol. 7 (1974-75), pp. A87-A101, and Vol. 8 (1975-76), pp. A118-A126.

xxii See Congress, House, Committee on International Relations, *U.S. Policy on Angola: Hearing before the Committee on International Relations*, 94th Cong., 2nd Session, January 26, 1976 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1976), p. 13. Also see Congress, Senate, Subcommittee on African Affairs and Subcommittee on Foreign Assistance of the Committee on Foreign Relations, *Security Supporting Assistance for Zaire: Hearing before the Subcommittee on African Affairs and the Subcommittee on Foreign Assistance of the Committee on Foreign Relations*, 94th Cong., 1st Session, October 24, 1975 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1975), p. 32. Also Kenneth Maxwell, "A New Scramble for Africa," in *The Conduct of Soviet Foreign Policy*, ed. Erik Hoffman and Frederick Fleron, Jr. (Hawthorne: Aldine Publishing Co., 1980), pp. 515-34.

xxiii For Spínola's own account of this episode, see de Spínola, *Pais sem rumo*. See also Stephen R. Weissman's testimony before the Committee on International Relations, January 26, 1976, and his book, *American Foreign Policy in the Congo 1960-1969* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), as well as John Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies: A CIA Story* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1978). There has been much speculation about what was discussed between Spínola and Nixon at their June 19, 1974, Azores meeting. The two men met alone with only an interpreter present, and officials on both sides were left in the dark as to the topics covered. Spínola has now given his version of the conversation in *Pais sem rumo*, pp. 158-68. Also see Stephen R. Weissman, "CIA Covert Action in Zaire and Angola: Patterns and Consequences," *Political Science Quarterly*, 94, No. 2 (Summer 1979). For background on Cuba's role in Africa, see: Nelson P. Valdes, "Revolutionary Solidarity in Angola," *Cuba in the World*, ed. Cole Blasier and Carmelo Mesa-Lago (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1979), pp. 87-117; William M. Leo Grande, "Cuba-Soviet Relations and Cuban Policy in Africa," *Cuban Studies* (Pittsburgh, January 1980), pp. 1-48; Carla Anne Robinns, "Looking for Another Angola: Cuban Policy Dilemmas in Africa," *Working Papers Number 38* (Washington, D.C.: Latin American Program, Wilson Center, Smithsonian Institution).

xxiv Helmut Sonnefeldt, "American-Soviet Relations: Informal Remarks," *Parameters, Journal of the U.S. Army War College*, 6, No. 1, (1976), pp. 15-16 (an article adapted from an address given before the 22nd Annual National Security Seminar at the U.S. Army War College, June 3, 1976).

On Soviet policy, William E. Griffith, "Soviet Power and Policies in the Third World: The Case of Africa," *Adelphi Papers* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1979), p. 152; "Prospects on Soviet Power in the 1980s" *Adelphi Papers* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1979), pp. 39-46; Congress, House, *The Soviet Union and the Third World: A Watershed of Great Power Rivalry; Report to the Committee on International Relations, by the Senior Specialists Division, Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, May 8, 1977* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1977). Also Colin Legum, "The African Crisis," *America and the World 1978* (*Foreign Affairs* Special Edition, 1979), pp. 633-51.

xxv *Strategic Survey 1978* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies), p. 13.

xxvi For a balanced account of the outside intervention in the Angolan war, see Colin Legum chapter in Kaplan, *Diplomacy of Power*, pp. 570-637.

xxvii See the excellent accounts by Tony Hodges, "How the MPLA Won," and Colin Legum, "The Role of the Big Powers," in *After Angola: The War over Southern Africa* (London: Africana Publishing Co., 1976); Charles K. Ebinger, "External Intervention in Internal War: The Politics and Diplomacy of the Angolan Civil War," *Orbis* (Fall 1976), pp. 669-99; as well as the firsthand report by Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies*, and Nathaniel Davis, "The Angola Decision of 1975: A Personal Memoir," *Foreign Affairs* (Fall 1978), pp. 109-24. On South Africa's intervention, see Robert S. Jaster, "South Africa's Narrowing Security Options," *Adelphi Papers*, No. 159 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1980). On Cuban intervention see the comprehensive account by Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959-1976* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

xxviii For some interesting and well-informed comments on this aspect, see "The Battle for Angola," *Economist's* confidential *Foreign Report*, Robert Moss, ed., November 12, 1975, pp. 1-6. Moss was in southern Angola with the South Africans and was one of the best-placed observers to know their thinking on this question. Also see comments by Cord Meyer, *Facing Reality: From World Federalism to the CIA* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980). Cord Meyer was the CIA station chief in London over this period.

xxix These figures are pieced together from Mark M. Lowenthal, "Foreign Assistance in the Angolan Civil War," in Congress, House, *Mercenaries in Africa; Hearing before the Special Subcommittee on International Relations*, appendix 3, 94th Congress, 2nd Session, August 9, 1976 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1976), from *World Military Expenditures 1967-1976*, and *Strategic Survey 1977* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1977), p. 27. The best brief accounts of the role of the various European countries in Africa can be found in *Africa Contemporary Record*, ed. Colin Legum (New York: Africana Publishing Co.), especially Vol. 7 (1974-75) and Vol. 8 (1975-76).

xxx U.S. Secretary of State, Henry A. Kissinger, in a speech on February 3, 1976, stated that "for the first time in history the Soviet Union could threaten distant places beyond the Eurasian land mass-including the United States...Angola represents the first time that the Soviets have moved militarily at long distances to impose a regime of their choice. It is the first time that the United States has failed to respond to Soviet military moves outside the immediate Soviet orbit. And it is the first time that Congress has halted national action in the middle of a crisis" (*The Washington Post*, February 16, 1976). He repeated this view more starkly in an interview published in *Encounter* (November 1978). "Had we succeeded in Angola there would have been no Ethiopia. The situation in southern Africa would be entirely different, and I think this was one of the decisive watersheds" (p. 12). Also see Congress, Senate, *Statement by Hon. Henry A. Kissinger: Hearings before the Subcommittee on African Affairs*, 94th Congress, 2nd Session, January 3, 4,

WORKING PAPER N.º 2

The United States and the Portuguese Decolonization (1974 – 1976)

Kenneth Maxwell

6, 1976 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1976). For the contrary “regionalist” argument, see Gerald J. Bender, “Angola, the Cubans, and American Anxieties,” *Foreign Policy*, No. 31 (Summer 1978), pp. 3-33, and John A. Marcum, “The Lessons of Angola,” *Foreign Affairs* 54, No. 3 (April 1976), pp. 407 -25. The violence of the debate can be seen in Kenneth Adelman and Gerald J. Bender, “Conflict in Southern Africa: A Debate,” *International Security*, 3, No. 2 (Fall 1978).