The United States and Portuguese Angola: Space, Race, and the Cold War in Africa

Alex J. Marino

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The United States and Portuguese Angola: 
Space, Race, and the Cold War in Africa

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment 
of the requirements for the degree of 
Doctor of Philosophy in History

by

Alex J. Marino
University of California, Santa Barbara
Bachelor of Arts in History, 2008
University of Arkansas
Master of Arts in History, 2015

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University of Arkansas

This dissertation is approved for recommendation to the Graduate Council.

Randall B. Woods, Ph.D.
Dissertation Director

Todd Cleveland, Ph.D. 
Committee Member

Alessandro Brogi, Ph.D. 
Committee Member
ABSTRACT

This dissertation is an international history of the role of the United States in the process of decolonization in Angola, a former colony of Portugal. I argue that the United States embraced Portugal, Angola, and neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo as irreplaceable Cold War allies. Decolonization in Africa challenged America’s relationship with all three countries, as competing forces within the American public called for Washington to adopt an anti-colonial, anti-racist ideology, while others demanded their government to support white supremacy at home and abroad. Decolonization in Angola, a protracted liberation struggle that started in 1961 and lasted until 1974, became a major foreign policy crisis that spanned five presidencies and ultimately led to the CIA’s IAFEATURE operation in 1975, a secret war to secure an independent anti-communist Angola.

Since World War II, psychological warfare and covert operations were at the center of America’s relationship with Angola. The “Truman Doctrine” of providing military and economic aid to allies in order to prevent foreign publics from embracing communism succeeded in winning Portuguese, Angolan, and Congolese allies. Ironically, Holden Roberto, president of the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA), as well as his scourge, the Portuguese Estado Novo (New State) dictatorship, both envisioned Angola as an integral part of an American led global economy. I argue that both Roberto’s nationalists and his Portuguese foes believed they alone could “save” Angola from communism, and they used public relations tactics to convince Washington to embrace their cause. Ultimately, the United States rebuffed both sides during the independence war for fear of endangering NASA installations in nearby South Africa, exacerbating race relations in America, and upsetting anticommunist allies across Africa. These
entanglements during the anticolonial struggle directly led to the CIA’s disastrous 1975 covert action in Angola which ended in failure.
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This dissertation is only possible due to the financial support, friendship, comradery, mentorship, and guidance of individuals and organizations across the globe. Many hands brought this document into being, and I will attempt to acknowledge as many of those individuals and institutions as possible, and I apologize to those who were left out. Of course, this work ultimately is my own, and any errors or mistakes found in this document are my responsibility and mine alone.

The COVID-19 pandemic altered the trajectory of this dissertation in profound ways. The University of Arkansas shut down within a week of the birth of Ruth, to whom this dissertation is dedicated, which completely upended the original plan for completion. I owe a huge debt of gratitude to my family for risking COVID-19 exposure by taking care of Ruth and sharing her within our little pod—without many households coming together to provide childcare, this dissertation would not have been possible. With limited time to work due to the pandemic, the project shifted from an entirely new narrative based on recent archival research to an update of my 2015 University of Arkansas master’s thesis under the direction of Randall Woods, Alessandro Brogi, and Andrea Arrington. It is not the dissertation I set out to complete, but as they say, the best dissertation is a finished dissertation. I look forward to the process of transforming this from a COVID dissertation into a post-pandemic book that more closely aligns with my intentions and incorporates the vast amounts of original archival research that went into this project.

Conducting multi-archival research is an expensive endeavor, and the research for this dissertation would not have been possible without significant financial support. Randall Woods paid for my first dissertation research trip, a cold March journey to the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum in Boston. The Department of History at the University of
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DEDICATION

To Lisa and Ruth.
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ABBREVIATIONS

AAD—Central Foreign Policy Files, 1973-79/Electronic Telegrams, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, United States National Archives.

ACOA—American Committee on Africa

AES—L’Association des évolués de Stanleyville

AFL—American Federation of Labor

AHD—Arquivo Histórico Diplomático, Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros, Portugal

AMU—Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Portugal

ANTT—Arquivo Nacional de Torre do Tombo, Portugal

CA—Le Courrier d’Afrique

CEC—Centre Extra-Coutumier

CEDAF—Centre d’Etude et de Documentation Africaines

CF—Central Files

CIA—Central Intelligence Agency

CORE—Congress on Racial Equality

DDEL—Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library

ECA—Economic Cooperation Administration

ERP—European Recovery Program

FDRL—Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library

FO—Foreign Office

FNLA—Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola

FTUC—Free Trade Union Committee

GRAE—Governo Revolucionário Angolano no Exílio

GRFL—Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library

GNP—Gabinete Negócios Politicos
IBRD—International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
JFKL—John F. Kennedy Presidential Library
JMP—John Marcum Papers
LBJL—Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library
LOC—Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
MNE—Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros
MU—Ministério do Ultramar
MUD—Movimento de Unidade Democrática
MUNAF—Movimento de Unidade Nacional Antifascista
MPLA—Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola
NAACP—National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NAM—National Association of Manufacturers
NARA—National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.
NARA II—National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD
NASA—National Air and Space Administration
NSC—National Security council
NSF—National Security Files
NYT—New York Times
OCB—Operations Coordinating Board
OCDM—Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization
OH—Oral History
OF—Office Files
OPA—Office of Price Administration
PCP—Partido Comunista Português
PP—Personal papers
PPEB—Private Papers of Ernest Bevin
PR—Public Relations
PT—Portugal
RG—Records Group
RG 59—General Records of the Department of State, United States National Archives.
RNL—Richard Nixon Presidential Library
SCOR—Security Council Official Records
SNI—Secretariado Nacional de Informação
SWNCC—State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee
TNA—The National Archives of the United Kingdom
UMHK—Union Minière Du Haut Katanga
UN—United Nations
UNDO—United Nations Documents Online
UNITA—União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola
UPA—União das Populações de Angola
UPNA—União das Populações de Norte Angola
VP—Vice Presidential
WHCF—White House Central File
WHO—White House Office
INTRODUCTION

Angola, a Portuguese speaking country in southern Africa, was one of the principal battlegrounds of the Cold War. Although Angola did possess incredible amounts of oil, diamonds, and fertile land, it was not highly contested due to its vast mineral riches. Rather, in their pursuit of African adherents to their competing ideologies, the superpowers sought to champion Angolan independence as a powerful symbol of their support for African independence, and racial justice. Furthermore, after the failed communist insurgency in neighboring Zaire (Congo) in the mid-1960s, both the United States and the Soviet Union (and its allies) viewed Angola as the critical battlefield of the Cold War in Africa.

However, it was Angolans themselves, not agent provocateurs from the East and West, which brought the Cold War to central Africa. Angola’s nationalists, divided by ethnic, class, and social differences, adopted competing ideologies in their pursuit of independence from Portugal and one another. This internal rivalry within the Angolan revolution led Angolans to seek external support from the superpowers. The 1975-1976 civil war, for which Angola is now infamous, was the culmination of a twenty-year struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union in southern Africa.1

Both the Soviet Union and the United States aligned with competing Angolan nationalists for ideological reasons, rather than security concerns. For the superpowers, Angola was an arena “to prove the universal applicability of their ideologies,” both of which claimed, “to expand the

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domains of freedom” and “social justice.”

Once committed to the conflict, neither the United States nor the Soviet Union was willing to see their chosen rebels lose.

This is the story of America’s war in Angola. How the United States, through its ascendancy to superpower status in World War II, came to facilitate the last colonial struggle in Africa. Successive presidents, displeased with America’s role in Africa, worked with Holden Roberto of the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) to win Angola’s freedom. America’s relationship with Roberto began in the 1950s, when the American consulate in the Belgian Congo hired Roberto with funds from the Central Intelligence Agency (C.I.A.) as an informant. The Leopoldville consulate chose Roberto, an Angolan, not only for his knowledge of events in the Belgian Congo, but because he was an African revolutionary that actively sought out American support. The consulate wanted to “destroy the myth that the Soviet [Union] is the champion of democracy and freedom.” Holden Roberto became America’s Angolan, and from 1955-1975, he represented America’s plan for post-colonial Angola, and for the southern Africa region.

For the United States, Angola was a case study in how race relations at home and America’s alliance with Europe complicated U.S. Africa policies. Portugal, Angola’s colonial master, was both a fascist country and a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Even

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3 Enclosure to Despatch 220, Confidential, “Memorandum by the Consul General at Leopoldville (McGregor),” Leopoldville, 12/28/1955, 611.70/12—2855, CF, RG 59, NARA II, *FRUS*, 1955-1957, Africa, Volume XVIII, Document 9. In Portuguese: Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola; in French: Front di Libération Nationale de l’Angola (FNLA). This dissertation uses the name in use at the period of mentioning for the present-day Democratic Republic of the Congo. All Congolese place names follow this rule, such as the Belgian Congo, Republic of Congo, and Zaire; when mentioning cities, such as Leopoldville or Kinshasa, other names may appear in parenthesis to avoid confusion.

4 Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 11. Thomas Borstelmann notes the enduring nature of America’s racial foreign policy, which dates back to when “Slavery and westward expansion wove together issues of race relations and foreign relations from the very beginning of American history.”
while America strove to be the symbol of emancipation in Angola, American support for NATO empowered the ultra-right wing, white supremacist government of Portugal. Thus, despite American support for Angolan nationalists and strong words against Portuguese colonialism, Angola reinforced the image of the United States as a racist nation that supported white supremacy in Africa and the American South. Indeed, “a group of U.S. ambassadors in Africa warned their superiors in Washington in 1961 that ‘the most highly-charged issues in sub-Saharan Africa today are the war in Angola and racial discrimination in the U.S.’” Angola was the international symbol of American race relations; from 1961-1976, the United States struggled to save the soul of America in Angola.

The durability of Washington’s interest in the region was a function of the centrality of the Congo (Zaire) to America’s Cold War strategy and to Roberto’s revolution. After Belgium departed suddenly during the summer of 1960, the United States poured resources into the Congo to prevent communist infiltration into the region. The fulcrum of this policy was the close personal relationship forged between members of the CIA and the Leopoldville (Kinshasa) embassy staff and a powerful group of Congolese elites known as the Binza group, led by Joseph Mobutu. Mobutu and the Binza group were close associates of Holden Roberto, whose ethnic group, the Bakongo, straddled both sides of the Angola-Congo (Zaire) border. Roberto founded the FNLA as

5 “New State’ Portugal is often regarded as a fascist government. However, contemporary admirers of the regime labeled it a ‘corporatist state.’ A good example of this viewpoint is Michael Derrick, *The Portugal of Salazar* (New York: Campion Books, Ltd., 1939).
7 Melvyn P. Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind: The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2008), 3. This is a play on George H. W. Bush’s description of the Cold War as “a struggle for the very soul of mankind.”
an organization of Bakongo refugees and exiles in the Congo, and according to Angola expert John Marcum, it was “patterned on Congolese (Belgian) models, was caught up in the fortunes and intrigues of Congolese politics, and had less firsthand experiential knowledge of conditions prevailing in Angola.”

Roberto became a client of Mobutu as well as Washington; this meant that Roberto’s fortunes were hitched to Mobutu’s. As long as America remained committed to Mobutu, Roberto would not fade far from Washington’s view.

The FNLA was not alone in its quest to liberate Angola from the yoke of Portuguese imperialism. While Roberto politicked among his countrymen in the Congo, Agostinho Neto, the future first President of Angola and leader of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), had joined the communist party as a medical student in Portugal. Shortly thereafter, other future MPLA leaders, such as Mario de Andrade and Lucio Lara, visited the Soviet Union and affiliated with international communist organizations. Throughout the anti-colonial struggle, the two rebel groups competed against each other for the support of the Angolan people, a competition that frequently turned into armed conflict. According to Marcum, the FNLA traditionally held a military edge over the MPLA; “in administrative-organizational terms, the MPLA was the more impressive with its educated cadres and developing structure and political programs.”

The MPLA’s main support came from the ethnic Mbundu people of Luanda and its surrounding provinces, as well as the creole population of the capital. In 1975, The MPLA

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leveraged its support in Luanda, along with the help of Soviet arms and a Cuban military mission to take over the country.

A third group, led by Jonas Savimbi, formed as an offshoot from Roberto’s National Front, known as the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola/ National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). Savimbi focused his movement on his own Ovimbundu people, who traditionally lived in Angola’s central highlands. He competed with Daniel Chipenda, a fellow Ovimbundu, and member of the MPLA, for ethnic dominance. Like Roberto, Savimbi’s forces regularly fought against MPLA rebels; in turn, the MPLA accused Savimbi of collaborating with the Portuguese.\(^\text{13}\) Savimbi grew in importance as the war dragged on, and along with Chipenda, became a crucial factor in South Africa’s decision to invade Angola in 1975.\(^\text{14}\)

Superimposed over these competing Angolan factions was a Portuguese regime, weak and increasingly desperate, but with powerful allies. Portugal, a poor and under-educated nation, had managed to cling to an empire that in 1960 still spanned four continents. Controlled by an oligarchy of business and military interests, the government of President of the Council of Ministers António de Oliveira Salazar maintained internal control only through liberal use of the Secret Police, the Polícia Internacional de Defesa do Estado/International Police for Defense of the State (PIDE).\(^\text{15}\) Salazar called his reign the Estado Novo, or New State; he intended to forge a clean break from the debt and debacle of liberal democratic rule in the early twentieth century.\(^\text{16}\) An odd partner for

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\(^{14}\) For the definitive biography on Savimbi, see: Bridgland, \textit{Jonas Savimbi}; See also: Linda Heywood, \textit{Contested Power in Angola, 1840s to the Present} (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2000).


the United States, Salazar commanded Washington’s good graces primarily because of the Azores islands, a strategically located strand of volcanoes in the mid-Atlantic, and home to an American airbase. The Azores base, and it alone, led the United States to tolerate Salazar’s Portugal, whose politics and colonial policies were outside acceptable practices for most Americans.

A central tenet of New State thinking was the idea of Lusotropicalism, which held that “because of the historically unique absence of racism among the Portuguese people, their colonization of tropical, non-European territories was characterized by racially egalitarian legislation and human interaction.”17 Lusotropicalism led Portugal to believe it could hold on to Angola forever, since the Africans who populated the country would eventually become Portuguese. The hope was that in Angola, Portugal would turn Angola into an African Brazil. Americans and Portuguese alike bought into the theory of Lusotropicalism, and it was this construct that the United States used to justify its diplomatic support of Portugal.

By 1961, however, it was apparent that Portugal had no future in Angola, other than perhaps as the symbolic head of a sort of commonwealth. After France failed in Vietnam and Algeria, and the British in Kenya, the expectations of independence in the third world accelerated. It became clear to President Kennedy that the third world was where the superpowers would confront one another, and that the United States needed a plan to meet the challenge. When Angolan nationalists rose in open rebellion, (led by Roberto, Neto, and Savimbi) it became clear that Angola was the next flashpoint. This is the story of how Americans came to realize this fact, ignored it, and then finally became engaged in what was a predictable crisis.

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The Republican administrations of Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford tried to distance themselves from Angola’s independence struggle. These administrations chose to align the United States with Portugal and its fellow reactionary states, apartheid South Africa and Ian Smith’s Rhodesia. This shift corresponded with their views on domestic race-relations; rapprochement with the white supremacist powers left the United States unprepared for the crisis that unfolded in 1974-1976 after Portugal granted independence to its empire. Following a coup in Lisbon in 1974, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger initially ignored Angola and instead focused on Portugal.

Only after Kissinger came to understand the complex regional nature of the conflict and saw it as a direct challenge to American credibility, did Washington act. After intense lobbying from African allies, Kissinger and Ford reluctantly embraced the idea of a covert operation to aid Holden Roberto’s FNLA. The plan, codenamed IAFEATURE, was a product of Henry Kissinger’s anti-communism, not the desire to be on the champion of racial justice and self-determination in Angola. As such, the secret mission to aid Roberto involved the worst aspects of white interference in Africa: mercenaries, ethnic strife, and a military alliance with the apartheid regime in Pretoria. IAFEATURE’s failure was a direct response to the implementation of these questionable means. Nevertheless, despite years of neglect of Roberto specifically, and Africa generally under Nixon and Ford, the strong preexisting bond between the United States and the principal black actors in southern Africa nearly led to the success of the secret war. Only after losing in Angola did Kissinger come to understand the centrality of the white-black struggle in southern Africa to the global Cold War and to politics in the United States of America.

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18 Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line*, 241. Borstelmann termed this an extension of “Nixon’s Southern strategy…incorporating whites in southern Africa as well as the American South.”

19 Jussi M. Hanhimaki, *The Flawed Architect: Henry Kissinger and American Foreign Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 426, 400. Jussi Hanhimaki blamed Kissinger for making Angola “unnecessarily into a test case” of American credibility. He uses Angola as an “example of how Kissinger’s overall foreign policy outlook, when applied to complex regional crises, not only contributed to the havoc in those regions but…contributed to the demise of his entire foreign policy architecture.”
I: ORIGINS

The American alliance with Portugal, born out of the Second World War, was the crux of America’s involvement in Southern Africa during the 20th century. This odd pairing of an autocratic European regime and the American republic forced both nations to compromise their political beliefs. However, Portugal possessed islands of rare strategic value which Washington grew to covet. The Azores, a small island chain located in the mid-Atlantic, provided an ideal position from which to defend the sea-lanes to and from the Americas, as well as serving as a refueling hub for air traffic to and from North America and Europe, Africa and the Middle East. American generals and admirals had coveted the islands as early as the Spanish-American War.20 These strategic islands would eventually become the center of Portuguese-American relations.

It was not until the second war with Germany that securing an American base in the Azores became a reality. Desperate to defeat Adolf Hitler, the United States and the Allies turned to African powers for crucial war aid: the Union of South Africa fought in nearly every theater of the war, the Manhattan Project used uranium from the Belgian Congo, and the allies had hoped that the Portuguese Azores would become a key transit hub.21 Portugal sat out the fighting in World War II and made a fortune selling war materiel to both the Axis and the Allied powers. Portuguese neutrality encouraged Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Winston Churchill to contemplate taking the islands by force, but instead they entered an unlikely alliance with Antonio Salazar’s fascist government to obtain access rights to the islands.

The price for what Dean Acheson called “perhaps the single most important (set of bases) we have anywhere” was an American promise to secretly support and protect the Portuguese

empire. After the war, Salazar leveraged the Azores to obtain American aid, including NATO membership, economic development, and military modernization, all of which propped up Portugal’s colonial adventures. Quite simply, the only reason for the inclusion of Portugal in NATO and the close Portuguese-American relationship after World War II was the Lajes air base in the Azores islands. Without this American support, neither Antonio Salazar’s ‘Estado Novo’ nor the Portuguese empire could have survived until the 1970s.

THE ULTRAMAR

The Portuguese overseas empire, known simply as the “ultramar” in Portuguese, was the centerpiece of Salazar’s regime. The Estado Novo tapped into the deep resentment within Portuguese society as it struggled to reconcile a history of imperial greatness with abject poverty, high illiteracy, and general decline throughout the twentieth century. Salazar’s regime, like the fascist governments of Italy and Germany, promised Portugal renewed imperial greatness. This mission was used to justify great abuses of power, the least of which was the absolute authority of the PIDE. The esteemed Portuguese historian A. H. de Oliveira Marques called the PIDE’s record “good enough to make us think of the Inquisition in its golden age,” and only slightly less violent and organized “than the German Gestapo or the Soviet Secret Police.” Angola was an essential part of Salazar’s vision; he used it to offset the unrestored dreary present with the hope of returning to the glory days of the 1500’s. A deeper study of Portuguese colonialism is necessary to understand how the American Azores base propped up the Estado Novo regime in Lisbon and dictated America’s relations with Angola.

23 Marques, History of Portugal, 1972, II:188.
Portugal colonized Angola and the Azores islands during the Age of Discovery. Safe from Spain due to Britain’s guarantee of protection provided by the 1386 Treaty of Windsor, the fifteenth century was a period of rapid Portuguese expansion. The Portuguese originally discovered the Azores and Angola during expeditions organized by Prince Henry Infante. ‘Henry the Navigator’ brought naval experts from the Mediterranean and Northern Europe to Lisbon and encouraged Portuguese expansion overseas. One of Henry’s chartered voyages touched on the Azores in 1427, but “effective colonization” began “only after 1445.”

Portugal began settling Africa during the same period, first with a fort at Cape Verde, which became “the first European settlement on the west coast of Africa,” and “quickly became an important trading post, supplying gold and slaves to the homeland.” The Portuguese established relations with the Kingdom of the Kongo in 1485, which at its height dominated both sides of the Congo River with an empire spanning from modern-day Gabon in the North down to Luanda in the South. However, Portuguese exploration was not limited to the African coast. In the New World, Spain and Portugal created a “line of demarcation from the north to the south pole, a hundred leagues west of the Azores” in the 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas that ultimately granted Portugal Brazil.

While Columbus was in the Caribbean to make good on Spain’s treaty claims, Vasco de Gama made his way around Africa in 1499, paving the way for settling the future Portuguese possessions of Mozambique, Macao, Timor and Goa. By 1500, the Portuguese had built an empire spanning Europe, Asia, South America, and Africa. These voyages and settlements not only built the ‘Ultramar,’ but they also ushered in 500 years of European involvement in Africa. This was the

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25 O’Callaghan, 567.
golden era of Portuguese history, a time that the country would never again match in prestige, splendor, or power.28

The Portuguese imperial project focused on building and maintaining commercial connections throughout the globe. These outposts required only a minimal permanent presence to allow for infrequent visits by traders from Lisbon. The majority of Portugal’s imperial holdings fit this description, including Goa in India, Macau in China and Guinea-Bissau in Africa. The Portuguese undertook larger colonial projects in the Azores and Brazil. The Azores islands were uninhabited at discovery, and Portugal quickly dispatched settlers to colonize the archipelago.29 Other Portuguese settlers went to Brazil and built large plantations to grow cash crops to sell in the Old World. These plantations required slave labor, which Portugal hoped to procure in Luanda, the capital of Angola.30 Settlement in Luanda centered on its natural harbor, which became a principal base for the procurement of slaves for the plantations in Brazil. Angola was indispensable to the Brazilian economy, and more than 2.7 million slaves left the ports of Angola for the New World in the 18th century alone. Angola provided more slaves to the Western Hemisphere than any other region of Africa, making it, in the words of Marcus Rediker, “the most important region of the slave trade.”31 Each part of the empire constituted an integral part of the Portuguese economy. However, the sum of the empire’s parts barely provided the funds necessary to maintain global commitments.

Portuguese power and prestige receded almost immediately from the high water

mark of the 15th century. In 1581, Spain exploited a succession crisis in Lisbon to annex Portugal and its empire. Other European powers also took advantage of the nation’s misfortune. The French, Dutch, Danes, and English expanded their presence in Africa, Asia, and the New World at Portugal’s expense. The 60 years of Spanish rule wiped out Portugal’s dominant position in the world. Lisbon lost the commercial successes it had previously enjoyed, and maintaining the empire became a debt burden, rather than an economic engine. The Doms in Lisbon were saddled with large trade imbalances and accrued massive debts abroad. In this period, Portugal grew increasingly dependent of the British navy to defend the empire, and during the 19th century, Britain insisted on concessions in return. In 1808, London forced Portugal to open Brazilian trade to the world economy, and in 1810, the two nations signed a treaty that according to Marques “ruined the foundations of the Portuguese economy.”32 The situation worsened when Portugal lost Brazil to independence in 1822.

Deprived of Brazil, Portugal turned toward Africa for imperial conquest. Although the Portuguese had maintained a trading presence on the West Africa coast since the fifteenth century, Africa was a secondary imperial project whose sole importance was to provide slaves to Brazil. Without Brazil, Angola lost its meaning as a source of chattel slaves. Nearly a hundred years before the Estado Novo, Lisbon embarked on a mission to formally colonize Angola and create a Brazil-style settler society in hope of restoring the greatness of the state. Portugal hoped that Africa could replace the profits lost as a result of Brazilian independence. The campaigns to subjugate Angola in the 19th century and early 20th centuries, however, further bankrupted Portugal, setting the stage for Salazar’s eventual rise to power.

By the 20th century, Portugal was not a ‘great power’ by any sense of the term. Lisbon lacked the resources and work force traditionally required for conquest and had to look to outside sources for influence in world affairs. Indeed, the Treaty of Windsor remained the foundation of Portuguese foreign policy until the Second World War, when the United States formed an unlikely alliance with Portugal.

WORLD WAR II

World War II highlighted the strategic importance of the Azores to Washington, and the island chain was the impetus for American involvement with the Portuguese Overseas Empire. FDR redefined the goals of the military immediately after Germany invaded Poland. Although Roosevelt was then following a policy of American neutrality in the European war, FDR began to prepare for an eventual American involvement. For the first time “the United States committed itself to defend the entire land area of the Western Hemisphere against military attack from the Old World.” This bold mission was “a new departure in the military policy of the United States, although it was a natural outgrowth of American policy and practice under the Monroe Doctrine.”

This static defense of the western hemisphere included joint naval patrols of the Atlantic with the British, and the Azores served as the dividing line between the American and British zones of responsibility. The lend-lease act signed in 1940 between the United States and Great Britain was essential in providing the bases the American Navy needed for such an ambitious strategy. America received “sovereign rights for 99 years over sites for naval, military and air bases in the Bahamas, Jamaica, Antigua, St. Lucia, Trinidad and British Guiana, in exchange for” 50 World War I-era destroyers. Bases in Newfoundland and Bermuda came to the United States free of

33 Stetson Conn, *The Western Hemisphere, Guarding the United States and Its Outposts* (Department of the Army, 1989), 1.
charge.\textsuperscript{34} This strategy of ‘Hemisphere Defense’ slowly became a hot war in the Atlantic between U.S. patrols and the German \textit{U}-boats. The Joint Chiefs viewed ‘Hemisphere Defense’ as the maximum extension of the American military.

As early as the summer of 1940, Hitler had begun planning an Azores campaign to disrupt Anglo-American control of the Atlantic. Samuel Morison claims that the Germans had hoped to use the Azores as “a jumping-off point for the Luftwaffe against the United States.” A more likely use would have been as a forward base for German submarine warfare. With the German occupation of France, which gave Hitler access to French ports in the Atlantic, such an attack became a real possibility. In early 1941, all the telltale signs of a German invasion of Spain and Portugal began appearing in German propaganda radio programs, including frequent German radio broadcasts that attacked the Portuguese government and accused Washington of coveting the Azores itself.\textsuperscript{35} Roosevelt was convinced that such an attack was imminent. On May 22, FDR “directed the Army and Navy to be ready within thirty days to forestall a German attack on the Azores by getting there first.”\textsuperscript{36}

The military was wholly unprepared for the mission. The Joint Chiefs estimated the operation would require 25,000 men, would consume all available ammunition, and would have tied up most of the Pacific and Atlantic transport fleets. Not only would the operation, titled Task Force Gray, tax the army, navy, and air force to the max, it would probably launch the United States into the war.\textsuperscript{37} But FDR was determined. Military planners struggled to mobilize the men and materiel needed for the mission, and Roosevelt extended the deadline into June.

\textsuperscript{35} Morison, I:6, 34, 66.
\textsuperscript{36} Richard M. Leighton and Robert W. Coakley, \textit{United States Army in World War 2: War Department, Global Logistics and Strategy, 1940 1943} (Department of the Army, 1955), 68–70.
\textsuperscript{37} Leighton and Coakley, 68–70.
Events in Europe derailed the plan before it could be executed. On May 27, the British sank the *Bismarck* and effectively neutered the German navy. More importantly, on June 22, Roosevelt’s deadline to take the Azores, Germany invaded the Soviet Union. With the German *Wehrmacht* busy in the east, it became clear that the Azores were safe from German aggression. The troops earmarked for the Azores rerouted to Iceland, and the US remained out of the war until that December.\(^{38}\)

After Pearl Harbor, and America’s entry into the European conflict, the Joint Chiefs slowly came to covet the Azores once again. American supplies went to Britain in ever-greater amounts, and in turn, the Germans used submarines based in western France to attack allied shipping. In response to German submarine warfare, the Allies organized all trans-Atlantic commerce into convoys. American ships protected convoys of merchant vessels to the mid-Atlantic, where the British took over. In addition, air bases in Newfoundland, Iceland and Great Britain provided limited air cover while a system of mid-sea refueling allowed escort ships to protect convoys the entire way across the ocean. The system had a large flaw. According to Winston Churchill, the Germans were able to inflict heavy losses on shipping in the “large mid-ocean area north of the Azores” situated beyond the range of Allied air power. This ‘Azores gap’ was the scene of some of the worst allied losses in the Atlantic war. The Allies needed an airfield in range. Churchill, however, wanted not only to defend shipping lanes, but also to “attack U-boats not only going to and from the Biscay bases, but also while they were resting, refueling, recharging their batteries in mid-ocean.”\(^{39}\) Indeed, he came to see securing rights to an airbase in the Azores as a strategic imperative.

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\(^{38}\) Conn, *Guarding the United States and Its Outposts*, 464.

Churchill was unwilling to allow the Americans to invade, as they had planned to in 1941. Britain, Portugal’s historic ally, insisted on receiving Portugal’s approval for the Azores base, which delayed its construction. The negotiations dragged on through 1942 well into 1943, at which point the Allies had already decided the Battle of the Atlantic.\(^4^0\) The delay was costly. Churchill wrote in his memoirs that “it was estimated by the experts that a million tons of shipping and many thousands of lives might [have been] saved” if the allies had built bases in the mid-Atlantic islands at the onset of America’s entry into the war.\(^4^1\) It became clear to Churchill and FDR that the mid-Atlantic location of the Azores made them strategically important, no matter the circumstances. Thus, Churchill and Roosevelt pushed forward with negotiations for base rights.

The 1386 Treaty of Windsor served as the basis of London’s negotiations. Churchill, in an address to Parliament, described the treaty as committing Britain and Portugal to “be friends to friends and enemies to enemies, and (that they) shall assist, maintain, and uphold each other mutually, by sea and by land, against all men that may live or die.” Despite the invocation of the ancient foundation of Anglo-Portuguese relations, Portugal only agreed to give the British temporary rights to a base on Terceira Island in exchange for British military and economic aid to the Salazar government.\(^4^2\) London had negotiated the deal with Lisbon under the tacit understanding that American troops would help construct and operate the base. It seemed that the allies and Portugal had come to a settlement to allow British and American forces to occupy the Azores.

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\(^4^1\) Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, IV:789, 802.
The Portuguese recoiled at the thought of friendship with the Americans. Office of Strategic Services agents in London noted that Salazar viewed the United States as the shining example of political liberty that he had “tried so hard to rid” from “Portugal.” But the balance of power in the Anglo-American alliance had shifted dramatically in favor of Washington. In 1943, negotiations between the U.S. and Portugal began in an ad hoc manner following the death of the American ambassador in Lisbon who was replaced by the George F. Kennan, the American chargé d’affairs in London. Kennan wrote back to Washington emphasizing the importance of the Azores base and Portugal in general, and also noted “Salazar…fears association with us only slightly less than with the Russians.” Republican Portugal had glorified American style democracy, and Salazar’s dictatorship depended on strict control of the state. An American presence in Portugal could only lead to calls to return to democracy, he believed. Worse, Roosevelt was a vocal opponent of colonialism. Salazar believed that an alliance with America would lead to international pressure for Portugal to relinquish its empire. That was something the old dictator could not stand, more so because the colonies, especially Angola, were turning huge profits by providing raw materials to both sides in the war.

Fortunately for Salazar, American policy makers were far more pragmatic and much less intent on spreading democracy than he feared. To assuage the dictator’s apprehensions FDR assured Lisbon that the “United States had no designs on the territory of Portugal and its possessions.” That included ‘designs’ to impose an end to empire in the post-war settlement. With that, Roosevelt committed the United States to tacit support for Portuguese control over

Angola and public cooperation with Portuguese imperialism. The Azores, a chain of volcanic rocks in the mid-Atlantic, forged an unholy alliance between the world’s largest democracy and one of its oldest Fascist governments. A catholic priest blessed the first perforated steel runway of what was to become Lajes Airfield, and United States and Portugal celebrated by holding a joint banquet to commemorate the new relationship.\textsuperscript{47}

\textbf{THE AZORES}

The United States military pressed civilian leaders in Washington to secure a new long-term agreement with Salazar for the Azores. Even with the end of fighting in Europe, the American military relied heavily upon the islands for transferring personnel throughout the world, and thousands of soldiers returned home from the war via the Azores.\textsuperscript{48} In a 1945 report, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) argued that an airbase in the Azores Islands was “essential” to defend American interests and to fulfill America’s commitment to the United Nations Security Council, giving it the same rating they granted the Panama Canal. The Azores were a critical refueling stop along the major air routes from America to Europe and Africa which could also “provide alternative routes for movement of U.S. aircraft” throughout the world. Because of this, the JCS argued that “in the event of a failure of the United Nations Organization to preserve world peace,” the Azores were “an inescapable requirement for United States security.”\textsuperscript{49} In 1946, the Azores became even more important after military planners decided that the main thrust of an American attack in the case of war with the Soviet Union would come against the Caucasus via the Middle

\textsuperscript{47} Norman Herz, \textit{Operation Alacrity: The Azores and the War in the Atlantic} (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2004), 221.
\textsuperscript{48} Herz, 325–28.
East and North Africa. With a new war plan in place, the Joint Chiefs whittled the list of essential bases down to only six, of which they considered “Iceland, Greenland, and the Azores” to be “of outstanding importance.” In 1947, the European Affairs desk at the State Department imbued further importance to the Azores, which they argued were “vital to our lines of communication with Germany and for that reason a new accord or an extension of the present one is required.”

In response, the Joint Chiefs upgraded the Azores from “essential” to “required.” With the military importance of the islands established, it was up to the State Department to secure a long-term Azores deal from the Portuguese.

State reached out to the British Foreign Office for advice on negotiating with the Portuguese. America’s desire for an Azores base startled Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin, who disagreed that it was a military necessity. Bevin worried that American forces stationed in Portugal would upset the Russians, who were at the time protesting British troops in Greece and the Middle East. The British government also worried that a Luso-American agreement would undermine the Treaty of Windsor, their oldest alliance, paving the way for Portugal to move out of London’s orbit and into Washington’s. If there were to be an agreement, which London was generally against, Bevin preferred that the Foreign Office play a leading role in the negotiations, that the resulting treaty include the United Kingdom, that the British military have equal rights to the base, and that

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any agreement be temporary until Portugal entered the United Nations. Whether or not the Americans could successfully negotiate a deal with Portugal was open to debate within the Foreign Office. British Ambassador to Portugal Sir Owen O’Malley wrote to Bevin that an Azores agreement depended on the “question of Portuguese psychology.” Based on his own experience, O’Malley argued “that the Portuguese (and particularly Dr. Salazar) can be as obstinate as mules if they feel that Government more powerful than their own are trying to push them around.” He suggested that “the Americans had much better start by being rather lily-fingered with the Portuguese.”

In early 1946, Washington informed London that they would push ahead on negotiations alone. The State Department explained that the shift was due to that fact that “the United States government now attach[es] the highest priority and importance to a prompt agreement over the Azores,” ahead of all other US base acquisition programs in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. State was adamant that it needed a deal regardless of Portugal’s status within the United Nations, and that the Joint Chiefs attached “the highest importance” to the issue. The United States had spent nearly $26 million during the war to build the airfields at Terceira and Santa Maria, in part because they were viewed as long-term investments in American security. Secretary of State Byrnes told Bevin that he planned on triggering the automatic three-month extension built into the 1944 Luso-American Azores agreement, justified by needs related to “redeployment and other

plans in connection with our occupation of Germany and Japan.” That would extend the deadline for a new agreement to June 1946, far before Britain could help Portugal secure membership to the UN. The United States had adopted a policy of delaying all new member applications to the end of the year, to prevent the potentially heated discussions over including wartime neutrals into the organization from bogging down the UN’s first meetings.

United States President Harry S. Truman and Secretary of State James F. Byrnes developed a two-pronged Azores strategy in 1946. The first step was to successfully negotiate a short-term deal as soon as possible without London’s interference. The second was to immediately follow up with a sweeping proposal for a permanent Luso-American alliance.

United States Ambassador to Portugal Herman B. Baruch handled negotiations with Portuguese President of the Council of Ministers António de Oliveira Salazar in Lisbon. Within a week of the June 2, 1946 deadline, Baruch agreed to all of Salazar’s demands, which were mostly symbolic issues of sovereignty. The new eighteen-month deal granted access until December 2, 1947, with the possibility of continuing beyond that on a day-to-day basis. The new deal transferred the American base at Santa Maria to Portuguese civil authorities and shifted the American military over to the airfield they had built on Terceira Island during the war outside the village of Lajes.

Right after Baruch concluded the short-term deal in June, Byrnes sent Assistant Secretary of State Donald Russell to pitch a Luso-American alliance. Russell proposed to Salazar that “in

the interest of security in the Atlantic,” the United State and Portugal should join together for “their own security and that of the world.” Russell offered “an assurance such as has never been proposed by the Government of the US to any power outside of the Western Hemisphere…that any threat to the territorial security of Portugal would constitute a threat to the security of the Atlantic and of the world as a whole.” Washington promised to defend Portugal when attacked, even if the UN Security Council failed “for any reason to act in the event of such aggression.” This protection was directly “predicated upon the Portuguese Government granting the desired airbase rights and privileges in the Azores,” as well as “in the Cape Verde Islands,” for 99 years. It would be “a final agreement on long term base rights.”

To Russell’s surprise, Salazar did not jump to accept the proposal. Portugal’s strong man responded in the moment by quickly raising many issues that would have to be worked out, including the legal precedent of the previous Azores deals. He told Russell he would not give to the United States control over sovereign territory, nor would he agree to “the presence of foreign troops on [Portuguese] soil in time of peace.” Salazar told Russell that this was not his response final, but merely “Portuguese susceptibilities” that had to be considered.

Ambassador Baruch reported back to Washington that he learned from someone “who is very close to Salazar” that the dictator was extremely worried about the political ramifications of the American alliance. This friend of Salazar told Baruch that the deal would be “a weapon and talking point which might well be used to whip up national pride and sentiment to [the] point of causing Salazar’s downfall.” Salazar had done so much to limit American influence on Portugal

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63 The Ambassador in Portugal (Baruch) to the Secretary of State, “615. For the eyes of the Secretary only from Russell.”
that he had even banished Coca-Cola because he viewed it as “a symbol of American imperialism.” It was simply too much to ask regime loyalists to suddenly embrace the Americans, undermining the very foundation of the Estado Novo’s rejection of liberal democracy. Salazar was especially worried about the spread of American values in the Azores, which he believed were uniquely susceptible to American influence given the large Azorean communities in New England and California. Some in the foreign ministry, the Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros (MNE), worried that the proposed Luso-American alliance would undermine the Treaty of Windsor, or that the deal would in effect add the United States to that ancient treaty. Others worried that the Americans could not be trusted, especially after news broke at the end of 1945 of the Anglo-American plans to invade and capture the Azores during the war. The news confirmed the worst fears in Lisbon that Washington could not be trusted to respect Portuguese sovereignty.

Salazar’s most trusted advisers warned him to proceed with caution. Portuguese Ambassador to the United States João António de Bianchi, who had served in the post since 1933, warned that “eliminating the Azores from our relations with the United States,” would “seriously damage our international situation and our internal well-being.” Accepting the deal would deny Lisbon its greatest leverage in negotiations on other issues with Washington. Concurring with Bianchi was Salazar confidant and Ambassador-designate to Brazil, Pedro Teotónio Pereira. Pereira happened to be in Washington during the negotiations during a layover on route to Rio de

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66 Meneses, Salazar, 276.
67 Pereira, A Diplomacia de Salazar, 464.
69 Cited in Pereira, A Diplomacia de Salazar, 495.
Janeiro. Pereira worried that the agreement was unworkable given the current state of affairs between Lisbon and Washington. His fear was that defending the Portuguese empire would leave the United States terribly exposed, and force Washington to make policy decisions that “at times they cannot explain to themselves.” Pereira warned Salazar that the Azores were therefore not a strong enough foundation for a lasting relationship. He argued that barring “serious interests that unite us, this tenuous connection could break.”

Following the advice of Bianchi and Pereira, Salazar adopted a new Azores policy that became the foundation of Luso-American relations until the fall of the New State regime in 1974. Portugal would seek increased economic and political links with the United States, which Salazar hoped would enrich regime loyalists and lessen the negative impact of an American alliance on the hardliners. This would also create a more durable alliance with Washington. However, Portugal would never consent to a long-term deal along the lines of Russell’s proposed 99-year agreement. Instead, Lisbon preferred to keep renegotiating at regular intervals to maintain their leverage. This also meant that the MNE could demand the Russell deal serve as the starting point for all future negotiations. Salazar and the Foreign Ministry purposefully bogged down the talks over the Russell proposal with a never-ending stream of scheduling conflicts that prevented meaningful discussions to take place. The American embassy never caught on to the subterfuge, leaving


71 Pereira, A Diplomacia de Salazar, 496.
Ambassador Baruch convinced up to the collapse of the talks that his staff could “through long patient hours” secure a deal.  

There was still some hope Portugal’s entry into the United Nations could grant Washington access to the Azores via the Security Council. American representatives had already floated the idea of Portuguese membership to Soviet UN Representative Andrei Gromyko, who “showed no hostility whatever.” Amidst ongoing discussion in the Security Council about how to deal with Generalissimo Francisco Franco’s regime in Spain, Gromyko had gone out of his way to point out that “Portugal is not in the same position as Franco Spain,” echoing comments made by Stalin at Potsdam. It seemed as though Salazar had done enough to avoid a veto and join the UN by the end of 1946.

Salazar had been preparing the way for UN entry since the end of the war. In 1945 he passed a series of reforms intended to signal a transition to democracy and an end to the fascist aspects of his regime. In August he dissolved the National Assembly and called for new parliamentary elections in November. As part of this transition to what Salazar dubbed “organic democracy,” the regime’s União Nacional/National Union clique formally became a political party, and no longer an allegedly non-political “Union of all the Portuguese.” The regime would allow opposition parties, and censors would tolerate critical news items in the press. At the time there were widespread public demonstrations against the regime and in support of more democratic or socialist policies. Writing in exile in the 1970s, Portuguese historian Oliveira Marques called this loosening of state tyranny “a clever safety valve for Salazar’s control of the country, and a

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good propaganda weapon to tell the foreign countries that the Portuguese regime was not Fascist and depended upon popular support.” To soften the public perception of the secret police as just another gestapo, Salazar rebranded the PVDE as the Polícia Internacional de Defesa do Estado (PIDE). Salazar told his people and the world that he had been in favor of democracy all along. He explained that he had always believed it was “not possible to govern against the persistent will of the people,” which was why he wanted elections, “as free as in free England.”

There was a massive outpouring of anti-Salazar sentiment in response to the dictator’s call for elections. According to historian David Raby, there was a widespread belief amongst the underground opposition that Salazar would fall just as had Adolf Hitler in Germany and Benito Mussolini in Italy. Opposition groups were hopeful that the 1945 elections were a genuine opportunity to topple the regime. The illegal underground resistance formed in 1943, the Movimento de Unidade Nacional Antifascista/Movement of National Antifascist Unity (MUNAF), followed a two-part strategy during the war which reflected the ideological differences within the movement. Disgruntled military officers and veterans, led by former Governor General of Angola José Norton de Matos, preferred a military coup to topple the regime. Members of the Partido Comunista Português/Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) and other leftwing or socialist groups wanted to foment a popular uprising against Salazar. Reflecting the emergence of a democratic option to end the Estado Novo, the MUNAF rebranded for elections as the Movimento de Unidade Democrática/Movement of Democratic Unity (MUD). MUD held a public meeting on October 6, 1945 with a list of demands, the first of which was to move the election from November 18 to a new date six months out. The list focused on reforms that would ensure elections were free and

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76 Irene Flunser Pimental, A História Da PIDE, 11.
fair. Participants in the October 8 meeting signed their manifesto, which was followed by a nationwide campaign to create lists of MUD supporters. Within a few weeks MUD claimed to have more than 50,000 members in Lisbon.\textsuperscript{78}

The \textit{Movimento de Unidade Democrática} was a big tent political movement with little experience in electoral politics. Like the MUNAF, MUD combined conservatives, jaded integralists, monarchists, liberals, the PCP, and socialists like the young Mário Soares, who was only 20 when he attended the October 8 meeting. According to Soares, the MUD “swept the country in the space of a few days.”\textsuperscript{79} The organization’s rallies and meetings attracted large numbers of university students, including African college students living in the \textit{Casa dos Estudantes do Império}/ House of the Students of Empire (CEI). CEI students were extremely active in MUD, including Angolans Agostinho Neto and Mário Pinto de Andrade, along with Guinean/Cape Verdean Amílcar Cabral. Neto, Andrade and Cabral dove deep into the anti-fascist cause, participating in rallies, political meetings, and strategy sessions. They read Marx and learned political organizing from the PCP and other MUD leaders, while pushing for the movement to adopt decolonization as a policy plank. For most MUD members, even those aligned with the PCP, the democratic revolution would have continued colonialism, much to the chagrin of its African members. When Salazar refused to acquiesce to the movement’s demands, MUD leaders decided the only way to respond was to withdraw their candidates from the election and denounce the plebiscite as “a farce.” Some military members of the movement staged an ill-advised coup late in 1945 that failed to materialize, while other party leaders made the mistake of handing over

\textsuperscript{78} Raby, 18–24, 60.
lists of members to the regime loyalists who questioned their popularity. The promise of an easy transition to democracy faded as PIDE arrested MUD leaders and the União Nacional won every seat in parliament.\(^{80}\)

Despite Salazar’s authoritarian crackdown and the failure of the Russell talks, Washington pressed ahead with efforts to forge closer ties to Lisbon before the UN vote. In August 1946, as a sign of the growing importance of a strategic relationship between the two nations, the Pentagon sent the U.S.S. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the navy’s all-jet aircraft carrier, to visit Lisbon. The city’s Campo Pequeno bullring held bullfights in the Portuguese style for the ship’s crew, which the FDR repaid by putting on an airshow. According to a local American reporter, the trip “made Portuguese officials much more air-minded—at least for the time being.” Both President of the Council of Ministers Salazar and President Oscar de Fragoso Carmona boarded the FDR to watch the airshow above the Tagus River. In his remarks to reporters afterwards, Salazar spoke glowingly of the United States and Luso-American relations, returning to the comment on the airshow “two or three times, shaking his head in astonishment when speaking of the carrier Roosevelt.”\(^{81}\) It was an extremely powerful symbol to the Portuguese people that Salazar would board an American military vessel and sing the praises of American technological superiority. According to Portuguese historian Bernardo Pereira, it was “a rare and politically significant event,” which left the public “astonished.”\(^{82}\)

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\(^{82}\) Pereira, *A Diplomacia de Salazar*, 476.
In 1945, the United States loomed large over the life of 22-year-old Holden Roberto, the future leader of the Angolan Revolutionary Government in Exile (GRAE). As an Angolan exile working as accountant in the Belgian Colonial Finance Administration, he witnessed Congo’s American-fueled economic expansion firsthand. The postwar boom marked the third and final stage of Congo’s economic expansion during Belgian imperialism, which lasted until Belgian capital fled in the lead up to independence in 1960. This economic transformation left Congo second only to South Africa as the most industrialized country in Africa. By independence in 1960, more than a quarter of Léopoldville’s (Kinshasa) Gross Domestic Product came from industry.\footnote{Frans Buelens and Danny Cassimon, “The Industrialization of the Belgian Congo,” in \textit{Colonial Exploitation and Economic Development: The Belgian Congo and the Netherlands Indies Compared}, ed. Ewout Frankema and Frans Buelens (London: Routledge, 2013), 229–31. Buelens and Cassimon categorize the first period under King Leopold II (1885-1908) as ”Raubwirtschaft,” or the “plunder economy,” followed by industrialization under Belgian state control from 1920-1940.}

In 1944, Roberto and Lumumba both arrived for work in Kisangani, then known as Stanleyville, which emerged from the war an important economic and political center within Congo. Located just downstream from Stanley Falls, Kisangani was a booming entrepôt for agricultural goods from the surrounding countryside that grew rapidly from 15,000 residents in 1940, to 20,000 in 1945. Their paths to Kisangani were very different, reflecting major divisions between the new white-collar black Congolese elite.

Roberto came as a Finance Administration veteran accountant on assignment from the colonial government. He had worked hard in school his whole life to secure a job as a commis, or government clerk, first at Protestant mission schools in Kinshasa and then at secretary-accounting-typing school in São Salvador, Angola. Roberto was a top student in the subjects of French, advanced math, typing, counting machine operations, secretarial studies, and accounting principles. Belgian colonists demanded that black office workers like Roberto adhere to strict rules of conduct based on notions of European cultural superiority. Roberto was expected to speak flawless French and arrive to work each day in a pressed suit with tie and shined shoes. Those who could meet this standard were known as “evolved” Africans, or “évolués.” The term “évolué” also existed in France’s African colonies, and in Angola it was known as “assimilado” (“assimilated”). In 1944, when Roberto first came to Kisangani, évoluté status was an informal categorization of peoples which came to mean a member of the middle class that worked in an office.

Roberto moved to Kisangani as a continuation of a long Belgian tradition of relying on foreign black skilled laborers who could be closely monitored and separated from locals and then

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promoted to new administrative posts. These foreign workers were known as “Coastmen” because they were largely from the West African coast.\textsuperscript{89} Although Coastmen and Angolans were distinct communities in Kinshasa, there were so few Angolans in Kisangani that the Belgians grouped them together. In fact, 1943 Belgian records showed that there were only eight Coastmen in Kisangani not from the West African countries of Ghana, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Togo, Cameroon, or Nigeria—meaning that there were potentially not even eight Angolans in town when he arrived.\textsuperscript{90} Roberto was a foreigner in a suit that the Belgians hoped would not cause trouble in local politics.

Patrice Lumumba on the other hand was a self-taught job seeker that came to Kisangani on his own accord in search of a better life. Lumumba relied heavily on the local library to teach himself to type, and he took correspondence courses to learn French. He found work as a \textit{clerc}, or private company clerk, with an eye on one day becoming a \textit{commis} for the state. Lumumba worked with \textit{commis} friends like Roberto to improve his French, gain technical knowledge, and discover job opportunities. His big break finally came in 1947, when he was accepted into the postal academy back in Kinshasa.\textsuperscript{91} Although one was a better paid \textit{commi} and the other a less prestigious \textit{clerc}, Roberto and Lumumba were part of a very small class of nonlocals who found community with other \textit{évolués}, whether they were Congolese, Angolan, or Coastmen. \textit{Évolués} formed friendships based on their jobs more than their ethnicities, as they had specific interests based on their different pay scales and work experiences.\textsuperscript{92}


coutumier” or “extra customary center” (CEC) of Stanleyville, meaning they were neither white citizens of the city, nor were they subject to the local African chiefs aligned with the Belgian government. Since the creation of CEC’s in the 1930s, clerks living in the CEC’s consistently pushed for better pay, participation in local affairs, strong protections from customary laws, and exemption from forced labor.93 These issues, particularly pay and political rights, were at the forefront of évolué life in Kisangani after the war.

Holden Roberto and Patrice Lumumba came to Kisangani just as it became the epicenter of political organizing amongst évolués in the Belgian Congo. A series of crises in neighboring Congo-Brazzaville, in the Congolese city of Luluabourg, and a local political scuffle in Kisangani created overwhelming pressure for political change. The first major shock to the status quo was Charles Du Gaulle’s Brazzaville Conference in January of 1944. Du Gaulle and his Free French forces declared that in post-war French Africa, “évolués” would have full civil rights and limited suffrage, including seats in the French parliament.94 Brazzaville became the talk of the town, with évolués openly discussed the new French program and formulating demands for a similar expansion of rights in the Belgian Congo.95 The following month, the colonial military force, known as the Force Publique (FP), mutinied in the town of Luluabourg (now Kananga) against their white officers. Force Publique soldiers had served valiantly in both World Wars, most recently in Ethiopia where they crushed the Italian garrison at Saio.96 The soldiers were sick of their poor pay and treatment by their white officers who dismissed their concerns. In the early planning stages of the revolt, the plotters envisioned a colony-wide évoluté uprising by FP soldiers

93 Benoît Verhaegan, “Le Centre Extra-Coutumier de Stanleyville,” 63.  
alongside clercs and commis to force major reforms.\textsuperscript{97} Even though Belgian authorities squashed the revolt before it could metastasize, the mutiny fueled widespread calls for change.\textsuperscript{98} Later in the year Kisangani experienced its own local disruptions, as tensions between Congolese évolutés, Coastmen, and the city Chief reached a boiling point. All three groups were concerned that the population boom had upset the delicate and arbitrary balance created by the Belgians between native rule, évoluté rights, and special regulations for the foreign Coastmen. The colonial order seemed on the verge of collapse, with évolutés demanding an end to their liminal status and full inclusion in city affairs.\textsuperscript{99} Belgian authorities were finally convinced that without major reforms, they would lose Congo and their budding strategic partnership with the United States.

Political instability in Congo jeopardized the American economy and President Harry Truman’s national defense plans. Under Truman’s plan for transitioning the economy from war production to consumer products, known as “Reconversion,” the American government would “maintain the flow of supplies without interruption,” including “the precious and indispensable minerals upon which our national life is rounded.”\textsuperscript{100} In a 1947 report, the United States Bureau of Mines argued that “the mineral wealth of the Congo will have direct bearing on the economic future of all progressive nations of the world.” The Bureau found that Congo had replaced American imports from Asia, and that the Belgian colonial government had invested wisely in mining and infrastructure, betting on strong consumer demand for Congolese ores.\textsuperscript{101} The most

\textsuperscript{100} Harry S. Truman, “Special Message to the Congress Presenting a 21-Point Program for the Reconversion Period,” 9/6/1945, The American Presidency Project at the University of California, Santa Barbara (Hereafter, UCSB).
important resource for the consumer economy was copper, which would line the walls of new suburban homes and provide power to fancy new electric appliances. Appliance makers like General Electric filled American airwaves, newspapers, and magazines with ads about the “dream kitchen” of the postwar world, equipped with an electric refrigerator, ice maker, dishwasher, oven, and garbage disposal. The air conditioner, dependent on home wiring and a large copper cooling coil, would open up vast stretches of the United States for tract housing. Outside of Congo’s Katanga province, the other major foreign sources of American copper came from Chile and Northern Rhodesia (Zambia). Katanga provided other important resources too, including the largest deposits of cobalt and industrial diamonds available to the United States. American corporations began to move into Congo after the war, including a number of investment schemes by the brothers Laurance and David Rockefeller. Congo continued to be the main source of America’s uranium until at least 1954, when the 1944 Tripartite Agreement between the United States, Belgium, and the United Kingdom ended. Even though Truman wanted to fund uranium exploration in the United States, Katanga uranium was preferred because it was cheaper than anywhere else due to low worker play, pre-existing infrastructure, and the superior quality of the ores. As part of the Tripartite Agreement, Washington committed to modernizing Katanga’s infrastructure and increasing the mechanization of the mine itself after the war. Between the


uranium, copper, and other rare materials, American trade with Congo became so large that it sparked rumors that America itself would colonize the Congo after the war.105 Americans were hooked on cheap Congolese minerals, without which consumer goods would become unobtainable by middle-class Americans, and the government would be unable to fuel the nuclear program.

The Belgian government unveiled sweeping reforms designed to pacify évolutés without extending them political rights or increasing their wages. These reforms focused on greater social freedoms while still limiting overt political rights for blacks. The heart of these reforms was a public relations campaign designed to co-opt Congolese elites and channel their ambitions into Belgian approved activities, and then generate propaganda content off of those actions. These goals became the focus of nearly every government policy after the war which were publicized in Congo, in Europe, and in the United States.106 Ultimately the plan backfired, as the évoluté leaders that participated in these campaigns became anti-colonial nationalists in the 1950s.

The centerpiece of the Belgian reforms was a media campaign aimed at the colony’s rising black elite. The state created new films, radio shows, and periodicals that catered to évolutés and that encouraged support for the colonial government. According to Congolese historian Didier Gondola, the centerpiece of these efforts was the new magazine La Voix du Congolais (The Congolese Voice), “with articles and editorials exclusively written by Africans.”107

La Voix du Congolais served as the journal of record for elite Congolese life. The magazine dutifully reported each time a commis earned a promotion in the civil service, as well as publishing culture and society pieces from évoluté communities across Congo.108 Belgian authorities closely

105 Borstelmann, Apartheid’s Reluctant Uncle, 43–46.
oversaw production of the paper and intervened to remove content they deemed openly political or critical of the colonial regime. Even with state oversight, editor Antoine-Roger Bolamba put out a magazine that allowed its contributors and readers to leave their unique imprint on the paper. The paper did put out blatantly pro-Belgian propaganda, including a glowing biography of Henry Morton Stanley written by Patrice Lumumba himself.\textsuperscript{109} \textit{La Voix du Congolais} dedicated a large part of its pages to promoting black success, with large writeups on black businessmen, entrepreneurs, and high-level \textit{commis}. The magazine often wrote of Kapende Tshombe, who had become “the first Congolese millionaire, in Belgian francs,” by working with both the Belgian and Portuguese authorities in Katanga, the mineral rich province in Southeast Congo.\textsuperscript{110} In 1948, Kapenda Tshombe received permission to visit the metropole, which was unheard of for Congolese. Not only did Tshombe visit Brussels, but he did so in a three-piece suit and top hat that made him look more refined than his Belgian hosts, and news of his trip filled the pages of \textit{La Voix du Congolais}. Another businessman who frequently graced the cover of the magazine was Victor Dondo, the chief \textit{commis} of the Kinshasa branch of the \textit{Banque du Congo Belge}/Bank of the Belgian Congo (BCB).\textsuperscript{111} Congolese elites wanted to appear in the magazine, and the most politically connected were able to contribute as writers. Future politician Jean Bolikango was a regular contributor, as well as Congo’s first President, Joseph Kasa-Vubu and the aforementioned Lumumba.\textsuperscript{112}

The other major Belgian reform was the creation of clubs for \textit{évolués} beginning in 1944. Clubs had special privileges in public spaces that the colonial regime hoped would release the tension building amongst Congolese elites. \textit{La Voix du Congolais} dutifully chronicled Club culture

\textsuperscript{110} Nzongola-Ntalaja, \textit{The Congo}, 66.
\textsuperscript{111} \textit{La Voix du Congolais}, September 1948, 391-392; October 1948; December 1955.
\textsuperscript{112} Tshimanga, \textit{Jeunesse, Formation et Société}, 225.
as it quickly took off, going from 113 colony wide in 1946 to 2,078 in 1958. Sports clubs were the most popular but there were also religious clubs, professional groups, ethnic clubs, and cultural associations. In general, clubs focused on self-improvement—how to be a better “évolué”—by becoming more cultured, better dressed, and above all, wealthier. However, according to Charles Tshimanga, évolué club members were also “very receptive to the ideas of liberty, equality, and social justice.” One of the most popular events for clubs was to take members for their “baptême de l’air,” or their first flight in an airplane. Air travel became the symbol of the colonial elite, something previously reserved only for white administrators, businessmen, and the most well connected and wealthy évolués. Clubs were able to hold gatherings with members in other cities, creating a nationally connected network of black elites. The biggest clubs rented halls where they could meet, drink alcohol, smoke, and have open discussions about problems in the colony. A 1946 picture in the évolué periodical La Voix du Congolais perfectly captured a typical scene in an évolué club packed full of black men wearing ties, suit jackets over the back of their chairs while chatting over drinks and cigarettes. The Belgians believed this kind of boosterism would show the world that their colonial policies were succeeding as part of a “civilizing” mission; ironically, the magazine was most successful as a way to keep up with club announcements, elections, and events for évolués.

Kisangani évolués quickly formed their own club, L’Association des évolutés de Stanleyville (The Association of Evolved Africans of Stanleyville, AES). After its approval in 1944, the Association of Evolved Africans of Stanleyville quickly became the center of évoluté life in the

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113 Tshimanga, 173–74.
114 La Voix du Congolais, November 1948; May 1949; March 1952.
115 La Voix du Congolais, No. 10, July-August 1946, 416-421.
Members met in the new Belgian-provided clubhouse to discuss their grievances with the colonial state and their employers, to share self-help tips, and to create actionable goals for the organization. Despite an official decree by the government that clubs like AES were to be non-political, the members discussed issues of public policy and local politics. They formed factions, with the greatest internal friction forming between the commis of the government like Roberto and the clercs like Lumumba. Despite the emergence of new factions, the real power in AES came from former members of the only previously active club, the “Amis du sport” (Sports Friends/Fans), who quickly secured elected positions in AES. The first president of AES, a commis named Louis Abangapokwa, had the honor in October 1944 of being the first black Congolese leader to give a speech disseminated through mass media. Abangapokwa made clear that AES was “not created...for the purpose of forming a group of revolutionaries,” in line with what the authorities wished for the speech. However, he also thanked the Amis du sport and his fellow commis, who had delivered him enough votes to win the club presidency.117

In 1948 the Belgians introduced yet another reform, the carte du merite, or “social merit card.” The social merit card was an official government document proving one had achieved “evolved,” or “évolué” status, which formally freed one from native law and some of the colony’s segregation decrees. The test was humiliating, which included a home visit during which commissioners rifled through an applicant’s possessions, interrogated his wife, and judged all family interactions to deem them sufficiently westernized.118 The introduction of the social merit card only further flamed évoluté tensions and anger with the colonial government.

117 The only permitted clubs in Kisangani before the AES that was active at the time was a women’s group and Ami du sport, but there had been several that went inactive right before and during the war. Verhaegen, *L’Association des Évolués de Stanleyville*, 9, 15, 25, 115.
It was amidst the heavy pressure of the merit card and ongoing factionalism in 1948 that the AES elected Antoine-Marie Mobe president on a broad platform of black unity. Mobe was a *commis* with the Agricultural Ministry and used his contacts with other powerful clubs to make the organization more politically active. Belgian historian Benoît Verhaegen identified no less than “four situations of dissension” within the AES that Mobe faced: tension “between the *évolués* from Orientale Province and those from all the others; between the *commis* of the government and the *clercs* from the private sector; between mulattoes and blacks; and between Stanleyville locals and the others.” In his inaugural presidential address, Mobe made clear his call for members “to ignore this spirit of clan, of tribe, of region, to think only of our community of race and color…and to prepare for the Congo of tomorrow.” The Belgians deemed that Mobe had transgressed rules of approved rhetoric and goals of a “non-political” organization and forced him to resign. In the aftermath of Mobe’s fall, Lumumba began to get more involved in AES politics, winning the vice presidency in 1952 and the presidency in 1954. Verhaegen argues that Mobe was the inspiration for Patrice Lumumba’s national politics a decade later.\(^{119}\) There were also clearly echoes of Antoine-Marie Mobe in Holden Roberto’s political rhetoric a decade later, when he pushed a group of Northern Angolans toward an ideology of black nationalism over tribal, cultural, and regional differences.

**THE COLD WAR**

American plans to secure the Azores and Congolese minerals quickly became integrated into Washington’s increasingly confrontational relationship with the Soviet Union. The Cold War

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between America and Russia provided President Harry Truman compelling new reasons to solidify the relationship between the United States, the Portuguese Empire, and the Belgian Empire. In response to rising Cold War tensions, Truman and the United States Congress passed sweeping policies designed to integrate the Portuguese, Belgian, Congolese, and Angolan economies into one “free world” system, backed by a military alliance and promoted by extensive propaganda programs.

An early casualty of rising tensions between Washington and Moscow was Portugal’s application to join the United Nations. The United States, the United Kingdom, and Brazil fully backed the Portuguese application. They noted their historic relationships with Portugal, and emphasized help in defeating fascism by providing access to the Azores base and large supplies of tungsten. None of this mattered to the Soviet Union, whose UN representative declared that his country could not accept any country within the organization that did not have proper diplomatic relations with Moscow. In reality, the Soviet Union vetoed the membership applications of Transjordan, Ireland, and Portugal in retaliation to British and American concerns raised over the membership applications of Albania and Outer Mongolia. British and Americans charged that Albania was fomenting unrest in neighboring Greece by funneling money and arms to communist rebels there. In response to Russia’s veto of Transjordan, Ireland, and Portugal, the United States in turn vetoed Albania and Outer Mongolia’s applications. The opposing vetoes offended the General Assembly (GA), whose membership believed the Security Council’s membership applications recommendations were nonbinding, leaving final say to the GA. The GA debate over the vetoed members quickly focused on Portugal, which was singled out by Indian UN...

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120 UN SCOR, 1st Year, 2nd Series, 57th mtg, “26. Report of the Security Council’s Committee on Admission of New Members,” 8/29/1946, UN Doc. S_PV.57_E, United Nations Documents Online (Hereafter, UNDO), 103-110, 139; Edwin L. James, “Russia Finds the Veto May Work Both Ways,” NYT, 9/1/1946, 64.
Representative Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit. Trouble had been brewing between Portugal and India ever since the British Government announced eventual Indian independence in June 1946. Portugal refused to grant independence to the Portuguese State of India, which included the major cities of Goa, Damão, and Diu. When asked about the topic, Mahatma Gandhi said that “In free India, Goa cannot be allowed to exist as a separate entity in opposition to the laws of the state…I would venture to advise the Portuguese Government of Goa to recognize the signs of the times and come to honorable terms with its inhabitants.”

Back in the UN, Pandit offered a full-throated defense of the Soviet veto, arguing that Salazar’s Portugal was “definitely not fitted to be a member of the United Nations,” because of the regime’s “distinctly Fascist flavor.” What started with British and American protests about Albania had quickly turned into a Soviet propaganda victory with newly emerging independent India.

The Albanian question was intimately linked to Western anxiety about Soviet expansion in Greece and Turkey. Albania, along with Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, provided training and technical support for the Greek Communist Party in the Greek Civil War. This was worrisome to Washington because of how it seemed to fit a pattern of Soviet aggression throughout Eastern Europe. The idea of a communist regime in Athens was devastating to Britain, which had dominated Greek affairs since Greek independence in the 19th century. The State Department was far more concerned with the situation in Turkey, which faced demands from Moscow to cede territory to the Soviet Union. Russia had long desired control over the Bosphorus Straits which

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controlled Russia’s access to the Eastern Mediterranean from its Black Sea ports. If Moscow could dominate the Straits, it could more effectively advance its interests in Southern Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa. Both the Greek and Turkish crises were within Britain’s traditional sphere of influence, yet London was incapable of responding in a meaningful way while rebuilding its war-shattered economy. The State Department worried that even if Greek Communists could be militarily defeated, the recipe for extremism—poverty and hopelessness—would remain without major economic reforms focused on increased productivity and exports. State also worried that if Turkey fielded a modern army capable of deterring Soviet expansionism, it might “result in economic collapse.” Throughout 1946 it slowly became clear to the Truman administration that American intervention, both military and economic, would be needed to change the tide in the Near East.

Truman had no mandate in 1946 for the kind of liberal internationalist policies his administration had proposed for Greece and Turkey. As accidental president, Truman had already spent his first two years in office fighting to implement the United Nations and Reconstruction policies he had inherited from Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Confrontations with Russia in the UN over nuclear issues and Eastern Europe dashed the hopes held by many Americans that the organization could provide lasting world peace. Truman’s Reconversion policies, outlined in what

he called his “21 Point Program for the Reconversion Period,” met a similar fate as he battled with Republicans and his own party alike.\textsuperscript{126}

A bipartisan coalition of conservatives led by Republican Senator Robert A. Taft demolished Truman’s domestic reconversion initiatives one by one. Together with the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) and Southern Democrats, the conservative coalition blocked spending projects and systematically dismantled FDR-era policies to protect workers and regulate businesses. Led by Taft, it relentlessly attacked the Office Price Administration and its director, Chester Bowles over the OPA’s continuation of price controls after the end of the war. Taft dismissed Bowles as “an advertising man” who was “not concerned with facts.”\textsuperscript{127} Bowles quit in 1946 after Congress passed a Taft-backed bill that gutted the OPA. Truman vetoed the measure, even though doing so ended all price controls. Taft and NAM had assured the public that businesses would not take gouge consumers, but without government regulation prices skyrocketed. Truman and Congress quickly agreed to new price controls, but the damage had been done. Americans were no longer interested in government regulation of consumer spending, even if it had protected them from rampant inflation. Taft emerged from the fight “Mr. Republican,” the standard bearer of the party; the high price of consumer goods like beef became a staple of the GOP’s 1946 congressional campaigns.\textsuperscript{128} Along with the OPA, conservatives targeted labor unions.


and other protections the New Deal provided for American workers. NAM did everything it could to ruin the President’s 1945 National Labor-Management Conference which conservatives feared would make permanent the concessions corporations to labor unions during the war. With the help of the PR firm Hill & Knowlton, NAM used procedural battles to bog down the conference while depicting labor negotiators as greedy and unpatriotic. At the end of the conference both sides blamed one another, with the public siding with management. Working with Southern Democrats, Taft dismantled the Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC) in 1945, which had provided workplace protections for African Americans in defense jobs during the war, because he argued it impugned the economic and religious freedom of business owners. It was a major flip-flop for the GOP, which had supported the FEPC in its 1944 party platform. Unions responded to these defeats by launching widespread strikes in 1946 and 1947, which sparked public outrage and played directly into conservative’s hands. After failing to get a NAM-backed amendment to the National Labor Relations Act passed in 1946, Taft succeeded in 1947 with a sweeping bill, the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947, which severely limited labor’s ability to mobilize as a political force.

References:


Taft’s band of conservatives successfully stalled Truman’s Reconversion plans and significantly weakened labor’s ability to support the Democratic Party.

Amidst the onslaught from the right, Truman also faced rebellion from the left within his own party. Liberal Democrats had long viewed Secretary of Commerce Henry A. Wallace as their champion because of his strong views on economic support for farmers, workers, and African Americans. Wallace wanted Truman to go further and fight harder for farm aid, universal health care, civil rights, and public works programs. Democratic leaders and young upstarts alike viewed Wallace as the rightful heir to FDR, a fact that Hubert H. Humphrey, the Liberal mayor of Minneapolis emphasized in a letter he wrote to Wallace on the day FDR died. Humphrey made it clear “that Minnesota is expecting you to be our Presidential candidate in 1948.”132 African Americans and civil rights organizations strongly lobbied Truman to support racial justice, which was of course anathema to the Southern wing of the Democratic Party. During the war African Americans, inspired in part by the Atlantic Charter, strove for what became known as a “double victory” against fascism abroad and racism at home. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Council on African Affairs (CAA), led by W.E.B. DuBois and Paul Robeson, worked as a united front to push the Truman administration to include racial equality in the UN Charter and appealed to Eleanor Roosevelt to denounce racism in the planned UN Declaration of Human Rights. The charter adopted in 1945 did nothing to change the internal politics of the United States. In fact, by explicitly blocking the United Nations from condemning internal affairs of member states, the UN Charter removed a critical international

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pathway for African Americans to secure full rights. Other racial justice activists rejected polite politics all together. The Congress on Racial Equality (CORE) advocated Mahatma Gandhi’s *Satyagraha*, or non-violent form of protest, which called for direct action to expose injustice and confront injustice. Led by pacifists Homer Jack, George Houser, James Farmer, Bernice King, and Bayard Rustin, CORE decided to challenge the 1946 Supreme Court Decision in *Morgan v. Commonwealth*, which held that segregation on interstate bus travel was unconstitutional. CORE’s 1947 “Journey of Reconciliation” sent an interracial group of 16 activists, including Houser, Jack, and Rustin, on a bus trip across the South where several CORE members were arrested. The protest angered white Liberal Democrats and the NAACP alike, who both thought it was too risky and would inflame racial tensions.

Tensions with Russia eventually led to a falling out between Truman and the Left, which in turn sidelined DuBois, Robeson, Wallace and other leaders that opposed confrontation with the Soviet Union. Angered over the UN Charter, the FEPC fight, and Truman’s growing antagonism toward the Soviet Union, W.E.B. DuBois wanted to have the United Nations General Assembly take action against Jim Crow. His plan was to issue a report to the UN, titled *An Appeal to the World*, which exposed the worst aspects of racism in America. When NAACP leadership balked, DuBois resigned, opening up an avenue for the organization to continue anticolonial and

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antiracism activism in the United States as a more moderate organization. Widespread suspicions about Robeson’s communist sympathies undercut his utility as a public spokesman for racial justice amidst growing anticommunism in America. The CAA was crippled into the 1950s.135 As a member of the president’s cabinet, Henry Wallace had the highest profile of those that fell out with Truman over the Cold War. Wallace had growing concerns about Truman’s “get tough” policy with Russia, especially the creation of the Atomic Energy Commission which signaled the United States would not share nuclear power with the Soviets. After a speech at Madison Square Garden in September 1946 during which he criticized the administration’s Russia policies and called for a cooling of tensions, Truman asked for Wallace’s resignation. Free from the Truman administration, Wallace attempted to rally the American left against the Cold War and in support of an expanded social safety net, which culminated in 1948 with the creation of the Progressive Party with Wallace as its presidential nominee.136

The heart of Truman’s Cold War strategy was the concept of containment, first put forward by George Kennan, the architect of the first Azores agreement. While serving as the Chargé d’affaires in Moscow in 1946, Kennan wrote to Washington what became known as “the Long

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Telegram,” which proposed a concerted effort to contain Soviet expansion. Kennan believed that the Soviet Union would eventually collapse if prevented from securing an industrial base outside of Eastern Europe. Kennan argued that it was critical to defend against the Soviet Union’s planned “violent efforts…to weaken power and influence of Western Powers [on] colonial backward, or dependent people.” Kennan worried that “all persons with grievances, whether economic or racial, will be urged to seek redress…in defiant violent struggle for [the] destruction of other elements of society.” The Cold War would become “black against white,” which would turn Western public opinion against colonialism and force Europe to “weaken colonial policies,” which in Kennan’s eyes would inevitably lead to “Soviet dominated puppet political machines…when independence [was] achieved.” Kennan echoed the worries in the State Department that military confrontation without economic support would not be enough to successfully contain communism. He proposed that the United States “put forward for other nations a much more positive and constructive picture of [the] sort of world we would like to see than we have put forward in the past.”137 Kennan seemed to be suggesting a new, well publicized program for development that could rally nations to support an American-led containment strategy against Russia.

The “Truman Doctrine” institutionalized containment, indeed, it reflected the same priorities Truman had been pursuing since taking office in 1945. Truman launched his namesake doctrine in early 1947 in an address pushing aid to Greece and Turkey. He described Communists in the Eastern Mediterranean as “a militant minority,” that preyed upon “human want and misery…to create political chaos.” The way to meet the communist challenge was to confront both the military threat and economic conditions, to stamp out “misery and want,” which Truman called “the seeds of totalitarian regimes.” Truman said it was America’s unique purpose to “assist free

137 The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Kennan) to the Secretary of State, Secret, “511. Answer to Dept’s 284,” Moscow, 2/22/1946, 861.00/2-2246: Telegram, FRUS, 1946, Eastern Europe, The Soviet Union, Volume VI, Document 475.
peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way.” If America failed to do so, Truman warned, instability in Europe would eventually become an unavoidable threat to American national security.  

By presenting communism as a creation of poverty, Truman presented a compelling reason for conservative anti-communists to support foreign aid and economic stimulus programs. For liberals like Hubert Humphrey, the Truman Doctrine provided a vehicle to promote a return to New Deal type programs in support of farmers, workers, and industry. Congress passed the aid bill for Greece and Turkey, which signaled the beginning of America’s new Cold War internationalist liberalism.

Truman succeeded in pushing through a series of Cold War programs that had far reaching consequences for Portugal, Congo, and Angola. The 1947 National Security Act modernized the American military while emphasizing air power and covert capabilities. The Act created the Air Force as its own well-funded military branch, the administration easily won congressional approval for a massive fleet overhaul. In 1948 the Air Force rolled out the B-50 Superfortress as well as the Military Air Transport Services (MATS) to expand the ability of American air power to serve as a land bridge for the Army. The creation of the United States Air Force as its own military branch increased the importance of America’s overseas air bases, one of the most strategic being the Azores.

The Act also created the Central Intelligence Agency, the National Security Council, and the position of the National Security Adviser, all of which expanded the power of the

138 Harry S. Truman, “Special Message to the Congress on Greece and Turkey: The Truman Doctrine,” 3/12/1947, UCSB.
executive to influence foreign policy.\textsuperscript{141} The most impressive victory for Truman was the passage of the European Recovery Program (ERP) in 1948, an even bigger foreign aid program that directly invested American funds into Portugal, Congo, and Angola.

The European Recovery Program, or Marshall Plan as it is more commonly called, provided targeted economic stimulus for the European economy, including “dependent areas under its administration.”\textsuperscript{142} Truman and Secretary of State George C. Marshall designed the program to provide immediate emergency grants, loans for development projects, and central planning to increase the productivity and interconnectivity of the European economy. A major concern of the administration was what the Brookings Institute called the “dollar gap,” or the deficit between what Europe spent in dollars for American goods and services against what Europe gained in dollars from exports, direct foreign investment, and tourism. The Brookings Institute had proposed as early as 1944 that the United States government needed to provide loans and grants in dollars to Europe, as well as to encourage Americans to “go traveling abroad, spending our dollars along the way, as we please.”\textsuperscript{143} Another way Marshall Planners wanted to close the dollar gap was by integrating the European economy. If European countries could purchase essential goods and services form some other European country, it would slow the flow of dollars out of the continent faster than the European economy could earn them from exports. ERP loans targeted infrastructure projects that improved the tourism, productivity, and logistics capabilities of multiple countries.\textsuperscript{144} Whereas ERP intended to integrate European economies, is also sought to break the mercantilist

\textsuperscript{142} Public Law 472, Foreign Assistance Act of 1948, 80\textsuperscript{th} Congress, 2\textsuperscript{nd} Session, Chapter 169, 4/3/1948.
\textsuperscript{143} J. Parker Van Zandt, Civil Aviation and Peace, vol. II, America Faces the Air Age (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1944), 65-68
and protectionist binds between Europe and its African colonies. Marshall Planners viewed African raw materials as a significant potential source of dollar earnings for European empires which traditionally had used their colonial exports as a way to fuel their own economy, to subsidize their merchant marine, and to expand the circulation of their own currencies. Truman hoped that countries like Britain and France would open up their colonial economies to American investment and allow American factories to import African goods without the added markup created by European middlemen.\footnote{The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) was particularly frustrated by the United Kingdom’s insistence on using Britain’s African colonies as a way to strengthen the Sterling Zone rather than increase dollar earnings. See: Antonin Basch and Alexander Stevenson, “Balance of Payments of the United Kingdom,” (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Economic Department: 1948).} Pitched as a humanitarian and anti-communist program, the ERP was also an economic stimulus package for the American economy.\footnote{See: Michael J. Hogan, The Marshall Plan: America, Britain and the Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1947-1952 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Hogan, A Cross of Iron; On the Marshall Plan and tourism, see: Christopher Endy, Cold War Holidays: American Tourism in France (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004).}

The Marshall Plan passed in 1948 with bipartisan support that overcame staunch opposition from the right and the left. The Truman administration’s bill easily won the support of internationalist anti-communists like Massachusetts Representative John F. Kennedy and recent converts like California’s Representative Richard M. Nixon. As an outspoken critic of the Soviet Union and Henry Wallace alike, Kennedy quickly embraced the ERP after Secretary of State George Marshall announced the program at Harvard, the heart of Kennedy’s congressional district.\footnote{In his first run for Congress, JFK strongly criticized Henry Wallace after Wallace’s Madison Square Garden Speech. See: John F. Kennedy, “Russian Speech,” 10/21/1946, Foreign Policy Lynn, MA 10/21/46, Box 28, John F. Kennedy Speeches and Notes, David F. Powers PP, JFKL. On Kennedy’s support for the European Recovery Plan, see: “John F. Kennedy Record,” Kennedy: Foreign Policy, Box 98, Campaign Files, Pre-Presidential Files, Papers of President Kennedy, JFKL.} By 1948, Nixon had already established himself as a notorious red baiter but had little interest in foreign affairs. He became a believer in the European Recovery Plan after participating
in a fact-finding mission to Europe organized by Massachusetts congressman Christian Herter.\textsuperscript{148} Internationalist Republicans Arthur Vandenburg and Karl Mundt helped ease passage in the Senate. Opposing the bill was Robert Taft, who joined forces with former president Herbert Hoover to lead the conservative coalition in a fight against the Marshall Plan. Conservatives complained of the high cost and the central planning elements of the ERP, and argued that the plan would only create temporary, unsustainable growth. Left-wing critics, led by former Vice President Henry Wallace, thought the plan was the work of big business designed to create new monopolies throughout the world. Wallace also thought the ERP would destabilize global affairs by threatening Russia, which would challenge world peace.\textsuperscript{149}

More important than the dollars allocated to Europe was the creation of the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA), which provided American central planning, public relations assistance, and covert operations to ERP member nations. Truman tapped Studebaker Corporation President Paul G. Hoffman to lead the Economic Cooperation Administration, along with W. Averell Harriman as the ECA’s special representative in Europe. Harriman’s office in Paris became the de facto United States Embassy to Europe, teeming with European technocrats, statesmen, labor leaders, and businessmen. The American Federation of Labor (AFL) worked closely with Harriman through its Free Trade Union Committee (FTUC) led by Jay Lovestone in the United States and Irving Brown stationed in Europe. Both committed anticommunists, Lovestone and Brown believed in “free” unions, or, unions free to disagree with party or state policies. Harriman provided funds to Brown from the Marshall Plan to organize anti-communist

\textsuperscript{149} Hogan, \textit{The Marshall Plan}, 94–95.
European labor unions. Michael Hogan argues that Truman, Hoffman, and Harriman “hoped to build a transnational alliance behind the ERP, equip participating countries with American production skills, fashion American patterns of labor-management teamwork, and, in these and other ways, maximize the chances for economic integration and social peace on the Continent.” Prosperity in Western Europe would secure the continent from communism, in turn providing security and prosperity for Americans.

Portugal’s invitation to join the Marshall Plan came amidst another round of Azores negotiations with a December 1947 deadline. After the passage of the National Security Act of 1947, the newly created National Security Council (NSC) and the JCS regularly reaffirmed the importance of the Azores to Truman and the State Department. High turnover amidst the prolonged renegotiations, along with the lasting effect of Salazar’s rejection of the Russell proposal, bogged down the talks. U.S. Ambassador Herman Baruch transferred to the Netherlands, and his replacement, John C. Wiley, did not arrive until June. There was a major shakeup in the MNE during 1947, as Salazar finally stepped down from his role as Foreign Minister, handing the reigns to José Caeiro da Mata. In Washington, longtime Portuguese Ambassador to the United States João António de Bianchi also stepped down from his post. Replacing him was Salazar confidant Pedro Teotónio Pereira, a symbol of the importance Salazar placed on Luso-American


152 Memorandum by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Top Secret, “Views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on Over-All Examination of United States Requirements for Military Bases and Base Rights,” Washington, 8/2/1948, Enclosure, FRUS, 1948, General, the United Nations, Volume I, Part 2, Document 34.
relations. The talks were fraught, but they eventually ended on very amicable terms on a three-year agreement passed in early 1948. At the same time, Portugal initially refused Marshall Plan aid, worried that it might look bad to the American people to take the support even though Portugal had fared well during the war. But then in 1949 it accepted ERP funds, which eventually paid for hydroelectric projects in Portugal as well as rial improvements in Mozambique.

Portugal received a huge boost from the Berlin Airlift and the ensuing American propaganda campaign. The Azores were used as an important transatlantic resupply route during the Airlift, known as “Operation Vittles,” that kept the city of Berlin stocked in 1948-1949. The Truman Administration dispatched skilled propagandists to Europe to promote the airlift and to depict it as an epic confrontation between Russia and the United States. The ringleaders of the operation were Tom Hutton and Kenneth T. Downs.

Tom Hutton had been the PR man for Claire Chennault’s “Flying Tigers,” the catchy marketing name for the American Volunteer Group (AVG) that flew Curtiss P-40s with shark teeth and eyes in support of the Chinese Nationalist forces. PR was crucial to the central mission of the tigers, which was not only to fight Japanese planes in the sky but also to convince Americans to expand support for the KMT and for the KMT to embrace Americans. PR made the Tigers and the Chinese air force out to be much larger and effective than they really were. Andy Rooney remarked in his memoirs about Hutton that “I could see that no good deed by any of the Flying Tigers ever went unnoted in the press releases. He was good, and he certainly had a lot to do with the Flying Tigers’ widespread and well-deserved reputation.”

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Kenneth T. Downs and had direct experience in Berlin during the war working for the OSS. He was an award-winning journalist before becoming a crack intelligence officer during the war, eventually commanding all Secret Intelligence Branch units in Europe after the Normandy Invasion. After the war he worked in the Nuremberg Trials to uncover film evidence of German atrocities. He knew practically everyone in Berlin and knew how to tell a good war story.157

Together, Hutton and Downs made the Berlin Airlift into an epic story pitting hero against villain. American technological superiority, along with American resolve, had won the day. They focused on humanizing the story by lifting up certain individuals like the military governor of Berlin, Lucious Clay, and the local military commander, Frank Howley. American propaganda efforts made the blockade out to be an attack on the Marshall Plan itself and the liberty of Berliners. Downs made sure journalists had easy access to Clay and Howley, which in turn introduced them to the American public. Hutton used his experience publicizing the Flying Tigers during the war to make the airlift, a relatively unexciting exercise in military logistics, into a daring adventure. To prevent the airlift from becoming a bore as it dragged on into the fall of 1948, Hutton and Downs started to seed the press with stories of the impending winter, and how it would imperil the operation. After the winter had passed, they started planning stunts like the “Easter Parade” in April 1949 that tried to set a one-day cargo delivery record.158 American public relations efforts during the airlift secured public support for President Harry Truman and his Cold War policies. It

even made Lucious Clay and Frank Howley into minor celebrities with lucrative book contracts, which only amplified American propaganda efforts.\footnote{Lucius D. Clay, \textit{Decision In Germany} (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc, 1950); Frank Howley, \textit{Berlin Command} (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1950).}

The Berlin Airlift won the American public’s support for an aggressive, internationalist Cold War that included lasting overseas commitments to countries like Portugal. Truman easily won support for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and military aid to its members. Portugal was invited to join the alliance because of the Azores, which had been featured so prominently in the Hutton and Downs propaganda. NATO membership eventually led to a veritable flood of American military aid to Portugal, including millions of dollars through the Defense Assistance Act and the Mutual Security Act.\footnote{On the founding of NATO, see: Timothy Andrews Sayle, \textit{Enduring Alliance: A History of NATO and the Postwar Global Order} (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2019); Francis H. Heller and John R. Gillingham, eds., \textit{NATO: The Founding of the Atlantic Alliance and the Integration of Europe} (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1992); Chester J. Pach, \textit{Arming the Free World: The Origins of the United States Military Assistance Program, 1945-1950} (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991); On Portuguese aid obtained through NATO and various American programs, see: S. J. Bosgra and Chr. van Krimpen, \textit{Portugal and NATO} (Angola Comité, 1972).}

CONCLUSION

The United States, through economic and strategic necessity, became a major player in Southern Africa during and after the Second World War. Primarily, it was strategic concerns, such as securing an Azores airbase, procuring radioactive material for the atomic bomb, and fighting common enemies, which brought America into alliances with the white powers of Southern Africa. Once established, these partnerships blossomed. Although the economic impact for the United States was minimal, commercial ties to its allies made African colonies important. All the while western imperialism eroded African social structures and encouraged African elites to organize against their imperial masters.
II. COLD WAR PUBLIC RELATIONS

The United States adopted public relations as a central component of containment and pushed its allies to do the same. However, it was American public opinion, not the opinions of those beyond the Iron Curtain, that mattered most to Portugal and to Angolan nationalists. In the 1950s, both the New State regime and Holden Roberto’s Angolan nationalists prepared for a long media struggle to convince the American people to support their cause. As Portugal turned to Madison Avenue for professional public relations support, Roberto forged his own network of influencers and allies through sports, missionaries, and international travel. By the end of the decade, both Roberto and Portuguese dictator António de Oliveira Salazar viewed America as the vital battleground to secure the future of Angola. At the same time, American worries about Sputnik and the expansion of Cold War tensions into newly independent African states led to new American investments in Southern Africa.161

PORTUGAL’S MAD MEN

After World War II, the Portuguese Estado Novo, or “New State” regime of António de Oliveira Salazar seemed not to be a likely client for Madison Avenue PR firms after WW2. First, the regime was famously cheap, focused above all on balanced budgets.162 Spending money for foreign firms to do anything for the regime would have been a stretch, but PR was a particularly hard sell because Salazar already had a capable and very active propaganda department, the


Secretariado Nacional de Informação (or SNI). In the 1930s SNI relied extensively on tourism promotion for propaganda purposes, and ran extremely successful campaigns abroad, particularly in the United Kingdom, selling the Costa del Sol on the Tejo (or Tagus on this side of the channel) as “a cosmopolitan atmosphere of opulence and sophistication,” counter to Portugal’s reputation as the poorest country in Western Europe.163

Portugal’s main interest in the United States before the war was to protect and serve large Portuguese-American communities in New England, Hawaii, and California which they viewed as Portuguese “colonies.” Meeting those needs were the Foreign Ministry’s consulates in Boston, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. Portuguese-Americans for years suffered from discrimination by White Anglo-Saxon Protestant Americans, whose anti-Catholic, anti-Immigrant politics often targeted Portuguese-Americans. A good example of this was a 1920 soccer match in Boston between the “Lusitarian Club” and an Irish team that turned into a brawl after a “blonde woman” in attendance shouted at the Portuguese “You goddamn Negroes.”164 Portuguese diplomats viewed it as their responsibility to protect the Portuguese “colonies” in the United States from such behavior, to demand equal treatment before the law, and to foster community by bankrolling festivals and recruiting nuns and priests from the home country to serve in the states.

Salazar became much more concerned with American public opinion after making the decision to join NATO and take Marshall Plan aid. These opportunities were available to Portugal only because the United States built and operated an air base in the Portuguese controlled Azores islands, which was considered one of the most strategic American bases in the world. Because of

this, Salazar and the Foreign Ministry understood that their entire foreign policy, which was designed to bolster the regime via international legitimacy, military, and economic aid, rested on the whims of the Pentagon and the American voters. The Pentagon could easily downgrade the importance of the Azores by changing military doctrines, investing in long range jet aircraft, increasing the size and capacities of aircraft carriers, or worst of all from Lisbon’s perspective, add medium and long-range ballistic missiles for the American nuclear arsenal. But what frightened them the most was the democratic process, which could produce a series of policies devastating to Portugal. The regime knew from the “Portuguese colonies” in the United States that large numbers of Americans were isolationist, were not fans of Portugal’s record of neutrality in World War II or of the dictatorship, did not support European imperialism, or simply did not like Catholics. The figure who most represented these fears to them was Ohio Senator Robert A. Taft, “Mr. Republican,” who was anti-NATO, anti-Marshall Plan, anti-immigration.

Ready to provide their services to a newly interested Portugal were Madison Avenue PR firms many of whom had been extremely active for other Marshall Plan countries. The biggest player was probably the firm of Cleary, Gottlieb, Steen, and Ball, whose PR agent George Ball worked on behalf of the French government in all sorts of business and political matters during the 1950s. Early on, Marshall Plan countries used their American aid to pay New York PR firms with funds pegged for tourism advertising. Congress recognized the adverse public reaction if it were discovered that European countries ran propaganda in America funded by the US government and quickly made the practice illegal—a change that did not lead to any public relations contract cancellations. The Portuguese Embassy in the United States received a ridiculous number of
unsolicited offers from PR firms, which were all initially rejected in large part because of SNI’s objections.165

“Mad Men” were successful because they used their political contacts and understood how to manipulate Americans using shareable media. The goal was to create content that appeared to originate from genuine American media sources that did not reveal their propagandistic origins. Once released into American society, a news story or pamphlet would spread virally, eventually making its way into television news reports, sermons, and political speeches.

In 1950, Portugal’s first PR firm, George Peabody & Associates, won the account largely because it promoted shared media. Because most Americans knew little about Portugal and its colonies, the key to this strategy was to cast Portugal in the right light to the right audience. They chose American women as their main target because Madison Avenue companies were extremely confident in their ability to sell to the demographic. Tourism promotion was the first approach, with an emphasis on Portugal’s sunny climate, romantic castles, and cheap provisions. Then as now, women made up the majority of individual travelers to Europe. Best to focus on individuals already thinking about Europe and wanting to know more. But the campaigns became increasingly more sophisticated.166

Their most successful use of the strategy was the release of the song “April in Portugal” in 1953. “April in Portugal” was a cover of the song “Coimbra” by Amália Rodrigues, the great Portuguese Fadista, or Fado singer. Amália owed her career in large part to the mentoring and

financial support of Ricardo Espírito Santo, the playboy head of the Banco Espírito Santo group, who was Salazar’s closest confidant.\textsuperscript{167} Peabody & Associates obtained Amália a recording contract with Columbia Records in 1952, and in 1953 the firm got “Coimbra,” released as “April in Portugal” in the United States; it was subsequently played by numerous bands, including Les Baxter, Vic Damone, and Louis Armstrong.\textsuperscript{168} The song became a smash hit and was eventually performed by hundreds of others. The key to its success was that Peabody made the song widely available, not only to recording artists, but also as sheet music for local bands in an era when all large community gatherings featured live music. The words were completely changed from the original for the English, selling Portugal as an old, romantic place:

I found my April dream in Portugal with you
When we discovered romance, like we never knew.
My head was in the clouds, My heart went crazy too,
And madly I said: "I love you."\textsuperscript{169}

Louis Armstrong went on to sing the song live countless times in his career—it was both a crowd pleaser and one of Satchmo’s personal favorites.

Despite all the work George Peabody & Associates spent promoting metropolitan Portuguese businesses, it was the coffee boom in Northern Angola that most closely tied the United States economically to the Portuguese Empire. Americans increasingly drank Robusta coffee from Northern Angola in cheap coffee blends and in instant coffee. Americans purchased roughly half of Angola’s coffee crop, which comprised seven percent of American coffee consumption, and nearly a quarter of all of Angola’s exports between 1945 and 1974. Indeed, after the war, America surpassed Portugal as Angola’s largest export market.\textsuperscript{170} The “post-war coffee boom” in Angola

\textsuperscript{167} Pedro Jorge Castro, \textit{Salazar e os Milionários} (Lisboa: Quetzal, 2009), 13–16.
\textsuperscript{169} Louis Armstrong, “April in Portugal” (Decca Records, 1953).
\textsuperscript{170} Minter, \textit{Portuguese Africa and the West}, 123.
created a frenzied land rush amongst Portuguese and German investors in the northern part of the colony. The coastal plain stretching north from Luanda to the border with the Belgian Congo filled with coffee plantations, all of which employed “forced labor and other abuses” in order to increase production.¹⁷¹ Corporal punishment was pervasive, and the housing and provisions for coffee workers was abysmal. The situation was so bad that the Belgian Congo became an attractive alternative to Angola. Despite the Congo’s reputation for depravity and abuse, Angolans moved in droves during the supposed boom years in search of better jobs and living conditions. By 1954, the UN estimated 500,000 Angolans out of six million had fled to live abroad.¹⁷²

These Angolan refugees were predominantly members of the Bakongo ethnic group of the coffee country. Congo had a lightly defended the border, and its close proximity to the coffee fields offered an escape for Angolan laborers. But more important, members of the Bakongo ethno-linguistic group had already populated both sides of the Belgian/Portuguese frontier. The European powers had arbitrarily divided the Kongo Empire in 1885, scattering the Bakongo people between the French Congo, The Belgian Congo, and Portuguese Angola. John Marcum observed that the Bakongo people “have always flowed back and forth across the superimposed colonial border with the Congo, continuing to constitute a single ethnic community with fellow Bakongo ruled by either the French or Belgians.” Kinshasa, or Leopoldville, was almost half Bakongo, as was Brazzaville across the Congo River. In Marcum’s research he found that in the 1950’s, “thousands of Angolan Bakongo emigrated to the Belgian Congo, drawn by the latter’s comparatively attractive educational and economic opportunities.” Because of this migration of peoples, a “significant portion of Kikongo-speaking people of the Lower Congo living” between Leopoldville and the

¹⁷² Bender, Angola Under the Portuguese, 142.
Atlantic were “émigrés, or children and grandchildren of émigrés,” from Northern Angola.\textsuperscript{173} One such émigré was Holden Roberto, the eventual leader of the FNLA.\textsuperscript{174}

**KINSHASA**

In 1949, Holden Roberto’s uncle, Manuel Barros Nekaka, called him back to Kinshasa to rejoin the family. Nekaka lined up a job for his nephew at the Nogueira Company, a prestigious Portuguese import/export business, and he wanted Roberto to join his soccer team in one of the lower levels of Kinshasa’s soccer league, *l’Association Royale Sportive Congolaise/the Royal Congolese Sports Association (ARSC).*\textsuperscript{175} It would be a step down for Roberto in many ways—back under the control of his uncle; a perceived demotion from *commis* to *clerc;* and a move away from the city that seemed to be at the center of *évolué* political development.

After a brief stint with his uncle’s team, Roberto caught the eye of the Daring Club, one of Kinshasa’s oldest, most storied soccer teams. According to a former player, Daring was the team for “clerks,” because “of the number of players and supporters belonging to the coterie of *Kinois* who spoke the French language correctly.”\textsuperscript{176} Roberto joined the team when it was only in its ninth season of competition, but it was already immensely popular with the city’s *évolués.*

Daring began as ‘Football Club Standard’ at *l’Institut Saint-Joseph* (Saint Joseph Institute), founded by the father of Congolese soccer, the Scheutist priest Raphaël de la Kethulle. Known as

\textsuperscript{173} Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution,* I:50.

\textsuperscript{174} The first invasion, in 1961, was by Roberto’s organization named the UPA, or the Union of Angola’s People. The GRAE (Angolan Revolutionary Government in Exile) replaced the UPA after Roberto formed an alliance with several nationalist groups in exile in the Belgian Congo. The FNLA (National Front for the Liberation of Angola) was the military wing of the GRAE. Sources use GRAE and FNLA interchangeably. This paper uses the term used at the time by American policy makers. Thus, in chapter two, it is the UPA, in chapter three, it is the GRAE, and in chapter four, it is the FNLA. Nearly all monographs, debate and discourse about the 1975 War of Independence refer to it as the FNLA, which is why it as such in the Introduction, Conclusion, and here.

\textsuperscript{175} Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution,* I:60–65.

“Tata Raphael,” Kethulle formed Standard, along with the teams Union and Renaissance, which developed intense rivalries as they played constantly against one another. After the players for F.C. Standard graduated, they became the Daring Club in 1940 and played as a “non-booted,” or barefoot team in the ARSC. Their playground rival Renaissance also made the transition to the ARSC at graduation, and during the war changed their name to the Victoria Club or “V.Club.” The two teams, born from the same Sheutist school, became bitter enemies that remain rivals to this day. As teams formed by Alumni of the Scheutist schools, Daring and V. Club were the center of attention for the most powerful social club in Kinshasa, the Association des Anciens Élèves des Pères de Scheut (ADAPES), for alumni from schools run by Sheutist Fathers.

The Daring and V. Club rivalry sprang from their shared origin but also their fierce competition on the pitch. “Les Daringmen” and the “Véclubiens” divided ADAPES fans based on personal preference and identity politics. V. Club played a style of soccer based on allowing individual stars room to improvise and use their skills and athleticism to overpower opponents. Daring defined themselves as a cohesive unit, committed to disciplined play, teamwork, and sportsmanship. Les Daringmen reflected the ethos of clercs and commis, who played within the Belgian system and earned rewards for their abilities to help “the team” in the office and on the pitch. From 1942-1948, these two teams with their contrasting styles each won three ARSC championships. During Roberto’s time with the team there were constant fears that their matches, which perenniially determined the ARSC championship, would be tarnished by rioting.

178 The club is now known as Imana Motemba Pembe, which former player Paul Bonga Bonga says was “Named by its supports, “Imana, matiti mabe,” which means herbs with magical properties,” but Imana was also “the name of fetish popular in the Congolese province of Bandundu where several players originated from.” Paul Bonga-Bonga, Le football et ma vie en “Rouche,” 48–50.
and fights. Their rivalry drove the popularity of the sport in Kinshasa, which “Tata Raphael” believed had outgrown the Queen Astrid Stadium, with a capacity of 25,000 spectators, and in 1948 he pushed for the colonial regime to build a 70,000 capacity stadium in Kinshasa, even bigger than the largest in Brussels.

The 1949 Daring team was universally regarded as one of the greatest, and for that Holden Roberto was often included in loving tributes to “the “glorious phalanx” of 1949.” Daring won the 1948 championship after it pilfered the best players from another club in the offseason, and team management had the same plan before the start of the 1949 campaign. Roberto had barely been on his uncle’s team when scouts from Daring decided to bring him up into the big leagues as part of their plan to “strengthen the ranks” for 1949. Daring fans knew straight from the “memorable match to start the 1949 season,” that it would be a good year for the “green-white.” That season the game against V. Club was so contentious that it ended in riots and the teams did not shake hands afterwards. Featuring players who would become Daring stalwarts for the next half dozen seasons, the team won the championship in 1949, Roberto’s first with the club. It was the beginning of a new era in Daring football that captured a wide public audience far beyond évolué high society. Roberto had become a celebrity overnight, with sometimes strong write ups in the local catholic paper, Le Courrier d’Afrique.

Holden Roberto was a fan favorite of the era, even if he was not necessarily one of the most consistent players on the team. Reporters often struggled with his name, which appeared at times

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in newspapers as “Halden,” “Haldane,” and “Haldana.” In a match that “fascinated thousands of spectators and was interesting from beginning to end,” Roberto received special recognition as “excellent,” even as his name alternated between Haladane and Haldane in the same article.\textsuperscript{185} In another match “the best man on the field was unquestionably Haldana of Daring, one of the most athletic players in Léo.”\textsuperscript{186} In a draw against the Dragons, a secondary rival to Daring, Roberto hit the equalizer in the second half “with a beautiful header that gave [the keeper] no chance.”\textsuperscript{187} However, Roberto never made it to selection games, the All-Star lineups of ARSC players against white teams, other regions, and eventually games with “Eurafricaine” selections of desegregated regional All-Stars. Daring Club teammates Ebumba and Balondo made nearly every selection, playing for Léopoldville (Kinshasa) against teams from other Congolese cities as well as foreign clubs from Brazzaville, Angola, and Rhodesia.\textsuperscript{188} Selection teams flew on chartered flights for their games and regularly appeared with top colonial administrators.

Upriver in Kisangani (Stanleyville), Patrice Lumumba became the undisputed leader of the \textit{évolués} there and the most mentioned person in \textit{La Voix du Congolais}. After returning to Kisangani from the postal academy, Lumumba became a rockstar in the local social scene. Even though he was not an alumnus of a Scheutist school, in 1951 he became the local president of ADAPES. In 1952, became vice president of the AES. He immediately jumped on the opportunity to apply for the \textit{Carte d’Immatriculation} (Registration Card) when it came out in 1952, which was an expansion of the rights conferred under the \textit{carte du merite}, or “social merit card” of 1948.\textsuperscript{189} Despite the limitations imposed on African politics, Lumumba found a way to position himself at

the top of every legal social circle. Through *La Voix du Congolais, évolués* throughout the country followed his rise.

The Korean war marked the beginning of Holden Roberto’s outreach to Americans in his quest to improve conditions in Angola. In 1950, while focusing on helping Daring Club repeat their 1949 championship and working for Nogueira, Roberto married his first wife, Susanne Milton. They had their first child of six, daughter Catherine, in 1951. Sometime in 1951 he went into Angola with his mother, where he witnessed the Portuguese forced labor system firsthand. He saw women compelled to work on the roads with “children on [their] backs” and old men viscously beaten for minor offenses. Roberto and his mother watched an older man forced to his knees and brutally kicked by the local Portuguese official, after which the man was forced “to run until he dropped, blood flowing from his mouth.” Roberto told historian John Marcum that it was at that point that “he resolved to fight the system.”

Holden Roberto turned to the United Nations and the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) for help and guidance on the situation in Angola. Through BMS missionaries he sent letters to UN Secretary General Trygve Lie and FOR President A.J. Muste. He received positive yet lukewarm responses from both. However, in response to the 1951 letter, FOR member Homer A. Jack came to Kinshasa and met with Roberto and his compatriots. Jack was staying at a mission house, and they met at a local hotel to avoid suspicion. Roberto remembered him to Marcum as a “man against racism in the U.S.,” and he in turn left a good impression on Jack, who was only in town for a few days before moving on to Angola. Marcum wrote in his notes that Roberto had for years

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190 Photocopy of Divorce Application, March 15, 1966, Director General MNE to the GNP of the MU, Lisbon, “Actividades Terroristas: Elementos da UPA,” 3, SR37, PT/MNE/AHD/MU/GNP.
192 “Material for Profile on: Holden Alvaro Roberto,” nd., Folder 1 – Holden Roberto undated, Box 92, JMP.
193 “Holden Alvaro Roberto,” nd., Folder 1 – Holden Roberto undated, Box 92, JMP.
been hoped to meet an American missionary of with such a commitment to racial justice.\footnote{“Holden Roberto (Jose Gilmore),” nd., Folder 1 – Holden Roberto undated, Box 92, JMP; Homer A. Jack, \textit{Homer’s Odyssey}, 259.} This was the beginning of Roberto’s most important connection to Washington, the American Committee on Africa (ACOA), which would be created in 1953 with Jack as its leader.

While Roberto focused on direct connections with international organizations, Kongo royalists in the Congolese city of Matadi sought to revive the power of the kingdom. Inspired by ABAKO’s attempt to build a movement based on the memory of the kingdom, Angolans Eduardo Pinnock and Francisco Borralho Lulendo planned a trip to their homeland to measure support for a restoration of the throne in São Salvador. “Around Christmas time” of 1951 they went into Angola “to play football” as a “ruse to contact with people.” When Roberto heard about their trip, he called them to Kinshasa to discuss the outcome. Although his uncle Manuel Barros Nekaka agreed with the Matadi group’s plan to restore the monarchy, Roberto defied his uncle and rejected a return to the past. Instead of organizing around the BaKongo identity, he advocated for adopting a form of Angolan nationalism based on the politics he had known in Kisangani. He “argued for a modern, supra-tribal nationalism,” which the group rejected at the time.\footnote{“Angola,” nd., Folder 1 – Holden Roberto undated, Box 92, JMP; “Material for Profile on: Holden Alvaro Roberto,” nd., Folder 1 – Holden Roberto undated, Box 92, JMP.} For the moment his belief in a modern Angola free of the monarchy sidelined him, but in the coming years it would put him in a strong position of leadership.

In 1954, Roberto retired from play and joined the management team of Daring’s celebrated club president, Cyrille Adoula. Adoula was seen by the press as “a man full of authority and realism,” that oversaw sweeping reforms of the Daring organization in 1954. Together, Adoula and Roberto adopted the toughest practice and training routine in the league with a strong focus on discipline and teamwork. They expanded the operation to include three other teams, including
the Union squad that competed against Daring on the highest levels. 196 This further raised Roberto’s stature amongst Congolese elite and burnished his image as a modern reformer. As the Daring Group treasurer, Roberto was in charge of finding work for all four of the group’s teams, as at that time ARSC players were not paid. He was the center of a vast patronage network of Congolese elite, white owned businesses, and the colonial state.

Notwithstanding his popularity and networking in the Belgian Congo, it was during a 1955 scandal in Bakongo politics along the Belgian Congo-Angolan frontier Roberto made the pivotal political and international connections of his career. When the Kongo king died without an heir, Angolan Bakongo leaders living in the Belgian Congo’s principal port, Matadi, led by Eduardo Pinock, demanded a modern, Protestant king. Portuguese authorities refused, and instead a Catholic was crowned. Pinock organized a protest across the border in Angola. Roberto and his uncle were against the plan from the start. Nevertheless, the ‘Matadi Group’ travelled to São Salvador and demanded the king abdicate in favor of a Protestant. The Portuguese humored the protesters and allowed them their demonstration. The king remained in the throne, and the Matadi Group returned to the Belgian Congo defeated. Once the protesters had left the colony, the Portuguese government officially sealed the border. The closure of the frontier led Necaca, Pinock, and Roberto to begin to talk about building international support for Bakongo nationalism. Roberto wrote again to the United Nations and asked for “the people of the Kongo Kingdom” to become “a Trusteeship of the United States of America.” Ignored by the UN, Roberto turned to the American consulate in Leopoldville to further press the issue. 197

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197 Marcum, The Angolan Revolution, I:56–62 Belgian and Portuguese authorities had previously allowed freedom of movement across the border for cultural purposes.
Roberto met with the staff of the American consulate in Leopoldville in late 1955 which led to a twenty-year relationship between the U.S. and the Angolan nationalist. Holden made such an impression on the consulate staff that Consul General Robert McGregor wrote a critical memorandum to his superiors questioning U.S. policy in Africa. McGregor was “sympathetic and attentive” during his meeting with Roberto but was frustrated that he knew that America’s “relationships with the Portuguese in Europe preclude…doing anything.” He wanted Washington to “devise a propaganda campaign that would effectively destroy the myth that the Soviet is the champion of democracy and freedom.” He pointed out that American policy makers were more than willing to “tolerate or overlook conditions” in Angola, while chastising the Soviets for similar behavior in the Eastern Bloc. He noted, “the United States, being tied to the Metropolitan powers, will in ten years be devoid of a policy that will appeal to an emerging and awakened indigenous population in Africa.” McGregor complained that American support for colonial regimes was “in effect driving these well-meaning and sincere Africans towards the Communists,” because the Soviet Union would actually “raise the cry and at least point the finger at injustice.” What he wanted was for Washington to “stand for freedom from all forms of oppression, for self-government, and for independence based upon self-determination,” regardless of whether or not the State Department believed a people were ready for independence.198

Perhaps in a classic case of diplomats in the field driving foreign policy, Roberto left the U.S. Consulate with cash from the CIA station and the promise of more payments in the future.199

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This included, but was not limited to, direct monthly payments amounting to $6,000 a year in 1955 dollars. The money probably came from the consulate’s budget for paying African informants to track potential sources of instability in the Belgian Congo.

Following this breakthrough in 1955, Roberto’s political activities accelerated. In 1956, he secretly visited northern Angola to network with local Bakongo leaders and establish relations with non-Bakongo tribesmen in the area that would become the main combat zone of the War of Independence. He also quit his job to take a low-profile position with an insurance company. Under the leadership of Roberto, Necaca, and Pinock, the Matadi and Leopold communities formed an official organization, the União das Populações de Norte Angola (UPNA), whose stated purpose was the independence of the old Kongo Kingdom from Portuguese rule. In the summer of 1956, the UPNA’s leaders wrote letters directly to State Department officials to seek advice in identifying and contacting international supporters.

TRIPLE SHOCKS

In 1957, three seemingly unrelated events set off sustained movements that came to define the Cold War in Africa: the independence of Ghana portended the decolonization of Africa, the integration of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas began a new stage in the struggle for racial equality in the United States, and the Soviet Union’s Sputnik I launched the space race. These disruptive developments highlighted American shortcomings and underscored the Soviet

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201 Borstelmann, Apartheid’s Reluctant Uncle, 182.

Union’s scientific prowess and ideological opposition to racism and imperialism. The rest of President Dwight D. Eisenhower’s term in office would focus on responding to the escalation of the Cold War beyond a struggle for military supremacy into a global competition for technological and moral superiority.²⁰³

The Eisenhower administration knew it had to respond but initially did not know how. Ike and his PR men had failed to anticipate the global psychological impact on American prestige of the “triple shocks” of 1957. They had purposefully relied upon psychological and covert strategies to limit the size and cost of the federal government. Now Ike needed to take decisive, costly action to first catch up to the Soviets, and only after attempt to surmount their technological and racial justice superiority.²⁰⁴

Eisenhower decided to respond to Ghanaian independence with a symbolic gesture. He tapped Vice President Richard Nixon to head up the American delegation to Ghana’s independence ceremonies as a symbol of the importance the United States placed on celebrating independence in Africa. It was designed as a public relations mission and nothing more. Nixon had shown no previous interest in Africa, but he had done a commendable job serving as a goodwill ambassador during his 1953 tour of the Middle East and Asia.²⁰⁵

Nixon was at first apprehensive about taking on an African diplomatic junket but quickly embraced the trip. Over lunch on February 2, 1957, he told Secretary of State John Foster Dulles

²⁰⁵ Correspondence, President Dwight D. Eisenhower to Vice President Richard M. Nixon, 1/29/1957, in Richard Nixon Pre-Presidential Materials (Laguna Niguel), Series III, Subseries E: 1957 Africa Trip, Series 351, Trip File, Box 1 of 2, Africa Trip – 1957 Administration, RNL; Elliott L. Watson, “South Asia and the Cold War: Vice President Nixon’s Forgotten Trip to Ceylon,” South Asian History and Culture 2, no. 1 (December 10, 2010): 37–54.
that he had heard “gossip that he himself promoted these missions and they did not serve a vital government purpose.” After reassurances from Dulles that he and the president viewed it as an important mission, Nixon accepted. Once committed to the project, Nixon decided to expand his assignment from a simple appearance in Ghana to a full-fledged Africa tour. With the help of his assistant for National Security Affairs, General Robert Cushman, Jr., Nixon added stops in Ethiopia, Liberia, Libya, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia, Uganda, and Italy.206 Nixon’s staff packed his schedule as if it were a presidential campaign, complete with parades and glad-handing the locals. The centerpieces of each stop, however, were hours-long meetings with local leaders. Nixon filled legal pads with notes on the conversations, which focused primarily on aid issues and the regional threat posed by the war in Algeria and Egypt’s Gamal Abdel Nasser.207

These notes were the basis of his twin reports, one public and one secret, to Ike on the state of affairs on the continent. The public report stressed the need to create a Bureau of African Affairs in the State Department and to expand the American diplomatic presence on the continent, along with a corresponding increase in American developmental dollars for the region.208 The secret report called for moving quickly to consolidate relations with North Africa, to contain Algeria and Egypt, as well as a call to “avoid any identification with repressive features of French policies in Algeria.” He also reported to Eisenhower that Kwame Nkrumah did not want the United States “to


207 Africa Notes, undated, in Richard Nixon Pre-Presidential Materials (Laguna Niguel), Series III, Subseries E: 1957 Africa Trip, Series 351, Trip File, Box 1 of 2, Unmarked Folder, RNL.

208 Report, The Vice President’s Report to the President on Trip to Africa, February 28-March 21, 1957, 4/7/1957, in Richard Nixon Pre-Presidential Materials (Laguna Niguel), Series III, Subseries E: 1957 Africa Trip, Series 351, Trip File, Box 1 of 2, Unmarked Folder, RNL.
be represented in Ghana on a racial basis,” rather, that he wanted “an experienced officer capable of giving them the best possible advice during the difficult period ahead.”

The results of Nixon’s Africa tour were mixed. Nixon felt mostly ignored in cabinet meetings after the trip, as his pleas for increased foreign aid toward newly independent countries fell on deaf ears. Eisenhower was more interested in controlling the budget than meeting the challenge of the Third World. Frustrated, Nixon passed a note in a cabinet meeting that said, “free world investment…in Asia & Africa should at least triple in the next 10 years if we are to hold our own.”

The trip successfully raised Nixon’s stature as a global statesman committed to the cause of racial justice. Liberal-minded Americans interested in racial justice began contacting his office. Democratic Representative Charles Diggs of Michigan, a staunch champion of African independence, began his lifelong correspondence with Nixon in 1957. George M. Houser of the American Committee on Africa also frequently wrote to the Vice President, offering unsolicited advice on how to improve U.S.-Africa relations. Nixon had also drawn attention from white supremacists. He received in the mail a copy of the *White American News Service* out of St Louis, Missouri, which wondered “Can it be that the Gold Coast’s Hottentots have more racial self-respect than Richard Nixon?”

During the Little Rock Crisis, Eisenhower’s slow response ended up angering all sides. As Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus’ stand against desegregation became an international television

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209 Report, Report to the President on the Vice President’s Visit to Africa (February 28-March 21): Detailed Conclusions and Recommendations, 1957, undated, in Richard Nixon Pre-Presidential Materials (Laguna Niguel), Series III, Subseries E: 1957 Africa Trip, Series 351, Trip File, Box 1 of 2, Unmarked Folder, RNL.


211 Correspondence, George M. Houser to Vice-President Richard M. Nixon, 7/10/1959, in Richard Nixon Pre-Presidential Materials (Laguna Niguel), Series I, Series 320, Box 357, Houser, George M., RNL.

event, more and more Americans called for Ike to intervene. His inaction and delay angered African Americans and pro-Civil Rights liberals. Once he did send in the 101st Airborne to escort black students into Little Rock’s Central High School, Eisenhower angered white Southerners and small government conservatives alike. To them the military presence in Arkansas was an unwanted federal intrusion into local politics and recalled the days of Reconstruction and the military occupation of the South.213

Little Rock was a propaganda disaster for the United States and a huge victory for the Soviet Union. It stood as a reminder to the world that freedom in the United States depended on the color of one’s skin. Jim Crow in the South meant that the leader of the free world was an unequal society, as opposed to the allegedly color-blind Soviet Union.214 It was only surpassed as a propaganda coup by the Soviet Union’s launch of the first man-made satellite, Sputnik I, on October 4, 1957.

The United States lagged significantly behind the Soviet Union in rocket technology, with a few disjointed programs run by different agencies. None of the rocket programs could match the heavy lift capabilities of the Soviet program, or the Soviet ability to send large payloads into space. After many internal debates, and pressure from congressional Democrats led by Senator Lyndon B. Johnson, the Eisenhower administration created NASA in 1958 to consolidate America’s various space projects. Eisenhower preferred a civilian space agency, which he believed was a


propaganda asset in comparison to the Soviet Union’s “militarized” space program. The decision to make NASA a civilian operation meant abandoning test sites over the Pacific Ocean, and instead focusing on creating an Atlantic Missile Range based in Florida.215

NASA realized in early 1959 that significant testing of rockets on the Atlantic Missile Range required a significant investment in a “National Tracking System.” In order to properly observe and control satellites in orbit, NASA needed a network of three 85’ antennas, spread 120 degrees apart. Because NASA had just worked out an agreement with the Jet Propulsion Lab for access to the JPL’s Goldstone site, this “National Tracking System” required two international sites longitudinally 120 degrees away from California. Because NASA planned on utilizing Southern Hemisphere orbits to avoid flying over Soviet air space, that meant the ideal locations were in Australia and South Africa.216 JPL considered Spain but preferred South Africa because of the Eisenhower administration’s decision to launch rockets from Florida on a southern trajectory across the South Atlantic. American test rockets, satellites, and eventually manned space missions would follow the same trajectory, crossing South Africa as they climbed through the atmosphere.217 The JPL team also felt that, according to DSN historian William Corliss, South Africa “had a friendly government anxious to help with the station.”218 This system became known as the Deep Space Network. The South Africa site would be just outside of Johannesburg, easily

accessible for NASA administrators who could exploit South Africa’s sizable white scientific community.

Eisenhower was less concerned about the science of space and more worried about the costs. In a report titled *To Race or Not to Race*, the Operations Control Board debated whether it made sense to invest vast sums into a civilian space program. Their finding was that rockets for nuclear weapons could be developed relatively cheaply, and given American advantages in air power, could be done at a conservative pace. However, the OCB also pointed out that Sputnik was above all a propaganda victory for the Soviet Union that had to be countered. If America would have a civilian space program for propaganda purposes, it would also have to be done on the cheap. OCB decided to avoid making lofty promises to the America people, including the idea of a manned mission to the Moon. 219 NASA pitched the Deep Space Network to the Eisenhower administration as a “general purpose” system that was “easily adaptable for multiple uses, rather than equipment designed for a unique program.” The DSN was not a temporary program, or an expensive rocket that was consumed when tested. NASA knew the Eisenhower administration was cost-conscious, and by promising that each DSN station would “satisfy most of the NASA Research and Development tracking and data acquisition…for most of the decade,” the space administration won approval for its overseas expansion.220

In 1960 NASA and JPL began planning how to approach the South African government about the proposed DSN site near Johannesburg. The administrative hurdles were high given that the task would be a coordinated NASA-Department of Defense-State Department initiative. The Operations Control Board worried about the mission from a public relations perspective, in that

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219 “To Race or Not to Race? (A Discussion Paper),” 10/16/1959, Space [July-December 1959] (7), Box 15, WHO, Office of the Special Assistant for Science and Technology, DDEL.
220 “The Long Range Plan of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration,” 12/16/1959, Box 1, NASA: Documents Relating to the Space Program, DDEL, 47.
the team sent to South Africa to scout the location and negotiate with Pretoria needed to understand the rules and limitations imposed by Apartheid. The OCB gave detailed instructions “for the civilian contractor’s group envisaged and the possible political complications foreseen,” which still left lingering doubts on the Board about the efficacy of the plan.\textsuperscript{221} The scientists had made a compelling case for the South Africa location. However, the OCB remained worried about “political problems attendant on the use of South African locations.” After approving the mission to South Africa, the OCB asked State, the DOD, and NASA “to examine the possibility of locating the tracking stations on African sites outside of the Union of South Africa.”\textsuperscript{222} The trip was a huge success, however, and confirmed for NASA and JPL that they had picked the right location for DSN 51. The OCB approved; construction began in 1960 and finished in 1961.\textsuperscript{223}

To go along with NASA’s plan to match Soviet rocket capabilities, the Eisenhower administration also began planning civil defense in response to a possible Soviet intercontinental ballistic missile attack on the United States. In yet another administrative shuffle, Eisenhower merged the Office of Defense Mobilization with the Federal Civil Defense Administration to create the Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization (OCDM). To lead the new organization, Eisenhower chose his old war buddy, Leo Hoegh, who had just lost re-election for Governor of Iowa but had

\textsuperscript{221} OCB Activity Report, 6/27/1960, OCB 319.1 Activity Report (File #6), Box 10, WHO, NSC Staff, OCB Secretariat Series, DDEL.


helped Ike win the state. Because Eisenhower remained focused on balanced budgets, the OCDM needed a civil defense policy on the cheap.\textsuperscript{224}

Hoegh strategy was to use public relations to encourage homeowners to build bomb shelters in their basements or backyards. This strategy had the added benefit of becoming another domestic propaganda campaign to drum up support for the Cold War. It would also allow a continuation of ODM’s mission to create economic stimulus. Concrete manufacturers were already doing quite well with Eisenhower’s Interstate Highway System, and home shelter projects would further increase demand for concrete and building materials. As Americans stockpiled canned goods in their bomb shelters, grocers and food suppliers would profit as well. To run this critical Cold War public relations scheme, Hoegh brought in his old war buddy Kenneth Downs.\textsuperscript{225}

Downs was a natural choice to run Hoegh’s strategy. Like Eisenhower and Hoegh, the two men had served together during the war and remained close through veterans’ associations.\textsuperscript{226} Downs was also intimately familiar with how to move public opinion on the Cold War as an architect of America’s Berlin Airlift propaganda and a local coordinator for Radio Free Europe’s Freedom Bell campaign in Berlin. Downs left the U.S. High Commissioner in Germany (HICOG) at the end of 1950 and first applied for a position with Voice of America but turned it down to work for Henry Luce as Time Magazine’s Washington bureau chief. Downs became Luce’s point man in Washington, providing information from government sources on Sputnik, missiles, and nuclear weapons for Time, Life, and Fortune.\textsuperscript{227} He had contacts throughout the media landscape,

\textsuperscript{224} Leo A. Hoegh, 3/19/1976, OH #480, DDEL.
\textsuperscript{226} In fact, Leo Hoegh was the President of the National Timberwolves Association, and Ken Downs was the chief hagiographer of Terry “Terrible Terry” Allen, the disgraced former commander of the 104\textsuperscript{th} Infantry Division. See: Kenneth T. Downs, “Nothing Stopped the Timberwolves,” Saturday Evening Post, 8/17/1946. See also: Bruce, OSS Against the Reich, 198.
the diplomatic corps, and the intelligence services, and had proven in private and public service he knew how to tell a story and manipulate public opinion.

Ken Downs’ OCDM work targeted suburban moms and drove Cold War hysteria in the United States. Built off of earlier civil defense efforts like the film *Duck and Cover* by Walt Disney. Downs especially targeted women and stressed a maternal duty to protect children from nuclear attack. The plan was to get the public to fear the bomb so much that each suburban family would individually take on the cost of civil defense, all the while lining the pockets of American corporations. OCDM under Downs created “3 million award kits for...housewives whose families were encouraged to meet certain standards of civil defense home preparedness.” Downs had OCDM running three different weekly radio shows, ran radio and television ads—cartoons for the kids of course—and made sure OCDM press releases made their way into radio and TV news. OCDM blanketed the airwaves, plastered walls with posters, and built mock-ups of “tastefully decorated shelter(s)” in major American cities, all peddling fear of nuclear annihilation to encourage shelter construction. One OCDM report estimated that on top of agency articles sent to 11,000 newspapers, the American press wrote 20,000 stories in 1959 on fallout shelters, “an increase of more than 50 percent since the previous year.” Almost seven million Americans participated in OCDM exhibits, and Downs distributed almost 80 million publications in fiscal year 1960 alone. The United States government had fully committed to selling the Cold War to

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applied for the VOA job, he used then Director of Central Intelligence Roscoe Hillenkoetter as a reference. Hillenkoetter “would recommend him very highly.” See: “Friday, 2 June 1950 – 2,” CREST, Intelligence, Policy, and Politics: The DCI, the White House, and Congress, 5166d49399326091c6a604c4.


the American people, and Ken Downs led America’s largest domestic propaganda effort at its zenith.

**YOUNG COLUMBUS**

Portugal also worried about the implications of the triple shocks of 1957. The Portuguese military launched several reforms to prepare for action in Africa. Portugal formally created an Air Force and stationed squadrons overseas. The PIDE had opened its first station in Angola by the end of the decade. The Overseas Ministry created a *Gabinete dos Negócios Políticos*/Political Affairs Cabinet, modeled on the Foreign Ministry’s own GNP, to more effectively and bureaucratically respond to colonial crises. Finally, Portugal also renewed its interest in public relations campaigns in the United States.²³⁰

George Peabody and Associates dialed in new programs to reach even larger audiences. One of their other successful campaigns was a classic example of how public relations campaigns, focused on shareable media and networking with media and corporate elites worked. George Peabody and Associates brought *PARADE* magazine, the Sunday insert in local newspapers, and featured by Howard Hughes’ Trans World Airlines (TWA). In cooperation with TWA, Peabody created the “Young Columbus” trip. The trip was a prize for the top newspaper boys for each of the 62 newspapers nationally that carried *PARADE*. The boy “who sold the most subscriptions and received the best grades in school won a trip of five days in Portugal and two days in Spain.” Of course, they visited in April. *PARADE* wrote to the Portuguese government that they believed...

“Young Columbus” as a very successful promotion,” and that they also thought “of it as our introduction to the very charming and beautiful country of Portugal.” The Portuguese government shared costs with PARADE, TWA, and US Camera Magazine, which not only brought 62 American boys to Portugal, but also sent them along with cameras. The campaign led to “815 full page advertisements…2,000 feature articles about Portugal…83 radio and television programs….3,000 twenty-second television commercials” and “144 lectures about Portugal before school groups.” There was even a half-hour motion picture made of the trip that played for civic groups, television stations, and schools.231

The crowning achievement for George Peabody and Associates was Dwight D. Eisenhower’s trip to Portugal during his international farewell tour. Ike’s trip was carefully designed by the Portuguese government to visit the sights that Peabody had been emphasizing for a decade. Events at Queluz Palace and the Palace of Ajuda created plentiful photo-op opportunities for Portugal’s propagandists to picture the American president with regime insiders. U.S. Ambassador to Portugal Charles Elbrick reported to Washington that his open-air parade through the city “evoked an extraordinary manifestation of unrestrained popular feeling from the Portuguese people.” Eisenhower praised Prince Henry the Navigator in his public remarks and thanked the Salazar regime for its participation in NATO. Eisenhower’s farewell trip to Portugal symbolized the closeness between the United States and Portugal, which Salazar hoped would remain constant as the “winds of change” swept through Africa.232

ALL AFRICAN PEOPLES

The independence of Ghana opened up new opportunities for Holden Roberto that eventually led him to the United Nations. Roberto corresponded extensively with the executive director of the American Committee on Africa, George Houser, who in turn connected him with officials from Ghana, Africa’s newest independent state. George Padmore, Kwame Nkrumah’s pan-African advisor, invited the UPNA to participate in the Conference of All African Peoples in Ghana set for 1958. The UPNA elected Roberto as its official representative, and the group fundraised from sympathetic donors for the trip.233

The convening of the All-African People’s Conference was one of the pivotal moments in the history of decolonization in Africa. Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana, understood the significance of his own nation’s independence: “The break-through came in 1957. Ghana achieved her independence and declared to the whole world that the independence of Ghana was meaningless unless it was linked up with the total liberation of the African continent.” In that vein, he planned two major conferences in 1958, the first for the eight independent nations of Africa: “Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia, Liberia and Ghana.”234 The second conference was for the independence movements; this was the meeting to which Roberto was invited. The list of attendees read like a list of the first presidents of the nations that emerged in Africa in the 1960’s. Roberto was able to form relationships with many of those leaders, notably Patrice Lumumba, already an acquaintance from his days working in the Belgian Administration in Stanleyville; and Kenneth Kaunda, first president of Zambia. Also present was Frantz Fanon, Tom Mboya, and future presidents Taieb Slim of Tunisia, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, and Hastings Banda of Malawi. Most of the continent sent representatives. The connections Roberto made in Accra

established his standing in the liberation movement. In a few short years, many of his peers became the leaders of new nations, and his association with them gave him an aura of inevitability— that by right of attending the conference in Accra he was entitled to be president of Angola.235

Roberto’s Accra odyssey was itself something out of a spy novel. The Belgian administration of the Congo did not allow any Africans, even Angolans, to participate in politics or hold a passport. The route was treacherous; the trip required a great deal of subterfuge. In August 1958, Roberto started complaining about an unknown sickness and left Leopoldville to get a checkup from a doctor out of town. When he returned, Roberto produced a doctor’s note to the Belgian authorities that he required surgery across the Congo River in Brazzaville, then under French control. Roberto took a ferry anonymously across the river with only his doctor’s note and his vaccination records as identification. Locals helped to guide him through a French counter-insurgency zone. He then took busses and hitchhiked his way to Lagos, Nigeria. After three weeks holed up in a hotel in Nigeria, Ghana allowed him to enter.236

Roberto’s harrowing experience also produced a clever, fateful change for the future of Angola and the United States. Under the name ‘Haldane Roberto’ he made contacts with early arrivals in Accra and found that his peers agreed with him on his anti-tribal, supra-nationalist ideas. The tribal nature of the UPNA was off-putting to conference attendees, and they told him that he would find little support for such a cause. Roberto decided to drop the ‘Norte’ from his organization and quickly produced literature and pamphlets for the União das Populações de Angola (UPA) which was focused on democracy and national unity within an independent

Armed with a borrowed typewriter, Roberto was finally able to put his nationalistic ideas for Angolan independence on paper. The UPNA represented the past, he declared. Roberto’s newly minted UPA was forward thinking and proved to be the proper vehicle for the Bakongo refugees scattered along the lower Congo River to challenge the Portuguese on the world stage. Franz Fanon later wrote in the newspaper of the Algerian National Liberation Front (NLF) that “the delegates from Angola were welcomed with emotion and an enormous anger was expressed on hearing about the discriminatory and inhuman measures employed by the Portuguese authorities.”

While in Ghana, Roberto applied for and received a Guinean passport, which allowed him to use the little funds he had from his backers at home and in the U.S. to continue raising support abroad. He left Accra for New York to address the United Nations on behalf of the UPA. According to John Marcum, his speech was the “first time the Angolan issue was debated and lobbyists for the nationalist cause were heard in New York.” He met face-to-face with the American Committee on Africa, and he established many American acquaintances, including the chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Africa, Senator John F. Kennedy. By the time Roberto returned to Africa in 1960 for the Second All-African Peoples’ Conference in Tunis, his friend Patrice Lumumba had become prime minister-elect of an independent Congo. Lumumba had left Accra in 1958 and returned to the Belgian Congo a national hero. His

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237 Marcum, I:66–67. The UPA was a precursor to the FNLA that Roberto lead into Angola in 1975. Several non-communist groups in Leopoldville combined to form the FNLA as the army of the independence movement, with the GRAE serving as the Angolan Government in Exile. The acronyms are infuriating, as almost every Angolan group went through several alliances, schisms and aborted starts. See Marcum, Angolan Revolution for more on the politics of the nationalist groups.


homecoming speech inspired the riots that eventually forced the Belgians to grant formal independence. Lumumba pledged to support the UPA in any way he could. Lumumba’s rise and fall from power brought the Cold War to sub-Saharan Africa for the first time in spectacular fashion. Roberto’s trip to the United States and the independence crisis in the Belgian Congo cleared the way for his efforts to remove the Portuguese from Angola and take power for himself.

**THE CONGO CRISIS**

Shortly after the formation of the Republic of Congo, the new state descended into chaos. The resulting ‘Congo Crisis’ led to a U.N. intervention and ultimately the deaths of U.N. Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold and Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba, the defeat of a Soviet/Cuban attempt to overthrow the government in Leopoldville (Kinshasa), and the installation of Joseph Desiree Mobutu as a pro-American premier. The specifics of the ‘Congo Crisis’ as they unfolded in 1960-1961 are critical to understand the Holden Roberto-led uprising in Angolan, and America’s involvement in that war.

The unraveling of the Belgian Congo was the result of Belgian greed and heavy international speculation. The huge territory that is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo was once the personal possession of King Leopold II and not recognized as a part of the Belgian nation until 1908. King Leopold’s original revenue maker was the rubber trade, but the Second World War turned Congo into the world’s most important source of strategic minerals. Katanga province alone possessed reserves of copper, gold, uranium, tin, manganese, zinc, wolfram,

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244 Michela Wrong summarized the enduring lessons of Belgian rule: to “keep your head down, think small, look after yourself... The spirit, once comprehensively crushed, does not recover easily. For seventy-five years, from 1885 to 1960, Congo’s population had marinated in humiliation.” Michela Wrong, *In the Footsteps of Mr. Kurtz: Living on the Brink of Disaster in Mobutu’s Congo* (Harper Perennial, 2002), 60.
245 Wrong, 45, 48.
tantalum, coal and iron as well as cobalt. The southern province of Kasai was produced more industrial stones than anywhere else in the world, and also the second most diamonds.²⁴⁶ To exploit the vast mineral wealth of the Congo, Belgium turned to outside investors. Cecil Rhodes, the British explorer and Rhodesia’s namesake, was a chief financier in 1899 of the newly established Union Minière Du Haut Katanga (UMHK). South Africans eventually comprised the majority of the UMHK’s investors, pouring profits from South Africa’s own gold and diamond mines in Katangan mines. To further maximize profits, Rhodes and his English friends created the Benguela Railway Company in Angola to provide an Atlantic outlet for Katanga’s mines.²⁴⁷ The Benguela railway in Angola connected Katanga to the Atlantic Ocean at Lobito, Angola in 1931. The port became second only to Matadi on the Congo River as an outlet for Katangan minerals.²⁴⁸ By the 1940’s, the economy of Portuguese Africa was benefitting from a lucrative transportation trade that accommodated 40 percent of Katanga’s copper on the Benguela railway and another 30 percent through Rhodesia to the Portuguese port of Lourenço Marques (Maputo) in Mozambique.²⁴⁹

To protect international investments in the Congo and maintain order, Belgium relied on a national army called the Force Publique, as well as local police known as Gendarmes. Unlike European armies, the Force Publique lived off the land, pillaging local villages for food and pay. It recruited by taking orphans, ruffians, and down on their luck workers and offering them a new life.²⁵⁰ According to one anecdote, Force Publique “soldiers in the Congo were told to account for every cartridge fired, so they hacked off and smoked the hands, feet and private parts of their

²⁴⁷ Nkrumah, Challenge of the Congo, 10.
²⁵⁰ Wrong, In the Footsteps of Mr. Kurtz, 2002, 46.
victims. Body parts were presented to commanders in baskets as proof the soldiers had done their work well.”

The Congolese National Army at the time of independence was essentially a rebranded Force Publique. The Gendarmes supplemented the national army. Like the Force Publique, they had Belgian officers and relied on forced conscription. Whereas the national army pillaged to survive, the gendarmes relied on patronage and were committed to avoiding disruptions to civil society and commerce. The Gendarmes were loyal to the local chiefs, or in the case of Katanga, to the Belgian mining magnate, the Union Minière. At the time of independence, there were almost as many local militias as there were soldiers. This system of many local armies suited European investors well, allowing them to run provinces like Katanga and Kasai as personal kingdoms much in the way Leopold had exploited the Congo.

Despite the heavy-handed tactics of the Belgians, independence came swiftly following a series of events in the late 1950’s. A.A.J. Van Bilsen, a Belgian professor published “A Thirty-Year Plan for the Political Emancipation of Belgian Africa” in December 1955, and it sent shock waves through Belgian society. Van Bilsen argued that, “almost nothing had been done…to prepare the Congolese for the responsibilities of independence.” After a series of riots that crippled the colony, the Belgians announced a hasty retreat from Africa, and elections were held for an independent, majority-ruled Congo. Free and fair elections produced a president, Joseph Kasavubu, from the Bakongo region, and a Prime Minister, Patrice Lumumba, from a province upriver from the capital; it was a truly national ticket. The Katangan candidate, Moises Tshombe, led his delegation in a boycott of the government after failing to win either of the top positions.

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251 Wrong, 47.
252 “General Emile Janssens, the army’s Belgian commander…reportedly told his troops that “for the army, independence equals zero.”” Devlin, Chief of Station, 8.
254 Merriam, Congo, Background of Conflict, 68–69.
Within five days of independence, three of the provinces seceded, including Katanga and Kasai, and the army mutinied. Belgians fled the country en masse.

It was not long before the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. sprang into action. Lumumba requested urgent aid from the United Nations and the Soviet Union, and both obliged. Throughout the summer of 1960, hundreds of Soviet personnel entered the Congo, and the U.S. became increasingly worried about the security of the uranium mines. In response, the United States provided the logistical support for the U.N. peacekeepers, including an immediate airlift via the Azores base. The airlift itself was a marvel of American military power that brought the first peacekeepers, mostly Tunisians, to Leopoldville within forty-eight hours of the passage of the UN resolution, and only four days after Katanga seceded. Behind the scenes, the CIA station in Leopoldville provided key backing for Joseph Mobutu, the army Chief of Staff. Mobutu, with the approval of CIA Station Chief Larry Devlin, overthrew Lumumba in a coup d’état and installed a pro-western government. In turn, the new government declared “the Soviet and Czech embassies and the Chinese communist delegation persona non grata.” Lumumba was arrested. Devlin would later say, “at that moment, he (Mobutu) was the government and the success of our African policy depended upon him.” Mobutu handed the reins of power over to an oligarchy known as the “Binza Group.” He kept Kasavubu as President, but the Binza group effectively ran the country. The immediate crisis had abated; in the words of Michaela Wrong, “the huge African domino had not fallen: Congo was safely out of Soviet hands.” However, even in prison Lumumba remained a potent figure, and Tshombe’s rebellion continued unabated.

255 Devlin, Chief of Station, 23.
257 Devlin, Chief of Station, 37, 82, Cited in 87, 98–99.
258 Wrong, In the Footsteps of Mr. Kurtz, 2002, 70.
For Roberto, the anarchy and regime change in the Congo was a tumultuous period that ultimately provided him a secure base to build his movement and plan for a war of independence in Angola. Before Congolese independence, Roberto had secured promises of support from the Prime Minister, his good friend Patrice Lumumba. Lumumba allowed Roberto to open offices in the capital and to broadcast UPA programs on Radio Leopoldville. This was fortuitous, for Roberto was not the only political leader organizing the Bakongo of the lower Congo River. Joseph Kasavubu, the Congolese President, was also Bakongo, and Roberto’s UPA had to compete for support and affiliation. When Mobutu arrested Lumumba, Roberto hid in foreign embassies in the capital, worried he would be targeted as a friend of the deposed Prime Minister. It would not have been surprising had Mobutu and Kasavubu cracked down on Angolans during the coup, due to the importance of Portugal to the economy, the large refugee population along the border, and the ongoing secession movements. However, Roberto’s salvation was his close personal connections to several members of the Binza Group, most importantly Cyrille Adoula, Roberto’s old partner from the Daring Club, who had become interior minister in the Lumumba government. With Adoula, the UPA had a stalwart supporter and a friendly voice in Mobutu’s camp. Congolese independence, despite the difficulties surrounding it, gave Roberto’s a head start over rival Angolan nationalists, especially the communist MPLA which had established a headquarters in Conakry, Guinea. The MPLA was not able to move into Leopoldville until October 1961.259

THE WHITE POWERS

The ouster of Belgium whittled down the white powers of Southern Africa to three: the United Kingdom, the Union of South Africa, and Portugal. All three backed the secessionist regime

of Moises Tshombe in Katanga, but in their own spheres of influence, they had yet to coordinate their efforts. Britain reluctantly stayed in Southern Africa; only the copper industry and a desire to manage decolonization and ensure the emergence of majority-rulled states kept them in the region. The whites of South Africa, led by the Afrikaner proto-fascist National Party, worked toward creating ‘Bantustans,’ or ‘homelands’ to remove blacks from residential white cities, while at the same time exploiting black labor in manufacturing and in the ubiquitous mines of Johannesburg. Portugal too sought to remain in Africa for perpetuity, not only in Angola but also in the colonies of Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe, and Cape Verde. Despite the integrated nature of the Southern African economy, the relatively peaceful years of the 1950’s discouraged security cooperation between Portugal, the settlers of Rhodesia, and South Africa; instead, each attempted to maintain racial dominance independently.260

Although they had moved toward jettisoning colonies elsewhere, the British clung on to the settler colony of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland in 1960. The Federation was a time bomb for the British: tensions grew between English-speaking white settlers that dominated Southern Rhodesia, the political and financial center of the colony, and the black political elites of Northern Rhodesia, home to part of Katanga’s vast Copperbelt. African leaders, led by Kenneth Kaunda, clamored for Britain to dissolve the Federation and grant Northern Rhodesia independence. At the same time, whites in Salisbury grew impatient with British demands that they acquiesce in majority-rule. The situation was headed toward crisis by mid-decade.261


261 On the international aspects of decolonization in Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Malawi, see: Andrew DeRoche, *Black, White, and Chrome: The United States and Zimbabwe, 1953 to 1998* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2001); B. J. Phiri,
In South Africa, the relative calm of repressive National Party rule in the 1950’s gave way to increased violence and international condemnation. British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan journeyed to South Africa in 1960 to proclaim that the “winds of change” were sweeping through Africa and implied that the world would no longer support Apartheid. Just a month later, South African police massacred black civilians at Sharpeville, which proved to be a prelude to the banning of all black political parties. Even President Eisenhower, an ardent friend of the National Party and a supporter of increased trade between the U.S. and South Africa, condemned the Sharpeville massacre. Pretoria officially threw off the last semblances of British rule and declared South Africa an independent republic. The regime doubled down on its policy of Apartheid.262

Portugal entered the 1960’s confident that its hold on Angola remained secure. The colonial economy continued to expand, and through increased NATO reliance on the Azores base, the alliance with America seemed solid. In 1958, US Marines deployed to Lebanon via the Azores, and in 1960, the UN peacekeeping mission to Congo-Leopoldville also stopped at Lajes.263 By “1960, 70 percent of all American military air traffic to Europe and the Middle East was flowing through the Lajes base.”264 As a sign of the close friendship between the two nations, Eisenhower visited Portugal in 1960 and proclaimed, “There are no great problems between the United State and Portugal.”265 However, Salazar remained apprehensive over anti-colonial sentiment in the West. After Congo achieved its independence, Salazar sent reinforcements to Angola, increasing

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262 On the American response to Sharpeville, see: Borstelmann, The Cold War and the Color Line.
to 3,000 the number of Europeans in an expanded colonial army of 8,000 soldiers.\textsuperscript{266} John Marcum summed up the situation in his landmark history of the Angolan people: despite the intelligence efforts of the PIDE, Lisbon did not understand how “the disintegration of traditional society and the injustice of colonial society had led to widespread disorientation, despair, and repression, and to preparations for violent protest.” Salazar was unaware that Angola had become a “black powder keg.”\textsuperscript{267}

CONCLUSION

The United States, through economic and strategic necessity, became a major player in Southern Africa during and after the Second World War. Primarily, it was strategic concerns, such as securing an Azores airbase, procuring radioactive material for the atomic bomb, and fighting common enemies, which brought America into alliances with the white powers of Southern Africa. Once established, these partnerships blossomed. Although the economic impact for the United States was minimal, commercial ties to its allies made African colonies important. All the while western imperialism eroded African social structures and encouraged African elites to organize against their imperial masters. It was the importance of the Shinkolobwe uranium, not a desire to work with black nationalists, which brought Holden Roberto on the CIA payroll in 1955. Nevertheless, the U.S. funded the earliest activities of Roberto’s Union of the Peoples of Angola, with Roberto even making personal connections with high-ranking members of Congress. Finally, the implosion of the Belgian Congo forced a reevaluation of America’s partnerships with white regimes; for the first time the strategic imperative of the United States required an alliance with a


\textsuperscript{267} Marcum, \textit{The Angolan Revolution}, I:120–23.
free black state, and out of that need came the American alliance with Joseph Desire Mobutu, a young Congolese General, the one-day dictator of Zaire. The U.S. no longer had the choice to ignore revolutionary nationalism in the region, and events already in motion demanded a deeper American involvement.

Nineteen-sixty was the turning point for Africa, the closing of the book on the post-war period and the beginning of a new era. Seventeen new nations emerged from imperial domination, including the chaotic Republic of the Congo. Amidst the crisis surrounding independence in the Congo and the bitter escalation of racial oppression in South Africa, the American people elected a new President. JFK had campaigned on the issues of economic growth, an intensified Cold War, and racial equality at home and abroad. It was a sign of things to come. The policies of ignoring the racial conflicts in Africa under Roosevelt, Truman, and Eisenhower ended. President John F. Kennedy planned to confront white rule in Africa head on, particularly by backing the fledgling independence of the Congo and Roberto’s forces in Angola. By 1960, the perception was that America’s interests could no longer be served by acting as an accomplice to the white powers and a nascent partner to black nationalists. The Soviet Union, America’s Cold War rival, viewed the turmoil in Angola, the Congo, and South Africa and saw a continent ripe for revolution. Unbeknownst to the Americans, Cuba and Che Guevara were also “African dreams.”

Southern Africa was no longer a problem ‘in the back yard’ of America’s allies. Africa had become a battlefield of the Cold War.

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III. NEW FRONTIERS

John F. Kennedy committed the United States to the cause of racial justice in southern Africa like none of his predecessors. Even before taking office, Kennedy had met Holden Roberto and incorporated Africa into his presidential campaign, as both a Civil Rights and a Cold War issue. As president, JFK wanted to boldly side the United States with black nationalists, including Holden Roberto, who by 1961 was at war with Portugal.\(^{270}\) Roberto’s successes in that year led to the creation of the Angolan Revolutionary Government in Exile (GRAE), the political wing of the FNLA, in Leopoldville (Kinshasa).\(^{271}\) However, Kennedy’s commitment to the Space Race and the ongoing strategic importance of the Azores forced JFK to reconsider his lofty aspirations for the GRAE. Portuguese propaganda efforts, led by new Madison Avenue public relations council, effectively eroded American popular support for Holden Roberto and Angolan independence. By Kennedy’s death in 1963, the United States became both more engaged and more circumspect in its Angola policies. JFK failed to tip the scales of the war in Angola toward either party, setting the stage for a prolonged struggle that both Roberto’s GRAE and António de Oliveira Salazar believed would be won or lost based on American policy.

THE ELECTION OF 1960

Kennedy used Africa to advance his popularity throughout his political career. In 1957, he had spoken on the floor of the Senate about the war in Algeria. He called for an end to imperialism,


in Eastern Europe and in Africa. The historian Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. claimed the speech made him an international icon and “signaled his new prominence in foreign affairs.” Kennedy pushed for the creation of the African subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and he became its first chair. He used the new position to call for “sympathy with the independence movement,” and promoted “programs of economic and educational assistance” as part of a policy focused on strengthening Africa. As a Senator, he made a point to meet with African nationalists travelling in the U.S., including Roberto and his Mozambican counterpart Eduardo Mondlane. Kennedy’s visibility on African issues bolstered his credentials as both a Cold Warrior and a progressive on civil rights. In January 1960, despite his youth, Kennedy announced his intention to run for President of the United States to counter “Soviet gains” in the arms race, and “to maintain freedom and order in the newly emerging nations.” That thinly veiled statement regarding Africa foreshadowed the role it would play in the election.

Making Africa a component of the presidential campaign stemmed from a number of factors. First, the throng of newly independent black nations in Africa synergized with Kennedy’s projection of youth and vitality. Second, the international crisis in the Congo brought the Cold War in Africa to the public, which vindicated Kennedy’s progressive statements on Algeria and served to underscore his qualifications on foreign policy. Finally, as Whitney Schneidman cogently pointed out, Kennedy could make a “pitch for civil rights overseas” to appeal to “the liberal wing” of his party while acquiescing in Him Crow in the American South.

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Kennedy played the Africa card early and often. Arthur Schlesinger Jr. called it “the first time in American history” that “Africa figured prominently in a presidential election.”\footnote{Schlesinger Jr., \textit{A Thousand Days}, 554.} Schneidman counted that throughout the campaign, “Kennedy mentioned Africa an unprecedented 479 times.”\footnote{Schneidman, \textit{Engaging Africa}, 12.} He attacked Nixon on the campaign trail for his refusal to accept the inevitability of independence in Africa. On the topic of the Congo, he expressed a willingness to work with Lumumba, a clear repudiation of Eisenhower’s policies. JFK promised, “to post more black diplomats in Africa” and personally paid the tab for a group of Kenyan students to travel to American universities.\footnote{Cited in Noer, \textit{Cold War and Black Liberation}, 58–59; Schlesinger Jr., \textit{A Thousand Days}, 554–55.} Richard Mahoney called Kennedy’s Africa rhetoric “a minor classic in political exploitation of foreign policy.” Kennedy knew that Africa was not important to the general public; but civil rights were. He used Africa to paint Nixon as a racist and to elevate his own profile as a champion in the struggle against racial inequality. Presidential authority over foreign policy provided a means to secure civil rights abroad that Kennedy could not promise at home.\footnote{Mahoney, \textit{JFK}, 29; Schneidman, \textit{Engaging Africa}, 12.}

JFK used Africa within his overall focus on foreign policy and the need for a more robust Cold War strategy. On the campaign trail in 1960, Kennedy spoke of Africa and the “missile gap” between the Soviet Union and the U.S. as part of the same dire threat to American security. The candidate tied nearly all aspects of the ‘missile gap’ argument to Africa, including “the Polaris submarine, the minuteman missile,” and “airlift capacity.” Of Eisenhower’s airlift on behalf of the U.N. Congo mission, Kennedy questioned, “How many of them were jets?” America needed a new leader to modernize the armed forces in order to “stop the conquest of the sixties” by the
Soviet Union. Kennedy attacked the Eisenhower administration’s policies on Africa at every opportunity.

Although effective, Kennedy’s attacks on the Eisenhower-Nixon track record on Africa were a touch unfair. Although ‘Ike’ supported Portugal and its colonial interests, he understood that his administration needed to show support for the newly freed African countries. Despite Kwame Nkrumah’s flirtations with the eastern bloc, the Eisenhower administration established relations immediately with Ghana after its independence. Ike sent Richard Nixon, his Vice President, to the ceremonies. After he visited Ghana in 1957, Nixon pushed for the creation of the Bureau of African Affairs within the State Department. Vice President Nixon had joined a growing chorus of American policy experts who foresaw Africa becoming an increasingly important front of the Cold War. One State Department report at the time predicted “a very difficult and probably long period of uncertainty” for the independent states of Africa that presented “plenty of troubled waters for Communist fishing.” The sudden independence and descent into chaos in the former Belgian Congo became the first great ‘fishing hole’ for communism in Africa, the State Department declared, and the ‘Congo Crisis’ dominated Eisenhower’s foreign policy agenda during his final year in office. In September, less than two months from the election, Eisenhower proposed an ambitious assistance package for Africa before the U.N. General Assembly and followed up with an unscheduled payment to the Secretary General for the Congo operation. Nevertheless, Kennedy’s attacks worked with the public, and he won the election by a razor thin margin. Kennedy soon found it necessary to transform his rhetoric into reality.

280 John F. Kennedy, “Speech of Senator John F. Kennedy, American Legion Convention, Miami Beach, FL,” 10/18/1960, UCSB.
281 Borstelmann, The Cold War and the Color Line, 123.
283 Schneidman, Engaging Africa, 2.
Events outside of the young President’s control accelerated his need to develop a plan for Africa. Fearing that Kennedy was a less committed Cold Warrior than Eisenhower, Mobutu arrested Lumumba and sent him to the rebels in Katanga, who murdered the Congo’s first Prime Minister three days before Kennedy’s inauguration.\(^{284}\) Two days after the inauguration, on January 22, 1961, Portuguese political dissidents hijacked the *Santa Maria*, the second largest ship in the Portuguese merchant marine. Led by General Humberto Delgado and Henrique Galvão, the rebels hoped to start a revolution in Portugal and force Kennedy to confront the cruelty of the regime in Lisbon.\(^{285}\) Antonio Salazar requested that the American government find the ship and take it by force. Kennedy refused, which infuriated Salazar. In response, Portugal for the first time threatened to deny American access to the Lajes base. After his eventual capture in Brazil, Delgado claimed that his goal was to reach Luanda and proclaim a rival government against Lisbon. The reaction to this news in Angola was immediate. On February 4, Angolans attacked the radio station, a prison, and police stations in Luanda with knives and clubs and demanded the release of all political prisoners. Portuguese colonial authorities repulsed the attackers and counterattacked, killing dozens in the city’s slums. Dismayed at the events of the previous weeks and eager to end Salazar’s 35-year-old New State regime, Portuguese General Botelho Moniz approached the US ambassador, C. Burke Elbrick, and the CIA chief of station in Lisbon, Fred Hubbard, to feel out the American position a possible on regime change. The CIA agents in Lisbon were receptive to the offer and immediately began contingency plans in preparation for a coup d’état.\(^{286}\) The United

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Nations, which had already passed a resolution denouncing Portuguese colonialism in December 1960, scheduled a Security Council meeting to discuss the matter in March.\textsuperscript{287} It appeared that the Portuguese Empire could collapse at any moment.\textsuperscript{288}

Kennedy anticipated the fall of the ‘Ultramar,’ and viewed support for Holden Roberto as part of his overall Cold War strategy. For all of the uncertainty regarding Angola, it was obvious to Kennedy that eventually the country would become independent. The United States needed a plan for that eventuality. From both his personal relationship with Roberto and from his most trusted advisers, Kennedy knew of Angola’s contested rebellion firsthand. During the presidential campaign of 1960, JFK had sent W. Averell Harriman on a fact-finding mission to Africa.\textsuperscript{289} Serving as Harriman’s translator was historian John Marcum, who up to that point was an expert on French North Africa. During the tour’s stop in Kinshasa, Marcum setup a series of meetings with Holden Roberto’s family and closest associates to gather intelligence on the Angolan leader. Marcum reported back to Harriman that Roberto was “anti-communist in orientation” and wanted American support.\textsuperscript{290} At the same time, Harriman and Marcum rejected entreaties from several members of the MPLA. Kennedy’s envoys were aware of the MPLA’s communist sympathies and avoided contact.\textsuperscript{291} The message was clear: America wanted pro-western, anti-communist Angolan allies. Kennedy believed this was vital for maintaining Angola’s western orientation after independence. Kennedy sought to dominate and determine the struggle brewing between Angola’s independence movements as a part of his overall strategy for post-colonialist Africa.

\textsuperscript{288} For an overview of Luso-American relations in 1961, see: José Freire Antunes, Os Americanos e Portugal (1961). Kennedy e Salazar: O Leão e a Raposa.
\textsuperscript{289} Noer, Cold War and Black Liberation, 59.
\textsuperscript{290} “Miscellaneous Notes on Leopoldville,” n.d., Box 11, 1960, JMP; “Notes,” n.d., Box 51, Notebook and Loose Notes c. 1959, JMP; “Miscellaneous Notes on Conditions in Leopoldville and the Congo (2),” 9-10 September 1960, Leopoldville, Box 406, Folder 5, African Trip, 1960 Zaire (Belgian Congo), N.Y. Files Post Gubernatorial, Special Files, Public Service PWAH.
\textsuperscript{291} Marcum, The Angolan Revolution, I:94.
Within a few months of taking office, the Kennedy administration began moving towards a pro-independence policy on Angola. On March 7, ambassador Elbrick informed the Portuguese to “not expect US support in Security Council or General Assembly debates on Angola.”\textsuperscript{292} Elbrick went on to chastise Salazar for the cruel treatment of Africans in Angola, warning him that without progress toward self-determination, a “Congo type” disaster could happen. Under instruction from Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Elbrick delivered the same message to Moniz. In the first week of March, Roberto visited Washington again, and this time he met with Attorney General and brother to the president, Robert F. Kennedy, before addressing the UN.\textsuperscript{293} Roberto spoke about the crimes committed by Portugal in Angola and referred ominously to the rising calls for violent overthrow of the Portuguese colonial government. The UN Security Council scheduled a vote on March 15 to condemn Portuguese policy in Angola. In the past, the U.S. had abstained from actions against its NATO ally in Lisbon, including during the December 1960 vote. This time Kennedy instructed his UN Ambassador, Adlai Stevenson, to vote against Portugal. Roberto prolonged his stay in New York to witness and comment on the Security Council’s actions. America voted in support of the resolution, and Roberto proudly claimed that Angola had “helped solidify the sharp change in American policy concerning Africa and decolonization.”\textsuperscript{294}

On March 15, 1961, Roberto’s UPA forces invaded Angola from the Congo. Within a few days of invading, Roberto’s forces captured a large swath of Northern Angola and had killed over 250 Portuguese civilians in its opening days. The offensive sparked a general revolt in Northern Angola, and rebel bands roamed the countryside attacking every Portuguese in sight. UPA fighters also directed their violence against the Ovimbundu laborers who had replaced their brethren in the

\textsuperscript{292} Schneidman, \textit{Engaging Africa}, 15.
\textsuperscript{294} Cited in Marcum, \textit{The Angolan Revolution}, 1:182.
coffee fields, marking the first mass violence committed by Angolans against fellow Angolans during the Civil War. Settlers fled and anarchy prevailed. With their leader abroad and little organizational direction, UPA forces were unprepared to govern the towns, plantations, and military installations they had conquered. The haphazard offensive came to a halt a mere 30 miles from Luanda. Roberto never imagined the invasion would be so successful.295

The Portuguese responded to the uprising with maximum violence. Settler militias fought back savagely, not only against the rebels but the African population in general. They burned villages, fired indiscriminately at Angolans, and “spared prisoners only until they had talked.”296 Lisbon, fully aware the severity of the situation and the UPA’s proximity to Luanda, mobilized for war. First came the Portuguese Air Force which bombed indiscriminately. With their American planes, the Portuguese hit targets, real and perceived, within rebel held areas, and included the use of napalm.297 Throughout March and April, the world’s focus remained on Kennedy’s maneuvers at the UN and the coup attempt in Lisbon. Despite the mayhem caused by both the rebels and the government, widespread news coverage and condemnation of the fighting only surfaced when the real war began in the summer, when the Portuguese army arrived from Europe.

Kennedy’s Angola gamble collapsed along with Roberto’s invasion. The UN resolution failed to pass, even with American support.298 Salazar caught wind of the plot against him in April and fired the ringleaders before they gave the order to revolt. He went to the press and portrayed “the United States as the agent provocateur” of the coup, which led to protests in front of the

296 Wheeler and Pélissier, Angola, 179.
297 Bender, Angola Under the Portuguese, 158.
298 Marcum, The Angolan Revolution, I:144; Noer, Cold War and Black Liberation, 71.
American embassy.\textsuperscript{299} Moniz’s plot failed, and the national mood turned against America and its interference in Lisbon and Angola.\textsuperscript{300} The American attempt to promote progressivism in Lisbon and to liberate Angola backfired; instead, Portugal rallied and united behind the effort to subdue the jewel of their African empire.

The war in Angola was Portugal’s first since World War I. Salazar sent twenty-five thousand troops by sea from Lisbon to Luanda, which represented two-thirds of Portugal’s NATO divisions.\textsuperscript{301} The army regained the initiative in the coffee fields in the north. The UPA’s untrained, poorly equipped forces were no match for Portugal’s NATO trained and equipped army. Throughout the long dry season of 1961, American supplied planes bombed rebel strongholds, while the army pushed forward in trucks, half-tracks, and armored cars. For the first time in Angola’s history, the Bakongo north became a militarized zone, and small towns and plantations grew into sprawling military bases, supplied largely from the air once the rainy season washed out dirt roads. By September, Salazar was able to declare victory over the rebels. However, despite the capture of all major towns, the re-establishment of control over the border, and the destruction of “some rebel centers,” the CIA believed that Portugal “failed to regain control of the areas outside of towns, and their control of many roads [was] tenuous at best.” Portugal hunkered down for the rainy season which began in October; the rivers swelled, dirt roads washed out, and long-distance

\textsuperscript{299} Schneidman, Engaging Africa, 19.
\textsuperscript{300} Antunes, “Kennedy, Portugal, and the Azores Base, 1961,” 157.
travel became almost impossible.\textsuperscript{302} Neither side had achieved a decisive victory. Both Roberto’s UPA and the Portuguese settled in for a prolonged fight.

With two allies locked in battle, Kennedy’s foreign policy team wrestled with finding an appropriate balance between the competing strategic imperatives: how to fight the Cold War in Africa and to maintain the western alliance. The CIA increased payments to Roberto from $6,000 to $10,000 a year, with the understanding that this was just a holding action.\textsuperscript{303} To address the issue, Kennedy created the Presidential Task Force on Portuguese Territories in Africa, chaired by Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs G. Mennen ‘Soapy’ Williams, and included officials from the White House, the Departments of State and the Treasury, the Bureau of the Budget, the CIA, the ICA, and the USIA. The State Department, led by Williams, favored an aggressive Angola policy, even if it led to a Portuguese leaving NATO and an American evacuation of the Azores base. The Department of Defense disagreed rigorously and claimed that any “courses of action which would gravely jeopardize retention of the Azores bases in Spain would be unacceptable from a military point of view for the foreseeable future.”\textsuperscript{304} After the failure of the Bay of Pigs operation in April, and with a new crisis brewing in Berlin, Defense’s position won out, and the debate continued without consideration of military support for the Angolan rebels.

The taskforce agreed to work to create a broad front to pressure Portugal into granting independence for its African possessions. Such a policy of forced moderation required that any support for Holden Roberto, including his ongoing CIA stipend, needed deeper cover. Secretary

of State Dean Rusk decided to end direct payments to Roberto, which led Director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research Roger Hilsman to initiate efforts to “locate an individual or institution willing to assume on a strictly private basis the current payments.” With the funds under deep cover, the President and the Secretary of State could deny their existence. In July, the taskforce produced National Security Action Memorandum (NSAM) No. 60 on “U.S. Actions in Relation to Portuguese Territories in Africa.” NSAM 60 became the blueprint for both Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson’s Angola policy. Above all, the pressure tactics to be used against the Salazar regime needed to “minimize the possibility of losing the Azores,” which would have “grave military consequences.” The plan was simple: coordinate international pressure against Portugal, prevent American weapons from entering the conflict, expand American aid to Angolan refugees in Congo, and provide scholarships to blacks from Portuguese Africa to study in the United States. American support for self-determination nonetheless left Roberto without concrete aid in his war against Portugal. Kennedy and his administration believed that pressure tactics and world opinion, rather than financing battles, presented the best chance at Angolan independence.

Kennedy’s moves strengthened Salazar’s hand. The dictator purged the military of all opposition, and the people, aroused by his anti-American rhetoric, rallied behind him. He lambasted the United States for meddling in the internal affairs of Portugal; to him, Angola was not a colony, but an overseas province. Events elsewhere fueled Portuguese nationalism. In December, Salazar doubled his resolve when India invaded the Portuguese Overseas Province of

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Goa. On December 19, after little resistance, the Portuguese garrison capitulated, ending the 400-year history of Portuguese India. The Indian invasion raised the prospects of a similar Chinese offensive against Macao. Angola became essential. Beset with threats throughout the world, Salazar cast himself as the sole defender of the Ultramar, the source of Portugal’s once and future greatness. By the end of Kennedy’s first year in office, Salazar was stronger than ever.

The failure of Kennedy’s Angola ‘gambit’ produced repercussions that became clear in 1962. After the fall of Goa, Salazar instructed the PIDE to “obtain the names and addresses and control the movements of all American nationals living off the limits of the Lajes Base in the Azores.” Franco Nogueira, the Portuguese Foreign Minister, refused to see his American counterpart, Ambassador Elbrick, during the spring and early summer. Adriano Moreira, the Portuguese Overseas Minister, bashed American policy in early June in a statement to the press. He said American policy engendered “neutrality toward enemies, hostility toward friends and friendship toward neutrals.” Portugal’s anti-American posturing and diplomatic cold shoulders were problematic because the American lease for the Azores base was set to expire in December of 1962. The situation was so dire that in U.S. Secretary of State Dean Rusk went to Lisbon to attempt a breakthrough with Salazar. Nothing came of the meeting, except an official list of Portuguese demands and “a rumor in Lisbon that Portugal would ask the United States for eighty million dollars to renew the Azores agreement.” Rusk decided to wait until October to address the new Portuguese requirements for the base extension.

October 1962 proved to be the worst moment for the United States to set the terms of a new Luso-American agreement on the Azores. The Cuban Missile Crisis brought the world to the

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brink of World War III. American and NATO war planning relied on the Azores; western strategists had yet to create contingency plans for losing access to that important base. On October 24, the State Department notified most allies via diplomatic cable of the blockade of Cuba. However, Kennedy wanted to give Nogueira the news in person. He had hoped to “emphasize the value that the US attached to Portugal as an ally and a member of NATO” with such special treatment.\footnote{Devlin, \textit{Chief of Station}, 200–203; Schneidman, \textit{Engaging Africa}, 35.} Rusk pressed Nogueira before his meeting with Kennedy to agree that if war with the Soviets broke out the United States and NATO would have access to the Azores after the agreement expired at year’s end. Nogueira’s response was crushing: “It is more than two years that we, the Portuguese, are living in (a) permanent (state of) emergency, and it does not seem to me that any of our allies are much disturbed by this fact.” After shooting down Rusk, Nogueira went to Kennedy. With the fate of the world in the balance, Kennedy used the weight of the situation to challenge the Foreign Minister on Angola: he asked Nogueira if Portugal “could not see its way to proclaiming publicly its acceptance of the principle of self-determination.” Nogueira told the President that such liberalizations “would be impossible.” The Azores agreement expired on December 31, 1962, which meant that American access to the strategic airbase thereafter relied on the whim of the Salazar government.\footnote{Cited in Schneidman, \textit{Engaging Africa}, 35–36.}

While Kennedy’s African policy floundered, Roberto made several significant political and diplomatic advances. Recruitment for the UPA soared after the March 15 invasion. Angolans living in the Congo flocked to the UPA headquarters in Leopoldville to join the movement. Roberto received promises of aid and invitations from nearly every African capital, as well as from international aid organizations such as Catholic Relief Services, Church World Service, Lutheran
World Relief, and the African Service Institute.\textsuperscript{312} More importantly, the UPA used the fighting in Angola to persuade smaller Angolan nationalist organizations in the Congo to merge and form the Angolan Revolutionary Government in Exile (GRAE).\textsuperscript{313} The GRAE created a military wing, known as the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA). To train and quarter this new army, the Congolese government provided Roberto land at Kinkuzu that John Marcum would later describe from one of his visits as “empty, isolated hills.”\textsuperscript{314} The base in Kinkuzu became the center of all FNLA operations.

The formation of the GRAE was a great propaganda success. It legitimized Roberto’s leadership beyond his own ethnic group precisely when military activity in Angola decreased and his forces increasingly fought more against the MPLA than the Portuguese. Furthermore, in 1963 the Organization of African Unity recognized the GRAE/FNLA as the one true Angolan liberation movement. Not only did the OAU recognize Roberto as the leader of the Angolan resistance, it made the colony the top priority of its “liberation agenda.”\textsuperscript{315} This opened the door for more international funding, but also it marginalized his main rival the MPLA.

The creation of the GRAE was possible because of a young, enigmatic leader from the central highlands named Jonas Savimbi. Roberto had convinced Savimbi to drop out of school in Switzerland and join him on his yearly trip to New York in 1961, where he “took the plunge” to join the UPA as Roberto’s head of Foreign Affairs. Savimbi proved to be critical in recruiting Angolan students in Europe to join Roberto. Along with the addition of Rosário Neto, a Luanda-Mbundu, to the UPA leadership, Savimbi’s participation helped Roberto avoid the ‘Bakongo

\textsuperscript{313} Guimarães, \textit{The Origins of the Angolan Civil War}, 62–63.
\textsuperscript{314} Marcum, \textit{The Angolan Revolution}, I:259.
\textsuperscript{315} Marcum, I:100.
image’ of the movement. Savimbi was described by his biographer Fred Bridgland as a master political strategist, who sought to build “intensive political recruitment and indoctrination; efficient health, welfare and educational provisions for civilians; and a highly organized and sustained guerrilla warfare campaign, less dramatic than the original attacks but more enduring.” He started student and youth movements and helped negotiate mergers amongst Angolan groups as well as treaties with foreign powers. However, as an Ovimbundu, the largest ethnic group in Angola, Savimbi’s greatest worth was as spokesman to his people. After Savimbi’s appointment as Foreign Minister, Ovimbundu joined the UPA in droves.

Once wealthy slave traders, large numbers of Ovimbundu themselves had become modern-day slaves to the Portuguese colonial state by the early 20th century. Concentrated in Angola’s fertile central highlands, the Ovimbundu represented the bulk of the forced labor workforce. The Portuguese utilized hundreds of thousands of Ovimbundu contract laborers for infrastructure projects and field labor during the post-war economic boom which depopulated their homeland and opened land to the settlers of the 1950s. As with the Bakongo along the Angola-Congo border, Protestant missionaries had been active among the Ovimbundu areas of Angola’s central highlands since the 1880s. The missionaries focused on education, health, and social services, and with aid from the church, a small and influential protestant middle class came to dominate social life.

Jonas Malheiro Savimbi came from this small class of Protestant elites and was a natural fit to lead the Ovimbundu in resistance against Portugal. He was born into an influential Ovimbundu family from Bié. His father, Loth Malheiro Savimbi, was a traditional chief who had been stripped of his powers and lands by the Portuguese after an uprising in 1902; he subsequently

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316 Marcum, I:221; Guimarães, The Origins of the Angolan Civil War, 55.
317 Bridgland, Jonas Savimbi, 45–56.
became the first black stationmaster on the Benguela railway. Loth had also built a church and a school in the small village where he worked as stationmaster; he replicated that undertaking each time the Portuguese transferred him to another station. Due to frequent transfers, all along the Benguela railway, there were churches and schools built by Loth Savimbi. Spurred on by a strong family emphasis on education, Jonas completed his basic studies at a mix of Protestant and Catholic missions. He was one of the first Angolan students to receive funding for college abroad from the United Church of Christ. After starting medical school in Portugal, he left during a school recess in 1960, and received permission from his sponsors to continue his studies in Switzerland. It was in Switzerland, after a change of major to political science, that both the MPLA and Roberto courted Savimbi to join their movements. Roberto received a major assist from Kenyan leader Tom Mboya, who eventually convinced Savimbi to join the GRAE.\footnote{Bridgland, \textit{Jonas Savimbi}, 23–26; Marcum, \textit{The Angolan Revolution}, I:244–45.}

With Savimbi on board, Roberto’s GRAE/FNLA appeared to be on the path to victory. Roberto shed his image as a Bakongo tribalist and gained recognition as the leader all of his people. The GRAE functioned as a real government-in-exile for Angolan refugees in Congo and had continuously fought the Portuguese Armed Forces for over a year. Not only was it the chosen Angolan movement of the Congolese government, but also the GRAE enjoyed extensive international contacts.\footnote{Guimarães, \textit{The Origins of the Angolan Civil War}, 57.} This image of progress belied the fact that Roberto still lacked the weapons, training, and funds to effectively fight the Portuguese. In fact, Roberto’s organizational gains in 1962 and 1963 quickly deteriorated under pressure from the stagnated progress of the war and Portugal’s relentless propaganda efforts overseas.
THE OVERSEAS COMPANIES OF PORTUGAL

Portugal’s public relations needs changed drastically in early 1961. Portugal’s armed forces in heavily relied upon American arms, training, and funding from the United States and its NATO allies. Because Angola was outside of the NATO zone, Portugal’s allies were under no obligation to defend the empire from African nationalists. If Lisbon wanted direct foreign support for the colonial war in Angola, it would need to convince allies to commit to the cause. Worst still, PIDE knew that not only was Roberto in touch with the American Committee on Africa (ACOA), but that two members, Frank Monteiro and William Scheinman, had secretly crossed the border in 1960 to gather intelligence. PIDE seemed very concerned that through ACOA, with high profile Democratic Party members like Eleanor Roosevelt, Roberto might find an ear within the Kennedy administration. Those fears were confirmed in the summer of 1961 when PIDE reported that ACOA had arranged for Roberto to meet then Senator Kennedy during his first trip to America.

Holden Roberto represented an existential threat to the regime and Portuguese imperialism. It was easy for Lisbon to imagine that Kennedy would choose Roberto over Salazar, Angola over the Azores, given that JFK had advocated for the United States to support African independence.


movements as a Senator as a member of ACOA. As a presidential candidate, Kennedy called for the rapid deployment of more nuclear missiles, which would make the Azores base obsolete. Beyond the threat posed by Kennedy, Holden Roberto’s offensive had shattered the myth of Portuguese easy dominance in Angola. José Manuel de Melo, a leader of the Companhia União Fabril (CUF) Group, one of the most important industrial interests in the country, informed Salazar in a long telegram just how dire the situation was in Northern Angola. José de Melo’s report made clear that military action alone could not undo the “psychological lashing” delivered to the metropole by Roberto’s men. In José de Melo’s estimation, winning over the Portuguese public, the Angolan masses, and international public opinion would take years to achieve. A PIDE report from April 1961 made clear that the secret police believed the combined assault by enemies on all sides—Portuguese dissidents, the United Nations, disgruntled military officers, the Angolans, Kennedy, (and soon India)—meant that the world believed the regime was weak, unpopular, and unable to fight back. Portugal did indeed suffer a series of political and military crises caused by how the public perceived them—a public relations crisis—and the regime believed they needed to counter with a heavy public relations counteroffensive.

Within weeks of the March 15 attacks the New State had retooled their PR machine from the ground up. George Peabody and Associates had been a fine public relations firm for peace time, but their services were not up to the level that would be needed for war. The centerpiece of the plan would be to create the Associação Portuguesa das Empresas do Ultramar, or the Overseas Companies of Portugal (OCP), which would work as a front organization for running propaganda in the United States. Alexandre Pinto Basto, director of the Companhia do Caminho de Ferro de

Benguela (CFB), offered his company’s headquarters in Lisbon to serve as the paper headquarters of the OCP. Joining CFB were the other commercial monopolies that made up the core of the New State, some of whose officials were members of government but all were involved at the highest levels of regime decision making. The Banco Espírito Santo was typical. They pooled their resources to hire an American PR firm, who would therefore have no direct connection to the Portuguese state. In reality, the OCP was deeply integrated into the Portuguese war machine. The donations made by its members served as a form of war tax, and the OCP had a direct line to Salazar.325

After secretly shopping itself to top New York firms, the Salazar regime chose the infamous Madison Avenue firm of Selvage & Lee.326 James P. Selvage and Morris Lee had been for years the masterminds of the corporate wing of the far right in America. They formed their firm in 1938 after seven years running the corporate conservative fight against the New Deal for the National Association of Manufacturers and had fought for Robert A. Taft in three presidential elections for a more isolationist, conservative America. In essence they represented the political forces the Portuguese sought to counter in the Peabody contract: small government conservatives who sought cuts for foreign aid; isolationists who did not believe in NATO and the Marshall Plan; and white Anglo-Saxon Protestants who had spouted anti-Catholic, anti-immigrant rhetoric in political campaigns for over a hundred years. Selvage & Lee were two of the most powerful

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326 The firms Hill & Knowlton, Communications Counselor Institute, and the Western European Public Affairs Division all vied for the chance to represent Portugal in 1961. Interview with Francis Starrs, Portuguese Desk, State, 5/17/1962, Review of Tax Returns, Box 8 of 67, RG 46, SFRC, 87-88th Congress, Investigation of Activities of Nondiplomatic Representatives of Foreign Principals in the U.S., Correspondence with Federal Agencies, NARA I.
conservative figures within the Republican Party and saw the Portugal contract as a way to push the party to the far right.\textsuperscript{327}

To run their Portuguese campaign, Selvage & Lee picked new hire Kenneth Downs. The Kennedy administration had laid off Downs as part of a general pairing back of Eisenhower’s civil defense programs, which the incoming administration believed went too far. One report claimed that if all of OCDM’s plans came to fruition, it “would, in fact, change the character of our society so that it became an authoritarian and regimented one.”\textsuperscript{328} Freed from government work, Downs fully embraced his new job as counsel to the OCP. Downs wrote to Lisbon that he knew how to defeat the Portugal’s enemies, who he identified as “communists, Negro organizations, civil rights organizations both black and white, the New Left, [and] anti-colonialists.” By May of 1961, just seven weeks after the March 15 uprising, Downs was already in contact with Portuguese Ambassador to the United States Luiz Esteves Fernandes and the CFB’s Alexandre Pinto Basto. Downs reported to Lisbon that the way to win the American public’s support for the war in Angola was to argue that it was in Washington’s interest to support Portugal, to defend the principle of noninterference in the affairs of allied countries, continue the media blitz portraying Portugal and Portuguese Africa in a positive light, and to aggressively push back against attempts by liberal activists to combine the issues of civil rights with anti-colonialism.\textsuperscript{329}

\textsuperscript{327} Daniel M. Friedenberg, “Public Relations for Portugal: The Angola Story as Told by Selvage and Lee”; The best example of their work for the National Association of Manufacturers was James P. Selvage and Morris M. Lee, \textit{Making the Annual Report Speak for Industry} (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1938); On Selvage’s work for Taft, see: Patterson, \textit{Mr. Republican}, 395–96, 416, 582; Senate Foreign Relations Committee, “Activities of Nondiplomatic Representatives of Foreign Principles in the United States.”

\textsuperscript{328} Marc Raskin, “Memorandum for Mr. McGeorge Bundy,” 4/25/1961, NSF Box 365, Civil Defense General, 1/61-5/61, + Undated, NSF Carl Kaysen, JFKL.

To help Downs, Selvage and Lee brought in Martin T. Camacho. Martin T. Camacho was a prominent Portuguese American lawyer from Madeira who had served in the National Labor Relation Board before the war and afterwards ran efforts to organize workers in Tokyo to form anti-communist unions during the General Douglas MacArthur-led occupation of Japan. In 1952 he ran Kennedy’s outreach to Portuguese voters in the 1952 Senate election, working closely with both Robert and Jack Kennedy to get Massachusetts’ large Portuguese community to block vote for the first time. Not only was this critical to Kennedy’s victory over Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., but it solidified Portuguese Americans’ role as kingmakers in several congressional districts in the state (including those of Democrats Tip O’Neil and Republicans Joseph W. Martin and Hastings Keith).  

With the help of Selvage and Lee funding, Camacho created the Portuguese American Foreign Relations Committee to provide the appearance of a grassroots and organic movement of patriotic Portuguese Americans in support of Portugal’s colonial war.  

Downs, Camacho, and James P. Selvage used their connections to rapidly generate what appeared to the public as a genuine outpouring of sympathy and support for Portugal and Portuguese colonists. As the news media raced to report on the brutality of the regime which inspired the uprisings in Angola, OCP’s Mad Men worked their connections to produce new content. Downs wrote speeches for the Portuguese Ambassador and the Foreign Minister which would be delivered to friendly crowds and then reprinted as pamphlets. Reprints of those speeches

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330 Camacho was so close with John and Robert Kennedy that they were “Jack” and “Bob” in his campaign planning correspondence. See: Letter, Martin T. Camacho to Bob Kennedy, 6/14/1952, Lists: Ethnic Groups, Box 110, Papers of President Kennedy, Pre-Presidential Papers, Campaign Files, ’52 Campaign, JFKL; “Biography,” n.d., Box 29, Investigation Files: Selvage & Lee, Selvage & Lee: Chairman’s Questions 5/6/63 Executive, RG 46, SFRC, 87-88th Congress, Investigation of Activities of Nondiplomatic Representatives of Foreign Principals in the U.S., Correspondence with Federal Agencies, NARA I.  

went out to Downs’ friends in the publishing business who were struggling to find the conservative angle in the Angola story. Camacho shared speeches within the Massachusetts Portuguese American community, which then brought them to the attention of Congressmen O’Neil, Martin, and Keith as representative of a crucial constituency. All three congressmen inserted into the Congressional Record propaganda materials created by Selvage and Lee. Downs also convinced his friend and fellow Berlin Airlift veteran General Frank Howley, recently fired from the Army for forcing his troops to read John Birch Society pamphlets, to accompany him on a trip to Angola. Upon his return Howley published a Downs-inspired article in Reader’s Digest, which at the time enjoyed the widest readership of any magazine in America. The Howley piece was full of blatant lies, including the repeated refrain that Holden Roberto was a communist, quoting him saying “our comrade THE DEVIL is standing by with a watchful eye,” and “LONG LIVE COMMUNISM.”

Eventually Downs helped in the production of academic books on Salazar and Angola, including Hugh Kay’s Salazar and Modern Portugal and David Abshire’s Portuguese Africa: A Handbook, written with the help of a young Richard V. Allen.

The most notorious and effective propaganda item of the campaign was a pamphlet titled “On the Morning of March 15.” It typified propaganda emanating from the alliance of Selvage and Lee, the Overseas Companies of Portugal, and the regime. After the armed forces cleared areas

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formerly held by Angolan rebels, the Portuguese secret police took extensive photos of a particularly gruesome scene in which victims of rebel attack were gruesomely maimed, including images of dead pregnant women and white babies dead in cribs scattered by the roadside. The images were handed over to the Colonial Ministry, who in turn sent them to OCP and from there to Selvage and Lee. The pamphlet linked the collection of images with a series of stories of white plantations, the families who lived there, and how “on the morning of March 15” their lives came to a brutal end. An accompanying pamphlet, “The Communists and Angola,” placed the blame squarely on the American Committee on Africa and their support of communism. In August 1961, Selvage and Lee ordered the first 35,000 copies and disseminated them amongst the Portuguese of Boston and to libraries who lacked materials on Angola, now a hot news item. Kenneth Downs also shared it with the adventurer-reporter Robert Ruark through a mutual friend, hoping Ruark would write about it in his nationally syndicated article.334

Ruark did not disappoint. The resulting op-ed appeared on a national syndicate of conservative papers and the pamphlet went viral. In it he wrote that Angola “has probably seen more organized bloodshed than the rest of Africa put together.” He knew this from a pamphlet that he said he had “before me,” that he told the readers, “which is by all odds the most horrid presentation of grisly picture and prose that I’ve ever seen.” He concluded that it was proof Angolans were “unfit to rule.”335 Within days of going to print, the Portuguese Embassy in
Washington was inundated with requests for copies from the White Citizens’ Council, the Young Americans for Freedom, the John Birch Society, the Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation run by the Schlafly family, George Benson of Harding College, and several outfits of the Young Republicans. By mid 1962 snippets of OCP pamphlets were appearing in the far-right radio shows run by Dan Smoot and Billy James Hargis. Portuguese Americans spoke about the pamphlets in speeches which later became materials for other news outlets and far right groups. Hargis, the John Birch Society, and the Citizens’ Council all sold reprints, with the Citizens’ Council copies listed under the heading of “Negro Crime & Crime Rampant in Integrated North.” The OCP got Angola into nearly every far-right media space. In 1963 arch conservative Barry Goldwater, whose presidential campaign was openly championed by James P. Selvage and a member of the Arizona NAACP, published a series of op-eds in support of Portugal. In his 1963 “Segregation now, segregation forever” speech, George Wallace said the people of Alabama were in common cause with the “Portuguese of Angola.”

This shareable media strategy masked the propagandistic origins of the materials, achieved every marketer’s goal of instilling a sense of ‘discovery’ in the target audience, and facilitated widespread exposure. Conservative media constantly pushed for its adherents to share more

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content with their social groups. *The Citizen*, the magazine of the White Citizens’ Councils of America, called for its readers to “be more effective—send material to your friends!” Appearing right after a reprint of a Martin Camacho speech, the *Weekly Crusader* implored its readers that in order “to save America,” its readers needed to “distribute pro-American literature to people who are not so well informed as you are.”\(^{338}\) Critical to the strategy was its focus on “influencers,” people and politicians with a large media following, who could be discreetly convinced to produce or share campaign content. In the era of the early Cold War, those with the largest reach meant newspaper editors, television producers, and the emergent group of right-wing media personalities like Smoot, Hargis, and Schlafly.\(^{339}\) Conservative groups were particularly important given their claim to be leaders of a new “grassroots” movement to shift American politics to the right.

They were also easily recruited into political propaganda schemes because for all of their talk about the new conservative future of American politics, by 1961 it had been four years since the Little Rock crisis and seven since *Brown v. Board of Education*. They lacked engaging content that stoked the fear, rage, and distrust that they wanted to foment.

The OCP propaganda became a major headache for the Kennedy Administration. National Security Council Staffer Samuel H. Belk worried about the effectiveness of pamphlets like “On the Morning of March 15;” “it would be unfortunate, indeed, if one day we had to fight long, time consuming battles on the Hill because we let a public relations firm get out of hand when it might have been controlled.”\(^{340}\) However, taking on Selvage & Lee was not that easy. For starters, James P. Selvage was a high-profile right-winger and leader in the GOP. Kenneth Downs was one of the

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\(^{340}\) Memorandum, Samuel E. Belk, “The Activities of Selvage and Lee Public Relations Firm/U.S.-Portuguese Relations,” for Mr. Dungan Through Mr. Bundy, 1/12/1962, NSF Box 154A, Portugal: General, 12/15/62-12/31/62, JFKL.
most connected men in Washington, not only with the GOP but also the conservative media, the intelligence community, and the foreign service. The Martin Camacho had been one of the Kennedy’s closest allies and loyal political operatives during the Senate campaigns of 1952 and 1956 was potentially embarrassing. Even while Camacho was on the Selvage & Lee payroll, he wrote letters to Kennedy to recommend Portuguese Americans for federal jobs. The Kennedy brothers wanted to deal with the issue privately. They deemed it prudent for the White House, the State Department, and the Justice Department to avoid investigating Selvage & Lee and the OCP campaign. Instead, they passed the problem on to Arkansas Democratic Senator. J. William Fulbright, who had an interest in amending the Foreign Agents Registration Act.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee under J. William Fulbright full heartedly investigated OCP’s connections to the regime in Lisbon. Fulbright subpoenaed Ken Downs’ whole operation. Fulbright’s staff combed through the desks of Downs and other Selvage and Lee operatives. Although Fulbright found documentary evidence of close contact between Downs and members of the Portuguese Overseas Ministry, he could not prove the Overseas Companies of Portugal was a front organization for the Salazar regime. When brought in for questioning during a series of Senate hearings, Downs and Camacho defended their actions as legal and patriotic. Selvage and Lee had properly registered as a foreign agent. Portugal was a NATO ally of the United States. Despite his constant pressure and tough questions, Fulbright failed to get either of Portugal’s foreign agents to admit to any wrongdoing. The sometimes-rowdy hearings proved embarrassing for Downs, Camacho, and Portugal but nonetheless did nothing to significantly

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341 Letter, Martin T. Camacho to Congressman John F. Kennedy, 4/23/1952, Lists: Ethnic Groups, Box 110, Papers of President Kennedy, Pre-Presidential Papers, Campaign Files, ’52 Campaign, JFKL; Memorandum, Kenneth O’Donnell, Special Assistant to the President, “Memorandum for John S. Gleason, Jr.,” 6/21/1961, White House Name File Box 400, Cam, JFKL. Camacho was able to easily receive an audience with President Kennedy in the summer of 1961 to discuss U.S.-Portuguese relations. See: Letter, Martin T. Camacho to Kenneth O’Donnell, Special Assistant to the President, 8/1/1961, White House Name File Box 400, Cam, JFKL.
shutter the campaign. Fulbright’s investigation resulted in no charges filed, and the public at large cared little about Fulbright’s findings of wrongdoing. At the end of 1963 Downs reported to the OCP that “the Overseas campaign was not substantially harmed, nor was it helped, in the public’s mind.” Ken Downs would later gloat to clients that he had been vindicated by the Fulbright investigation, which he said had found no criminal or immoral activity.342

Based on these successes, in 1963 the Estado Novo shifted away from racially charged propaganda material toward “more positive reporting from Portugal and Portuguese Africa.” Ken Downs reported to Lisbon that: “Your image in the United States has improved immeasurably since 1961; public opinion is no longer hostile. Representatives of news media and other observers are interested in the Portuguese world, particularly in Africa, and are willing to report on it objectively.” By which he meant, in Portugal’s favor. Following the advice of Downs, the campaign switched to focusing on “good news of economic development,” which the Madison Avenue marketing man called “one of the best forms of political propaganda.”343

THE CONGO CRISIS UNDER KENNEDY

Kennedy served a caretaker role in the ongoing Congo Crisis. The local actors had already set the stage: Lumumba was dead, Mobutu’s Binza Group controlled Leopoldville (Kinshasa), secessionists in Katanga and Stanleyville remained entrenched, and United Nations forces were

342 Kenneth T. Downs of Selvage and Lee to Alexandre Pinto Basto of the APEU, 12/28/1963, Relatório sobre a campanha das relações públicas da Associação Portuguesa das Empresas do Ultramar nos Estados Unidos, dirigido pela Selvage and Lee Inc. a Alexandre Pinto Basto, PT/AHD/3/MU-GM/GNP01-RNP/S0082/UI01832, 4; The bulk of the materials Fulbright collected that did not make it into the published Senate Foreign Relations Committee report can be found in Boxes 29, 30, and 33, Investigation Files: Selvage and Lee, and Box 1, Preliminary Studies and Correspondence, 1961-62, Country & Agents: All Drafts, RG 46, SFRC, 87-88th Congress, Investigation of Activities of Non-diplomatic Representatives of Foreign Principals in the U.S., Correspondence with Federal Agencies, NARA I. The final report is an invaluable collection of primary documents collected by the investigation and hearing minutes. See: Senate Foreign Relations Committee, “Activities of Non-diplomatic Representatives of Foreign Principles in the United States.”

343 Kenneth T. Downs, “Public Relations Presentation for the Overseas Companies of Portugal.”
enforcing a shaky peace. Kennedy embraced Mobutu and privately searched for a way for the United States to influence events in the Congo. However, the United States played no significant role in the major turning points during Kennedy’s tenure, namely, the death of UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld and the eventual UN victory over separatists in Katanga. Despite this lack of substance, however, the style and tone of Kennedy’s Congo policies made America’s relationship with Mobutu durable enough to outlive the Cold War.344

Kennedy nurtured America’s relationship with Mobutu and his Binza Group through personal diplomacy. He brought Mobutu to the White House in 1963; during his visit the President exclaimed, “Nobody in the world had done more than the General to maintain freedom against the Communists.”345 Mobutu’s visit was intended as both a symbol of American friendliness with newly independent states and a determination to confront the Soviets anywhere. It elevated Mobutu’s visibility in the United States at a time when few Americans knew who he was. Most important, Kennedy kept Mobutu’s friend Larry Devlin in Leopoldville, who more than anyone influenced American policy there.346

Devlin forged deep contacts within Mobutu’s inner circle that strengthened the American-Congolese alliance. According to Congolese Historian Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, Devlin cultivated close friendships with “Mobutu, (Justin) Bomboko, and Victor Nendaka,” who “formed an informal troika” that controlled the Binza group, and therefore, Congo. Between them, these three men controlled “the military (Mobutu), the security police (Nendaka), and foreign affairs (Bomboko).”347 Devlin and his wife frequently hosted the troika for dinner. According to Devlin,

345 Westad, The Global Cold War, 141.
346 See: Namikas, Battleground Africa; Devlin, Chief of Station.
along with others, including Holden Roberto’s friend and former teammate Cyrille Adoula, “the Binza group advised Kasavubu, but unofficially it was the power behind the presidency.” In the personage of Larry Devlin, the United States was the oligarchy’s closest friend.

The Cuban Missile Crisis highlighted the strength of that relationship. After Kennedy made his decision to impose a blockade on Cuba and to take the crisis to the public, Devlin had the task of reporting to the Congolese government. He delivered the news personally to Prime Minister Cyril Adoula, whose “first words were, “this could mean war.”” Prepared for the full ramifications of such an outcome, Adoula immediately pledged his country’s support to the United States. Adoula stood by the Kennedy administration throughout the crisis, all the way up to the removal of the Soviet nuclear weapons from Cuba. Devlin declared that Kennedy’s “successful handling” of the crisis “raised our stock with the Congolese.” Adoula, Mobutu, and the rest of the Binza group felt personally engaged in the main theater of the Cold War, which further strengthened their support of the United States.

Shortly after the removal of Soviet nuclear weapons from Cuba, the Katanga secession crisis reached a climax. In a surprise move, it was the Katangans, and not the government, the Americans or the UN troops, that instigated the final conflict. On Christmas Eve 1962, Katangan gendarmes attacked a UN barracks. Despite orders to remain in their barracks, the besieged peacekeepers went on a counter-offensive. UN troops quickly took Elisabethville (Lubumbashi), and by January 2, 1963, they had secured the Katanga’s copper mines. The gendarmes steadily retreated; by the time Kolwezi on the border with Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) fell, Tshombe’s troops had escaped to the bush or crossed the border into Angola. The gendarmes took with them

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348 Devlin, *Chief of Station*, 97–99 At the end of Larry Devlin’s second tour in Leopoldville (Kinshasa), Mobutu gave his wife and daughter ivory bracelets, and gave the station chief himself a signed photograph that stated, “To my old and excellent friend, L. Devlin, to whom the Congo and its chief owe so much.”


The collapse of Tshombe’s regime hid the fact that the Congo remained in a state of crisis. Soapy Williams wrote to Dean Rusk expressing his concern that “the events of December-January seem to have led to a public and Congressional impression that the Congo problem is now solved…This misunderstanding is very likely to cause difficulties” for continued American assistance.\footnote{“Present Problems in the Congo: Information Memorandum,” \textit{FRUS}, 1961-1963, Vol. XX, Doc. 416.} Despite the Congolese government’s firm grasp on the capital and the ability via Holden Roberto to project power into Angola, the national army remained a major liability.

During a trip to Washington, Mobutu outlined the army’s shortcomings. A holdover of the Force Publique, the new black officer corps remained poorly trained, and the enlisted troops often went without pay. Discipline was nonexistent. Coordinating movement across the country proved next to impossible due to the vast distances and rough terrain. Then there was the army’s penchant for looting and pillaging. Mobutu asked Kennedy for American weapons, training, and assistance, including personal paratrooper training at Fort Benning followed by special forces training at Fort Bragg. However, despite agreeing that the Congolese army was a grave problem and threat to American policy in the region, Kennedy did not commit to aid beyond Mobutu’s personal training in the United States.\footnote{Memorandum of Conversation, Confidential, “Retraining of Congolese National Army,” Washington, 5/31/1963, NSF, Congo, JFKL, \textit{FRUS}, 1961-1963, Vol. XX, Document 423.} Washington continued to insist that retraining and equipping the army was a job for Europeans.\footnote{“US Action re Congo in Next Three to Four Months,” \textit{FRUS}, 1961-1963, Vol. XX, Doc 419.} Without such external aid, the prospects for stability beyond the UN military’s expected mid-1964 withdrawal were slim.
The Kennedy years were the establishment of personal relationships that brought American Congo and Angolan policies closer together. Roberto and the Binza group shared common friends and enemies. President Joseph Kasavubu, a successful Bakongo politician in his own right, competed with both Roberto and his Congolese masters for power and support. For the Binza group, Roberto served as a counterweight to Kasavubu’s personal political power; for their part, the Binza group checked Kasavubu’s ability to interfere with the UPA’s activities along the border. Furthermore, with Tshombe’s forces safely ensconced in Angola, the Binza group thought of the GRAE as a counter to cross border raids by the former Katangan gendarmes. Roberto was an asset to the regime in Leopoldville (Kinshasa); as long as Mobutu’s men controlled the government, Roberto had a safe haven for his movement and a staunch ally against the Portuguese.

In 1963, Mobutu and Adoula stepped up their support for Roberto’s government in exile. Despite worries regarding Katangan retaliation, the Prime Minister granted Roberto “permission to send a personal representative to Katanga to begin building a political apparatus there among Angolan refugees and émigrés.” The Adoula government also helped forge an agreement between the FNLA and South Africa’s Pan African Congress (PAC), known as the Congo Alliance, which would help both parties prepare for armed struggle against white rule.\(^{354}\) Roberto’s hope was to expand his insurgency into eastern Angola, far from traditional centers of Portuguese power. In the main theater of operations, the FNLA engaged in pitched battles with the MPLA within the Congo. These battles, essentially the first of the Angolan Civil War, intensified the hatred between the two groups. The Congolese government joined in, and frequently intercepted MPLA attempts to cross into Angola.\(^{355}\) Finally, after the OAU recognized the GRAE/FNLA as the one true

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\(^{355}\) Marcum, *Angolan Revolution*, II:43, 68.
Angolan liberation movement, the Kinshasa government expelled the MPLA from the Congo. The MPLA members who stayed behind in Kinshasa found it impossible to continue work amidst incessant harassment from the authorities.\textsuperscript{356} Dejected, Angola’s communists moved across the Congo River to Brazzaville, the capital of the Congo Republic. By year’s end, Roberto and his GRAE/FNLA had the monopoly on the Angolan revolution in the Congo.

NASA AND THE WHITE POWERS

The Kennedy administration had anticipated that the creation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) signaled a new stage in the struggle against Portugal and the Apartheid regime in South Africa. The OAU quickly confirmed those suspicions with the creation of an African Liberation Committee committed to ending white rule. The White House also heard reports that African and Asians countries planned on relentlessly attacking Portuguese imperialism and Apartheid through United Nations resolutions and Security Council discussions.\textsuperscript{357} This news took on greater importance as various individual White House studies on Portuguese Africa, South Africa, and Southern Rhodesia were combined to become one massive policy paper that viewed white rule in Southern Africa as one interconnected issue.\textsuperscript{358} That led Washington to begin to consider whether action taken against white rule in Portuguese Africa or Southern Rhodesia might endanger NASA’s satellite tracking station outside of Johannesburg and the Lajes airfield in the Azores.

\textsuperscript{356} Bridgland, Jonas Savimbi, 57; Marcum, Angolan Revolution, II:121–22.
\textsuperscript{357} George Ball, “Memorandum for the President,” 7/13/1963, Box 387, South Africa 10/61-10/62, NSF William H. Brubeck, JFKL.
The Kennedy administration realized it had less and less room to maneuver and needed to reevaluate its Southern Africa policy. Yet American interests were still dependent on the autocratic regimes in Lisbon and the Apartheid government in Pretoria. The deadline for a new agreement with Lisbon on the Azores had passed in 1962, and the tracking station in South Africa was an integral part of the blossoming American space program.\(^{359}\) Losing one of those installations would endanger a key plank of President Kennedy’s New Frontier agenda. Losing both would jeopardize Kennedy’s whole foreign policy.

Special Assistant to the President Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. wrote to Attorney General Robert Kennedy in July 1963 that America may have to choose “between the military risk of losing the Azores and the South African tracking stations and the risk of losing Africa.” He argued “that the African states have history on their side and probably justice too; and that, unless we want to abandon Africa altogether, we will have to do something to show our support of the principle of self-determination.” For Schlesinger, the policy decision was “how far we can go without risking the Azores base and various tracking stations…or, even more essentially whether these military facilities are so indispensable to us that they must determine our African policy.” Schlesinger argued that Washington should look more closely at “alternatives to the Azores and the tracking stations,” as well as “the prospects of the Salazar regime.” The Special Assistant to the President told Robert Kennedy that “it would be a great mistake to base our African policy on the indispensability of the military facilities and the permanence of the Salazar regime if neither of these things turns out to be so.”\(^{360}\)


The tracking station issue directly pitted Kennedy’s Moon Shot against his Africa policy. After inheriting the station from the Eisenhower administration, Kennedy continued to sacrifice the cause of racial justice in South Africa to the space program by agreeing in 1962 “to continue selling [South Africa] amounts of arms for external defense as a specific quid pro quo (emphasis original) for the tracking station.”³⁶¹ NASA and the Department of Defense made it clear to the White House that “movement of either NASA or AMR tracking station to positions outside South Africa would weaken” its value to the space program. Therefore, “their continued existence on South African soil is certainly in the best interests of the continuation of US research.” Deep Space Station 51 had “contributed greatly to our outer-space activities and missile development” through “electronic tracking data, mid-course telemetry data and command/control for manned space shots.” The Ranger unmanned program relied extensively on DSN 51, as did continuing research on the Thor-Delta program.³⁶²

Administration Africanists fought DSN 51 as hard as they could, given how much of the President’s own personal prestige was riding on the space program. Chester Bowles had been frustrated by the satellite tracking station from the start of the administration. He believed that without DSN 51, the United States would not sell any advanced military equipment to the Republic of South Africa.³⁶³ During the 1963 reevaluation, Africanist Samuel Belk pointed out that “the [Paul] Nitze papers on military installations in Africa contain next to nothing about those located in South Africa,” a welcomed change from “terming all of these extremely small installations as

³⁶¹ Telcon, Chayes/Ball, 7/12/1963, George Ball Personal Papers (hereafter, Ball PPS), Box 7, South Africa 7/27/61-10/61/63, JFKL.
³⁶² Department of State National Strategy Series, Secret, “South Africa (intermediate draft),” 10/28/1963, 197-200, Box WH01, Schlesinger PPS, JFKL.
necessary to our defense posture.” The tracking station was listed as “important but “not vital.”” The Azores were still considered “a keystone in US military operations.”

George Ball led the way in support of the tracking station and close relations between the United States and South Africa. To him, the decision was a no brainer. During a contentious conversation with Soapy Williams where Ball grew increasingly annoyed by the Undersecretary of State’s position on Angola and South Africa, Ball told Soapy that "you don't seriously think that when the chips were down that were(sic) going to be a party to a black envasion(sic) of South Africa in order to drive out the South Africans. Do you?" Ball’s position was that there would be no serious challenges to Apartheid until “sort of mid-way in Teddy’s administration,” which meant Jack Kennedy could afford to ignore it for the time being.

JFK decided the space program was more important than African nationalism and decided to moderate his moral opposition to Apartheid and Portuguese imperialism. When the UN did propose a general embargo in 1963 to cripple the Afrikaner government, Kennedy balked. He favored some form of limited action against South Africa but was unwilling to go to the extreme length of supporting a general embargo. Unable to decide between the moral choice and the military-economic one, Kennedy sought a compromise. The administration decided to pre-empt the UN by calling for a voluntary arms-embargo to start in 1964 which would exempt weapons used for ‘international security,’ the euphemism used by the Kennedy administration to describe military hardware which could be used against the Soviet Union in the event of a war. The administration designed the embargo to stop sales of equipment like helicopters and armored cars used by internal security forces; the exemption for national security left the door open for

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364 Samuel E. Belk, “Note for Mr. Bundy,” 7/12/1963, NSF Box 159, South Africa General, 3 June 63 to 12 July 63, NSF, JFKL.
365 Telcon, Ball/Bundy, 8/22/1963, Ball PPS, Box 7, Portugal, JFKL.
American Naval and Air Force sales. Furthermore, the delayed start date allowed Kennedy to squeeze in more arms sales to South Africa before the embargo went into effect. Pretoria understood that Kennedy had to take some kind of position on the arms embargo, and the flurry of arms sales prior to its going into effect was deemed enough to keep NASA’s Deep Space Network facility open.

At the same time as the controversy over the South African embargo was going on, Kennedy and his foreign policy team decided to change course and take a conciliatory tone with Salazar and Portugal. Kennedy recalled ambassador Elbrick in the spring of 1963 and replaced him with Admiral George W. Anderson in the summer. Nogueira and Salazar had never liked Elbrick, and the bad blood from the coup attempt in 1961 and the Azores negotiations in 1962 led to his undoing. Adlai Stevenson abstained from UN votes on Angola, rather than vote against the Portuguese. Despite the tenuousness of America’s access to the Azores, Kennedy continued to utilize the base and to support Portugal as a member of NATO. From 1960-1963, Alliance-wide military maneuvers practiced deploying troops to Europe in moments of crisis via the Azores.

Kennedy sent George Ball to meet with Salazar and do what Elbrick and Rusk were unable to do: convince the Portuguese to allow self-determination in Africa and unfettered American access to the Azores. Ball came away from his meeting convinced that “Salazar was absorbed by a time dimension quite different from ours; it seemed as though he and his whole country were living in more than one century, and the heroes of the past were still shaping Portuguese policy.” Portugal seemed to be “ruled by a triumvirate consisting of Vasco da Gama, Prince Henry the Navigator, and Salazar.” The dictator was a throwback to Portugal’s past and would not

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366 Noer, *Cold War and Black Liberation*, 141–51.
369 Ball, *The Past Has Another Pattern*, 277.
relinquish control of his ancient empire. Ball left the meeting convinced that Lisbon would remain intransigent on Angola and their colonies. He decided that American policy should not be about miracles; it should be about results. Along with Ambassador Anderson, Ball was convinced of the need for major changes in U.S. Angola policy. Together they intended to steer President Kennedy away from backing Holden Roberto’s nationalists and more firmly embrace Salazar’s Portugal.

Kennedy did not live to work out a new course in Angola. The day JFK died in Dallas, Holden Roberto was in New York, himself convalescing from an assassination attempt in Tunis. He had expected to meet with the President to discuss an increase in funding and a new aid package. Instead, Roberto watched Kennedy’s funeral on TV from a New York apartment. 370 Angola’s American champion was dead; Roberto returned to Leopoldville (Kinshasa) without meeting the new president, unclear as to whether LBJ would abandon or emancipate Angola.

After three years intensely searching for a way to support Holden Roberto, the Kennedy administration had achieved relatively little in meaningful progress. After initial strong steps to back decolonization in Angola, JFK found it difficult to create an Angola policy that could please the Africanists and the Europeanists in his administration. Complicating Washington’s Africa policies was Portugal’s relentless public relations campaign, which succeeded in flooding right-wing media spaces with Portuguese propaganda. Without decisive American aid, Holden Roberto forged on, and with the help of the American-backed Congolese government found a way to increase his stature as the leader of the Angolan independence movement. Ultimately the Azores and the Deep Space Network Station 51 in South Africa proved too critical to America’s ability to project power across the Atlantic and to explore the stars for Kennedy to risk losing them.

IV. LOSING ANGOLA TO SAVE CONGO

Lyndon B. Johnson continued the strategies of his fallen predecessor and took them further, including providing training and covert aid for Holden Roberto, and a massive paramilitary operation in the Congo to preserve its pro-U.S. government. Kennedy had failed to secure either the Azores base or Angola’s independence, and the Africanists in the White House and the State Department renewed their push in 1964 for aid to Roberto. Standing in the way of increased American support was newly Congolese Prime Minister Moises Tshombe, who came to power amidst new instability in Congo. Roberto’s problems intensified under the Johnson years after Jonas Savimbi’s flight from the GRAE and subsequent defections. Adding to the Congo Crisis and Roberto’s struggles, South Africa and the Universal Declaration of Independence (U.D.I.) by Rhodesia escalated the racial struggle in the region. Johnson, encumbered by the Vietnam War, struggled to maintain a proactive policy in southern Africa that balanced global security concerns with his aspirations for freedom and liberty for all. However, LBJ’s gains in the region proved durable enough to survive the neglectful Nixon years, and served as the foundation of the climactic intervention in 1975.

Johnson executed his own Africa strategy that kept the United States aligned with African nationalism while preserving the Azores and the NATO alliance. His foreign policy team would invest a great deal of time and political capital in Africa, especially in 1964 and 1965 during the ongoing Congo Crisis, racial incidents in South Africa, Zambia’s independence, and Rhodesia’s unilateral declaration of independence. Most important, in 1964 LBJ transferred DSN 51 to Spain and authorized an expansive aid package to Roberto to improve his leadership and political operations. Despite such a bold move, events in the Congo prevented American aid to Roberto

Johnson stayed abreast of the contours of America’s entanglements in Southern Africa while serving as Vice President. As chairman of NASA’s Space Council, LBJ was keenly aware of the satellite tracking station in South Africa, DSN 51, its contributions to the space program, and its political liabilities.\footnote{On NASA’s development of the Deep Space Network under the Kennedy administration, see: Report to the Congress from the President of the United States, “United States Aeronautics and Space Activities, 1961,” Outer Space: OS: Executive, 1/1962:26-31, Box 652, WHCSF, Series 37: Outer Space, JFK PP, JFLK.} LBJ also followed Adlai Stevenson’s positions on Angola in the United Nations closely, as they directly impacted NASA’s operations in Southern Africa. The Vice President received Portuguese-American Committee on Foreign Affairs and other Portuguese propaganda from constituents in Texas who were enraged that the United States did not support Portugal in Angola and Moise Tshombe in Katanga.\footnote{Press Release No. 3668, “Statement by Ambassador Adlai E. Stevenson, United States Representative, in the Security Council, on Angola,” VP SF Box 134, VPP: 1962 SF, Foreign Relations: Africa [1 of 2], LBJL. The folder was littered with constituent letters passing along or echoing talking points from Portuguese and Katangan propaganda.} One outraged man who had imbibed a lethal dose of Madison Avenue’s Africa propaganda told Johnson that “No state in the Union is more aroused than Texas over the Administration’s support of the Rape of Katanga.” This constituent implored the Vice President to stop the “One-Worlders in the State Department and White House” from funding “the communistic United Nations.” Johnson was guilty of these sins by association, leading this angry writer to ask, “Have you lost your Texas manhood and soul?”\footnote{Fred D. Deckard to L.B. Johnson, Vice President, Houston, 1/3/1962, VP SF Box 134, VPP: 1962 SF, Foreign Relations: Africa [2 of 2], LBJL.}
Johnson was well aware that Africa was beginning to be a major issue for Southerners, one that he would have to confront in order to wage the Cold War in Africa.

Holden Roberto forced Angola onto LBJ’s agenda when *The New York Times* ran the column “Angolan Rebels to Take Red Aid” on January 4, 1964. Roberto bluntly summed up his needs to the *Time*’s reporters: “We are now at a point where a radical change of policy is imperative for us to make headway in our struggle.” Roberto observed, “that the Western countries are hypocritical…while paying lip service to self-determination, the United States supplies its North Atlantic treaty ally, Portugal, with arms that are used to kill us.” Members of the UPA, christened the FNLA in 1962, met with Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai during his African tour that winter. The Chinese promised the FNLA that they could “have whatever (they) need in arms and money,” an offer Roberto was determined to accept. The American embassy in Leopoldville contacted the Congolese government immediately. Marcel Lengema, an assistant to Adoula, guaranteed the U.S. that “all material assistance must be channeled through the Congolese Government. The Angolan government cannot accept aid directly from abroad.” The Department of State sent out a flurry of telegrams to the embassies in Leopoldville and Lisbon to discern if Roberto was defecting or merely trying to send a message to the new American administration.375

What was immediately clear was that Roberto’s FNLA needed help. The war had stagnated and regular engagement between opposing forces was replaced with cross-border strikes to destroy bridges and mine roads while the Portuguese responded by strafing villages and bombing the countryside with napalm. Portugal’s counterinsurgency tactics isolated people from the rebels which limited political organization and recruitment within Angola. The situation in the Congo

was no better. After a visit to Kinkuzu, John Marcum claimed that Roberto’s forces ate irregularly, mainly because they relied on “a combination of handouts from international relief agencies and food purchases made with scarce funds that might better have been used for military supplies.” FNLA troops rioted sporadically, with the leadership occasionally requiring help from Mobutu to suppress insurrection. Aid from the OAU had still not materialized; indeed, nearly “a year after the OAU recognition of the GRAE, the dual promise of escalated insurgency and massive pan-African support remained unfulfilled.”³⁷⁶ Without direct American assistance, it appeared, Roberto would have to accept aid from China.

The National Security Council organized a series of meetings in the winter and spring of 1964 to determine how to respond. The consensus was that this was a cry for help, rather than a genuine turn to communism and a rejection of American support. Johnson personally avoided the NSC’s Roberto meetings in 1964, and instead entrusted the issue to his foreign policy team.

The NSC meeting on February 18, 1964 outlined the potential courses of action. The State Department, represented by Undersecretary W. Averell Harriman, pushed for continued diplomacy with Portugal aimed at reconciliation with Roberto. To bolster their argument against direct support for the Angolan nationalists, the State Department sent a circular Airgram to every African embassy asking for “any information…regarding current reports of internal dissension within (FNLA) or host government’s views on Holden Roberto’s leadership.”³⁷⁷ The CIA, USAID, and the Africa Bureau of the State Department argued for a comprehensive package of support to Roberto, “particularly refugee relief, secondary education, educational programs specifically tailored to potential political leaders, administrative professional governmental cadres and other

such specialized requirements; and other forms of assistance by appropriate means.\textsuperscript{378} Such aid would supplement the relief work already provided by Catholic Relief Services, Lutheran World Relief, Church World Service, and other religious organizations.\textsuperscript{379} The NSC appointed a ‘Special Group’ to determine the best course of action, and ordered a full report on Angola, Portugal, and Roberto.

The first meeting of the NSC’s Angola Special Group convened on March 16. The CIA, National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy and Attorney General Robert Kennedy presented the case for an expanded aid package; the State Department argued against.\textsuperscript{380} George Ball led the State Department’s opposition, which focused on working with Portugal to seek a negotiated settlement and a managed transition to majority rule.

Ball hoped that Ambassador Anderson could convince the Portuguese to take a moderate stance on Africa, and he had some reason for optimism. Anderson was less confrontational than Elbrick, and his military background impressed Salazar and Nogueira. The new ambassador went so far as to travel to Angola and Mozambique with Portuguese guides and came back very impressed by the reforms put in place after hostilities had begun.\textsuperscript{381} Anderson’s argument was simple; he attempted to convince Portugal to move toward self-determination for Angola out of Portugal’s own self-interest. One State Department official likened the task to being “continually charged with the disagreeable task of trying to get some forward political movement out of the


\textsuperscript{379} Melady and Melady, \textit{Ten African Heroes}, 100.


Portuguese Government, while still being responsible for maintaining good relations.”

Notwithstanding Anderson’s hard-won civility with Salazar, his diplomacy produced no breakthroughs for George Ball to use in the policy debate back in Washington.

Ball remained adamant that the United States should not back Angolan rebels. He wrote to Secretary of State Rusk with “an emphatic dissent” to the military option. His greatest concern was that “sympathy for the underdog” and “abstract libertarian principles” would guide Angola policy, not the national interest. He was upset that he had personally assured Salazar that the U.S. was not involved with the GRAE, when in fact the CIA had been supporting Holden Roberto since 1955. Ball argued that American credibility as an ally and honest broker was at stake. Furthermore, the plan the CIA and the African Bureau promoted constituted “a joint venture with the Communists to undermine a Western ally.” The core of his argument, however, questioned the underlying assumptions of the foreign policy inherited by Johnson: “that we must give covert financial aid to the Angolan Nationalists if they are to be friendly with us after independence.” Ball insisted that the United States could wait until after independence to engage with Angola. In Congo, Americans had been able to thwart a communist advance despite being uninvolved with black politics before independence and providing support for Belgian colonialism. Ball supported overt aid to refugees and students but would not throw his weight behind covert activities.

G. Mennen ‘Soapy’ Williams was the counterweight to Ball. He wrote Rusk stressing that support provided to Roberto moderated the Angolan revolution. America’s goal should be for an

383 Ball ended a letter to Anderson, “Now, if you’ll just get him to pull those F-86s out of Guinea, as he promised to do, we shall be impressed indeed!” Se: “Dear George,” FRUS, 1964-1968, Vol. XII, Doc. 148.
independent Angola to be a part of a Portuguese commonwealth including Brazil. His fear was that Angola could develop into “another Congo-like situation” with chaos and rebellion. Williams believed that aid to Roberto was the only way to prevent that outcome. Additionally, Angola’s “wide African appeal” gave African leaders “no choice but to back the Angolan and Mozambique nationalist movements if they are to survive politically themselves.” U.S. engagement with the region demanded that American policy align with the free African states on the issue. He prophetically argued that the colonial wars were creating social strains in Portugal, and that the Portuguese military had become so despondent that it might rebel against Salazar. Williams worried that without American pressure to moderate its colonial rule, Portugal had no future in post-independence Angola.385

Roberto made it difficult for Williams and the Angola hawks. With the war stagnated, he worked to turned to making exile living in Kinshasa as comfortable as possible. According to Marcum, Roberto’s reputation as a rebel fighter took a hit when he “accepted the gift of a black Mercedes from an anonymous benefactor…(and) took to driving about the Congolese capital in his shiny new status symbol.”386 Marcum, a big UPA supporter, lamented that “Holden himself became increasingly a Kinshasa businessman,” and he eventually purchased “four or five buildings in Kinshasa bought partly with money that the Angolan liberation committee had placed at his disposal, and partly thanks to American aid and Mobutu’s aid.”387 Roberto lived less and less like a revolutionary and increasingly like the famous soccer player of his youth. Angered by the lack of progress in the war and the Bakongo monopoly over leadership positions, Jonas Savimbi quit

386 Marcum, Angolan Revolution, II:119.
387 Basil Davidson, In the Eye of the Storm: Angola’s People (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc, 1972), 212.
the movement. Ovimbundu membership plummeted. A CIA report at the time expressed doubt as to “Roberto’s long-term stayability (sic) as a leader,” even though the agency continued to support an expanded Angola program.\(^{388}\) The evidence against Roberto contributed to the decision by the Special Group not to choose a military course of action.

Bundy, Robert Kennedy and McNamara stressed that Roberto’s problems were political, and that covert aid was needed to shore up his leadership deficiencies. Bundy referred to “the folly of a stubborn adherence to an antique Portuguese policy.” Bobby “felt strongly that we (the United States) could not abandon the movement.” McNamara even went so far as to say that it was possible the Defense Department could live without the Azores base, and that the Azores “should not dictate our foreign policy…keeping the USSR out of Africa was more important than” the airfield.\(^{389}\) On May 21, 1964, the 303 Committee decided against military aid, but unanimously approved covert political funding for the FNLA.\(^{390}\) The Johnson administration had agreed to intervene in Angola in support of Roberto’s GRAE against NATO ally Portugal.

The administration immediately moved to shutter Deep Space Network 51 in South Africa and began work on its replacement in Robledo, Spain. NASA already had a minor tracking station in Robledo, but it needed major renovations to join the Deep Space Network. Rusk contacted the American embassy in Spain with instructions for approaching Generalissimo Francisco Franco’s government for permission to build a “third 85-foot antenna at Robledo station to provide essential coverage for increased workloads in lunar, planetary, and manned space flight programs.” Rusk


expected negotiations to go smoothly given the positive impact construction and manning the site would have on the Spanish economy, and the prestige the Franco regime would gain by playing a pivotal role in the Apollo and subsequent programs. The Johnson administration would not face the same decision between the Moon and Africa that had plagued Kennedy. Meanwhile, Soapy Williams met with Congolese Prime Minister Cyrille Adoula in New York to discuss the terms of Roberto’s increased aid. It seemed that the United States was prepared to help Roberto where he needed it the most, with his leadership and political organization.

JOHNSON SAVES THE CONGO, LOSES ANGOLA

Unfortunately, Roberto’s American aid never materialized. After the twin shocks of the pullout of the United Nations peacekeepers and the Congo’s second parliamentary elections, events in the Congo took an unexpected turn; by July, Adoula was out of power, and rebels led by Che Guevara had captured Stanleyville (Kisangani), the historic home of Lumumba and a center of the opposition. Moïse Tshombe, the one-time secessionist leader, came to power, and refused to allow aid to flow to Roberto. The Congo crisis had flared up again, and once again, the country appeared on the verge of dissolution or communist takeover.

Adoula’s government had quickly lost control of the provinces it controlled as the United Nations troops left the country in stages. By the end of 1963, a small rebellion in the east expanded into wide swaths of the country. Kivu province fell first to “The Simbas,” rebels led by Laurent Kabila, and as the June 30, 1964 UN withdrawal date approached, rebel control spread. The Simbas were Congolese frustrated by the inefficient and corrupt government in Leopoldville (Kinshasa).

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391 Telegram, Limit Distribution, Secretary of State Dean Rusk to American Embassy in Madrid, 5/20/1964, NSF CO Box 76 [1 of 2], Africa, General, Volume 1, 2/64-9/64, LBJL.
392 Young and Turner, The Rise and Decline of the Zairian State, 47.
Their political beliefs included Marxist-Leninism, but at their core was their belief in the slain Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba. Once the UN completed their departure, rebels allied to the Simbas took control of Stanleyville and announced their secession from the Léopoldville government.393

Amidst the chaos, Parliament sacked Adoula. The army was inept and the government remained paralyzed as the country fragmented. In a panic, Congo’s parliament turned to Moïse Tshombe, the former Katangan secessionist leader, to bring order to the situation. Tshombe recalled his gendarmes back from Angola and brought a mercenary army with him from exile.394 He was the only Congolese politician with a personal army, and his connections to Katanga and its international businesses meant that the communist led rebellion would not extend into the Copperbelt. In a stunning reversal, Roberto’s good friend Adoula was out and Portugal’s ally Tshombe was in.

With the Congo on the brink of dissolution, Tshombe first turned to his former white allies. South Africa again provided funding for an army of French and Rhodesian mercenaries. The new government in Leopoldville attempted to reengage with Portugal, whose ports of Lobito in Angola and Beira in Mozambique exported the majority of Katanga’s copper. Tshombe blocked the delivery of aid to the FNLA and disrupted its recruiting efforts, including the newly approved American support.395 Reversing the policies of Roberto’s good friend Adoula, Tshombe cleared the way for President Kasavubu, Roberto’s Bakongo political rival, to openly challenge the FNLA. It was the first time since immediately after Lumumba’s death that Roberto found his position in

394 Devlin, Chief of Station, 225.
395 Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, 126–27.
the Congo threatened. Mobutu, whose army was unable to control the chaos, could only sit on the sidelines and watch.

In a bid to assert total control over the situation, Tshombe met with G. Mennen Williams and asked him to recall the U.S. ambassador and to stop all support for Roberto. When informed of the request, President Johnson acquiesced; he told Williams that he was worried that the Congo was disintegrating. LBJ decided that “time was running out and the Congo must be saved.”[^396] The 303 Committee, an oversight panel composed of members from the NSA and CIA, tabled Roberto’s aid package in response.[^397] With Tshombe in power, saving the Congo meant sacrificing Roberto.

In the summer of 1964, with his presidential election campaign underway, Johnson ordered a covert military campaign in the Congo. The operation would include an “instant air force” of ground attack planes, a vast mercenary army, foreign paratroopers, and paramilitary operations.[^398] The CIA reassigned Larry Devlin to his old post at the CIA Station in Leopoldville (Kinshasa) where he oversaw Johnson’s secret war and the expansion of the CIA’s mission in the Congo.[^399] Devlin, a close confidant of the Congolese leadership, wrote in his memoirs that he had allowed “the Binza group and Tshombe” to determine “the form, extent and auspices of the U.S. intervention.”[^400] The massive program grew into a full-fledged war.

Devlin’s secret army was a conglomeration of distinct, compartmentalized factions. Tshombe brought his former secessionist gendarmes into the Congolese army, which undermined Mobutu’s control of the institution. Fighting with the army was a force of hundreds of foreign

[^399]: Devlin, *Chief of Station*, 227.
mercenaries, including the infamous “Mad Mike” Mike Hoare and Bob Denard.\textsuperscript{401} The CIA recruited Cuban exiles from Florida, claimed to be Bay of Pigs veterans, to pilot Zaire’s new air force.\textsuperscript{402} They flew an assortment of obsolete aircraft, many modified for a ground attack role: thirteen T-28 fighter-bombers, five long-range B-26 attack bombers, three C-46 transport aircraft, and two small twin-engine liaison planes.\textsuperscript{403} To maintain and support the small air armada, the CIA created a front organization run by Europeans known as the “Western International Ground Maintenance Organization,” or WIGMO.\textsuperscript{404} It was a perfect mixture of secrecy, deniability, and effectiveness. Theoretically these units were part of the Congolese armed forces. In actuality, they were separate groups that operated independent of the regular military. The CIA dictated strategy and managed the logistics.

The war reached its climax shortly after LBJ’s victory over Goldwater. Just a week after the U.S. election, the mercenary army reached the outskirts of Stanleyville. Inside the city, the Simbas held “30 Americans and 800 other foreigners, mostly Belgians” hostage.\textsuperscript{405} Fearing for the safety of the hostages, the Belgians and the Johnson administration concocted a joint plan to rescue them. Known as “Operation Dragon Rouge,” the scheme called for a Belgian paratrooper attack supported by the U.S. Air Force. On November 24, 1964, with the CIA providing air support, Belgian troops executed a combat jump from American C-130s into the besieged city.\textsuperscript{406} Later that morning the mercenaries began their assault. The combined mercenary and Belgian force

\textsuperscript{401} Young and Turner, \textit{The Rise and Decline of the Zairian State}, 49; Mike Hoare, \textit{Congo Mercenary} (Boulder, Colo: Paladin Press, 2008).
\textsuperscript{402} “How C.I.A. Put ‘Instant Air Force’ Into Congo,” \textit{NYT}.
\textsuperscript{403} Devlin, \textit{Chief of Station}, 225.
massacred the rebels; the beatings, robbery, rape, torture, and murder committed in the name of securing the city would damage the standing of the Congo and the United States within the capitals of Africa for years.  

Nevertheless, Johnson’s secret war broke the rebellion, and the Congo remained under the thumb to the United States.

In the wake of the upheaval in the Congo, President Johnson ordered a reevaluation of U.S. Angola policy. By that point, Tshombe’s anti-FNLA efforts had taken full effect. The Congolese government, once an ally, no longer allowed the FNLA to import weapons. The CIA found the FNLA to be “increasingly ineffective, and has been racked by mutinies…it is chronically short of food and ammunition, and largely cut off from its own forces inside Angola where nationalist activity has virtually ceased.” The overall opinion of Roberto amongst the embassy staff in Leopoldville plummeted. Even his staunchest supporters began to doubt his leadership. John Marcum, author of *The Angolan Revolution*, for the first time, questioned “Roberto’s leadership ability and potential.” Marcum’s opinion was particularly damning, given that the CIA viewed him as “the closest American to Roberto.”

With Roberto no longer a credible option in the eyes of his closest supporters in Washington, Johnson decided to switch tracks and try the policy of cautious engagement with Portugal proposed by George Ball and Admiral Anderson. The first step was to seek please the Portuguese government through arms sales. In 1965, the CIA secretly sold Portugal seven B-26 bombers in an attempt to convince the Portuguese to negotiate a long-term lease for the Azores base. By the summer of 1965, Anderson had created a comprehensive proposal for a Portuguese-

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American rapprochement. The so-called Anderson Plan would have required Portugal to allow “free political activity in the territories with full amnesty for refugees” in exchange for “a suspension by African nationalists of anti-Portuguese activities in the UN.” Anderson seemed to believe that Holden Roberto was bought and owned by the CIA and would take directions from Washington. Anderson promised to resume all military sales to Portugal if the African nationalists failed to hold up their end of the bargain.\(^{410}\) The Ambassador hoped that by offering Portugal an opportunity to procure sorely needed American weapons, the Salazar regime would begin reforms that would alleviate its status as an international pariah.

By then, however, Portugal had partially insulated itself from American pressure. With Moïse Tshombe in power in Léopoldville, Salazar had little reason to fear Holden Roberto’s ill-equipped army.\(^{411}\) In America the war in Angola was no longer frontpage news, and the propaganda campaign there continued to be successful. In Europe, Portugal found eager support from NATO allies to fill the void created by Kennedy’s limited arms embargo.

The Portuguese public relations campaign to move American public opinion towards the regime flourished in the Johnson years. After the Fulbright investigation, Kenneth Downs left Selvage & Lee and took the Overseas Companies of Portugal contract with him. He partnered with Kermit Roosevelt, Jr., the former CIA agent who had led the coup against Mohammad Mosaddegh in 1953, to create a new PR firm, Downs & Roosevelt. Downs & Roosevelt continued the OCP campaign under the radar of the Johnson administration by focusing more on recruiting reputable news sources and scholars to cover Portuguese Africa in a more flattering light for the Salazar regime. A key to this free-publicity plan was to encourage international reporters to come to

\(^{410}\) Schneidman, 69–72.
Angola, and for Downs and Roosevelt to work as a sort of press concierge service while in-country. Downs, himself a former International News Service wartime correspondent, put particular emphasis on bringing in Pulitzer Prize-winning reporters from the Associated Press. This was so successful that by the mid-1960s, nearly every journalist in Angola that entered the colony via Luanda, the capital, worked with Downs and Roosevelt or their subsidiaries. Eventually the D&R staffers in Luanda and Mozambique spun off their own companies which further obscured the role of the Portuguese government in the OCP propaganda campaign. Downs also worked with authors to find publishers for books espousing pro-Portuguese viewpoints and promoting the ones that did make it into print far and wide. Two such books, both of which received assistance from Kenneth Downs and the Portuguese Embassy in Washington, were *The Fabric of Terror* by Bernardo Teixeira, and *Portuguese Africa: A Handbook* by David Abshire with help from a young Richard V. Allen. Downs and Roosevelt also worked with Foreign Minister Franco Nogueira to prepare his book *The United Nations and Portugal* for paperback, including edits and a speaking tour. All three of these books are widely held in research libraries to this day.  

Portugal’s shifting role in NATO strengthened Portugal’s resolve to continue the war. Since the start of the war in Angola, Portugal had concluded military agreements with France and West Germany, which reduced their need for American aid. Portugal traded France the rights to a missile tracking station in the Azores and Germany land for an airfield in Beja in exchange for jet aircraft, helicopters, frigates, and submarines. After Charles De Gaulle reduced France’s commitment to NATO in 1966, Portugal assumed greater importance within the alliance system. NATO had reorganized the alliance’s naval forces after losing access to French ports, which led

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413 Schneidman, *Engaging Africa*, 100.
to the creation of the Iberian Atlantic Command, or IBERLANT, based near Lisbon. IBERLANT called for the relocation of American Navy resources from Norfolk Virginia, further bolstering the American military presence in Portugal.\textsuperscript{414} In addition to the lucrative base deals and arms purchases, Portugal benefitted from full participation within NATO training, standardization, and equipment purchasing programs. The result was that Salazar and Nogueira rebuffed Anderson’s new approach. America simply did not have enough leverage to moderate Portuguese colonial policies. Johnson’s efforts to reach out to Portugal produced even less benefit than his attempt the previous year to finance and train Roberto.

LBJ had had enough of the ineffective policies the Europeanists and Africanists in his administration had attempted. Rather than pick one side or the other, Johnson proposed a curse on both houses—Salazar and Roberto. To punish Salazar, Johnson ordered the Joint Chiefs in 1965 to minimize the Azores base and all other Portuguese NATO installations in American military planning. In December 1965, Johnson placed George Ball, who was adamantly against arming Roberto, in charge of African policy.\textsuperscript{415} Roberto still collected his CIA stipend and met occasionally with State Department representatives, but Washington would not provide him the critical military and political aid he needed to rally his GRAE to defeat the Portuguese military.

But then Roberto’s fortunes improved when Mobutu took power in a coup at the end of 1965. A new constitution written the previous year switched the roles of the prime minister and the president, and both Tshombe and Kasavubu wanted the newly empowered presidency.\textsuperscript{416} The National Security Council wanted the “two Congolese prima donnas” to retain their own offices, which Mobutu cynically characterized as, “a Johnson-Goldwater ticket” for the Congo. This

\textsuperscript{414} Minter, Portuguese Africa and the West, 108.
\textsuperscript{415} Schneidman, Engaging Africa, 90.
\textsuperscript{416} Young and Turner, The Rise and Decline of the Zairian State, 49.
arrangement would have left Mobutu and the Binza group further from the reins of power.\textsuperscript{417} In a repeat of the 1960 coup that led to Lumumba’s death, Kasavubu extra-constitutionally fired Tshombe. Amidst this madness, and a potential return to chaos, Mobutu, with approval from Devlin, launched his second coup in five years.\textsuperscript{418} With the support of the army high command, he declared the end of the Congolese Republic and sacked the government. Mobutu declared Tshombe the “chief enemy of the regime,” and on December 23, the one-time president of Katanga and Prime Minister of the Congo left for exile in Europe.\textsuperscript{419} Mobutu had emerged from his powerful position behind the scenes to take the reins. For the United States and Roberto, it meant that their main now ally directly controlled the Congo’s destiny.

President Johnson stood by Mobutu following the coup. When mercenaries loyal to Tshombe mutinied against Mobutu in 1967, LBJ sent him three C-130 cargo planes despite disapproval of Congress.\textsuperscript{420} For Mobutu, the gesture reinforced his understanding of the Congo-U.S. relationship; that the United States understood the Cold War was ‘hot’ in Africa, and in times of need, Mobutu could count on America to provide swift support.

Mobutu secured Roberto’s place in the Congo. Although his fortunes had waned, the war against Portugal stagnated, and his movement splintered, Roberto no longer worried whether his host government might evict him. As a fixture in the courtier life of the capital, Roberto continued to meet discreetly with personnel in Kinshasa (Leopoldville) under a policy of “maintaining


\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{418} Devlin, \textit{Chief of Station}, 233–34.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{419} Young and Turner, \textit{The Rise and Decline of the Zairian State}, 52–57.}

unobtrusive but useful contacts with Portuguese African nationalist leaders.”421 Throughout the final years of the Johnson presidency, Roberto continued to update the embassy on the GRAE, his relations the Congolese government, and his disagreements with other Angolan nationalists.422 However, Roberto’s moment had passed. By 1969, the momentum from his 1961 invasion was gone. The MPLA, and a new organization, UNITA, slowly replaced Roberto on the international stage as symbols of Angolan nationalism. More than ever, Roberto focused on survival rather than the fight against the Portuguese.

THE PROBLEM OF ZAMBIA, RHODESIA, & SOUTH AFRICA

The Johnson years saw the rise of a new crisis in Africa that hardened the animosities between the whites and blacks of southern Africa. Rhodesia’s unilateral declaration of independence in 1965 led to the creation of a new white pariah state whose existence imperiled newly independent Zambia. Rhodesia quickly became a close ally to Portugal and South Africa, and the three began coordinating their economies and militaries to prepare for a long struggle to maintain white rule. Anti-Apartheid activists dubbed this coordination between Salisbury, Lisbon, and Pretoria the “Unholy Alliance,” and they pushed Western governments to advocate for the principle of “one man one vote” in southern Africa.423

Shortly after the 1964 election, Johnson and his foreign policy team engaged with the British to mitigate the push by Rhodesia for independence and to support the fledgling nation of

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Zambia which had gained its independence from Britain earlier in 1964. The fear was that Rhodesia would retaliate against Zambia’s support for black rebels by strangling the Zambian economy. Landlocked Zambia, whose mineral riches rivaled the Katanga province across the border in the Congo, relied on completely the white regimes of colonial Southern Rhodesia, Portugal, and South Africa to export its raw materials. Furthermore, mining operations in Zambia required electrical power from the Kariba Dam, and the industry’s smelting and transport needs required coal from Rhodesia’s mines at Wankie. Of immense strategic importance to the United States and Great Britain was the region’s copper, which accounted for twenty-five percent of the “free world’s” copper production. Rhodesia was also the West’s most reliable source of chrome, and many in the United States favored good relations with Rhodesia to maintain access to that strategic resource. Copper and chrome helped to make Rhodesia the center of white-black confrontation in Africa; it would remain so until the South African invasion of Angola in 1975.

Rhodesia declared independence from Britain on Veterans Day, 1965, and a prolonged and bloody war to maintain white supremacy ensued. Both the United States and Great Britain sought to overthrow the Rhodesian regime and set the British colony on the path to majority-rule. Johnson deferred to the British on the issue, who still claimed control of the erstwhile colony. British Prime Minister Harold Wilson explored several options to end the crisis, all of which required massive American support. Britain initially proposed that the United States airlift Zambia’s copper to world markets in order to choke the lucrative transportation business operated by Portugal, Rhodesia, and South Africa. The American ambassador to Zambia, Robert Good, estimated that the airlift would have required 94,500 flying hours and cost $85 million. The United States preferred a British invasion, which Wilson rejected for fear that it would become a repeat of the Boer Wars.

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425 Good, 89–90.
The military option was also deemed unfeasible due to British difficulties moving troops abroad and American military commitments in NATO, Korea, Southeast Asia, and the Dominican Republic. Without a credible military option, Britain struggled to find a solution.

Reflecting the weak state of their economy and diminished power in the world, the British took a non-confrontational approach. In 1966, The UN imposed a comprehensive embargo against Rhodesia, and the United States and Britain fully complied. Rather than bringing Rhodesia to heel, the embargo helped unite the white regimes of Rhodesia, South Africa and Portugal for mutual defense and increased trade. Portugal and South Africa ignored the embargo and allowed landlocked Rhodesia, already dependent on the two countries for access to the world economy, to avoid the crippling sanctions. The only country to feel real suffering was Zambia, whose President Kenneth Kaunda straddled a fine line between confrontation with white dominated minority regimes on one hand, and active participation in the economy of the region on the other. Robert Komer of the National Security Council wrote to the President that “the longer the Rhodesian boil goes unlanced (sic), the sharper the confrontation over the Southern third of Africa will become.” Britain’s decision to take a strong rhetorical stand without real action was the opposite of what Washington had hoped for and contrary to traditional British policy.

South Africa’s support for Rhodesia was the crux of the problem. However, with its vibrant economy a sound investment choice for American and British businesses, South Africa remained a difficult foe. Both Washington and London acknowledged that meaningful change in southern Africa required a direct confrontation with the Apartheid state, yet neither was willing to assume

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the cost. British companies had over three billion dollars invested in South Africa, and together America and Britain enjoyed a one-billion-dollar favorable balance of payments with Pretoria. South Africa produced 70 percent of the West’s annual output of gold. In 1967, the U.S. Defense Department estimated “that a blockade against South Africa alone would require four carrier task forces (4 carriers, 24 destroyers and 3 submarines),” and that a deployment over six months would require additional forces due to “rotational and repair requirements.” A blockade of Portuguese Angola and Mozambique would require an even larger force and could result “in a possible military confrontation” between NATO allies.\footnote{Memorandum from the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (McNaughton) to Secretary of Defense McNamara, Secret, “Southern Africa,” Washington, 1/18/1967, WNRC, RG 330, OASD/ISA Files: FRC 71 A 4546, 092 Africa, \textit{FRUS}, 1964-1968, Vol. XXIV, Document 406.} The only American naval operation of comparable size had occurred in the Pacific theater of WWII. With the cost of direct confrontation so high, Johnson’s options for dealing with South Africa were limited.

Nevertheless, LBJ did his best to apply pressure against the Apartheid state. In 1964, he modified his predecessor’s military embargo against South Africa to deny all weapons sales to the Apartheid government, even those that Kennedy had previously exempted. This decision upset defense contractors and their supporters in Congress, a cost LBJ was willing to absorb. Following the South African government’s denial of shore leave for black sailors from the USS \textit{Independence} in 1965, the United States Navy boycotted South African ports. But it was short lived as the war in Vietnam escalated and the Navy’s Atlantic Fleet traveled to and from Southeast Asia via the Cape. Meanwhile, South African authorities insisted that all American sailors on shore leave participate in segregated activities. This led to a minor international incident when the USS \textit{Franklin Delano Roosevelt} stopped at Cape Town to refuel. Johnson cancelled shore leave for the \textit{FDR}, and he ruled out all future use of South African ports until “no racial conditions were
imposed” on American sailors.\textsuperscript{430} These small symbols of defiance angered Pretoria and made South African officials pine for a friendly government in Washington that left race out of international relations.

In 1966, Johnson spoke to the issue of the racist regimes in southern Africa in an address to the Organization of African Unity which the White House billed as “the first address by an American President devoted wholly to Africa.”\textsuperscript{431} Special Assistant to the President Bill Moyers encouraged Johnson to give the speech both “for foreign policy reasons” and as “a cheap way to keep the civil rights people quiet.”\textsuperscript{432} He also wanted the President to pre-empt Bobby Kennedy’s 1966 trip to South Africa as part of his preparation for a presidential run in 1968. Moyers wanted a strong speech, so that Johnson would not appear to “simply offer economic assistance and material aid while Kennedy trots off making hay on the intangible issue of the rights of man.”\textsuperscript{433}

LBJ spoke in broad terms on natural rights and freedoms, including the “inalienable right of all people to control their destiny…to secure the right of self-government, to build strong democratic institutions, and to improve the level of every citizen’s being.” He deplored “the more repugnant (and) narrow-minded, outmoded policy which in some parts of Africa permits the few to rule at the expense of the many.”\textsuperscript{434} The OAU speech helped heal the wounds of Stanleyville and the Anderson plan, which had hurt America’s standing in independent Africa. It helped create the impression that the United States viewed the region holistically, which increased the sense of isolation and despair amongst the white powers of southern Africa.

\textsuperscript{432} Cohen and Tucker, \textit{Lyndon Johnson Confronts the World}, 263.
\textsuperscript{433} Cited in Schneidman, \textit{Engaging Africa}, 94–95.
UNITA & THE EASTERN FRONT

In 1964, when Jonas Savimbi left the GRAE/FNLA, he took with him a cadre of non-Bakongo members. Even before Savimbi’s falling out with the organization, these Ovimbundu, Chokwe, Nganguela, and Sele Angolans had formed an ‘Opposition Group’ that challenged Roberto’s leadership within the GRAE. It was this faction that had rioted at Kinkuzu and incurred the wrath of Mobutu’s soldiers. Savimbi had also cultivated his own political following in Katanga amongst the Angolan refugee community there.\(^{435}\) It was because of this local support that Savimbi had expected to lead guerrilla activities based in Katanga. Due to Savimbi’s growing personal power, including budding relationships with various African leaders, Roberto moved to oust him.

The climax to the feud came in 1964 in Cairo.

Savimbi was supposed to be in Switzerland attending university when the OAU convened the Cairo Conference of Heads of State and Government in July 1964. Savimbi arrived only to discover his seat taken by one of Roberto’s close friends. Angry that Roberto replaced him, Savimbi called a press conference and announced his resignation in an accusation-filled tirade. Savimbi stayed in Cairo a few days in order to make further contacts with conference attendees, including Malcolm X.\(^{436}\) Despite his falling out with Roberto, Savimbi remained committed to the Angolan revolution.

Devoid of a powerbase, Savimbi turned to his contacts in the socialist camp. Throughout the end of 1964 and early 1965, he visited the MPLA leadership in Brazzaville and the communist regimes in Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Hungary, the Soviet Union, North Korea, Algeria, North Vietnam, and China. In Algeria, Savimbi met with Che Guevara, who he had previously met in January 1964. The highlight of his North Vietnamese tour was a chance to talk strategy with

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General Vo Nguyen Giap. None of the trips, however, was more important to Savimbi than China. After an initial rebuff from Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai, the veteran Chinese revolutionaries agreed to take Savimbi under the wing and provide arms, training, and cash for him to start his own independence movement. After the trip, Savimbi returned to Switzerland to finish his university studies before returning to China to attend guerrilla warfare classes at the Nanking Military Academy. Throughout the fall and winter of 1965, other Savimbi followers joined him for training. With his vanguard ready, Savimbi returned to Africa to start his own movement.

In 1966, Savimbi trekked into Angola from Zambia and declared himself the leader of the Union for Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). UNITA’s manifesto was neither pro-communist nor pro-western. Marcum described Savimbi’s political program as “purposively inclusive,” with a focus on fighting a war with a force of “Angolans within Angola.” Savimbi’s forces split up into small groups in Angola’s southeast, where they focused on grass roots organizing. UNITA organizers combined Protestant methods of evangelism and social justice with political theory Savimbi had learned in Switzerland and China. After his recruits were trained in political and guerrilla warfare, Savimbi planned a series of spectacular attacks to announce the expansion of the war into Angola’s vast eastern provinces.

UNITA began offensive operations in December. First came a full-frontal assault on a logging camp at Cassamba protected by two hundred Portuguese soldiers; it resulted in no Portuguese killed and several UNITA casualties. However, it was a Christmas day attack on Teixeira de Sousa, a railroad town near the border with the Congo, which captured international attention and elicited a major Portuguese response. At the cost of over 300 UNITA dead, Savimbi

439 Heywood, Contested Power in Angola, 1840s to the Present, 157; Bridgland, Jonas Savimbi, 71.
and his men damaged aircraft, freed prisoners, killed Portuguese, and most important, cut the Benguela railroad, which disrupted Zambian and Katangan copper shipments for a week. Portugal responded with the same kind of indiscriminate attacks and troop buildup that they had employed in the North in 1961. In early 1967, UNITA cut the rail line and derailed trains, attacks from which both the MPLA and FNLA quickly distanced themselves. President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia closed the border of Zambia to Savimbi, sealing the movement in Angola.440

After his initial assaults on Portuguese targets in Angola’s sparsely populated eastern provinces, Savimbi’s movement settled into community organizing, small-scale guerrilla operations, and sporadic firefights with the MPLA. By 1967, the MPLA had also started operations in eastern Angola. Unlike Savimbi, its leadership remained abroad except for brief journeys into liberated territories for photo-ops. The MPLA questioned UNITA’s military effectiveness; allegations that UNITA avoided Portuguese patrols and frequently fought against other Angolans dogged Savimbi.441 It was important to Savimbi for his own personal movement to have strong support from the countryside. Shut out from the internationally recognized MPLA and GRAE, Savimbi remained an obscure figure until independence in 1975. Shunning the courtesan politics of a foreign capital, UNITA focused on building grass roots in the bush. In 1971, an Austrian reporter visited Savimbi’s camps in Angola and claimed that they were “well-organized and well-run,” the “administrative process worked,” and that discipline was the best of the many guerrilla and underground movements he had seen.”442

441 Minter, Operation Timber, 11–13.
442 Cited in Marcum, Angolan Revolution, II:196.
CONCLUSION

President Lyndon Johnson and his foreign policy team spent a surprising amount of time on African issues. His administration tried to break the logjam in Angola, both by supporting Holden Roberto and subsequently António de Oliveira Salazar, to no avail. In Congo, LBJ took decisive action to squash challenges to Joseph Mobutu’s rule in Léopoldville, renamed Kinshasa. America’s support for Mobutu was a godsend for Roberto, who continued to receive shelter and aid from the Congolese government. Johnson supported British efforts to end Rhodesia’s UDI, but London undermined those efforts through mismanagement and bungling.

By the end of the Johnson years, the war in Angola had developed into the stalemate it would remain until the civil war. America maintained an arms-length relationship with Roberto, while at the same time embracing his patron, Mobutu. Roberto’s weakened GRAE/FNLA faced continued challenges from both the MPLA and the upstart UNITA. Meanwhile, rebellions in Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique further taxed the Portuguese regime, which outlived Salazar’s stroke and incapacitation in 1968 when regime loyalist Marcelo Caetano came to power.\textsuperscript{443} Worse still, American control of the Azores remained tenuous, the whites of southern Africa clung to Apartheid, and the United States appeared powerless to change either situation.

\textsuperscript{443} Marques, \textit{History of Portugal}, 1972, II:224.
V. “THE WHITES ARE HERE TO STAY”

Presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford evidenced little interest in Africa, with devastating consequences for U.S. foreign policy in the region. Nixon and his foreign policy guru, Henry Kissinger, concluded that “the whites are here to stay” in southern Africa, and with that mindset, dropped the Angola program specifically and American support for black regimes in the region in general.444 Meanwhile, the war in Angola simmered, Mobutu’s army decayed, and South Africa sought to protect itself through regional diplomacy. Portugal seemingly benefitted from the new administration in Washington, but with wars continuing across Africa and tensions building at home, the fate of Angola remained uncertain. The new American policy relied on Portugal’s ability to maintain control of its colonies, as well as its ability to preserve internal stability. These policies proved to be the undoing of America’s war in Angola.

President Richard Nixon’s record as a Cold Warrior in Africa will forever be summed up by his selection of “Option Two” the National Security Study Memorandum (NSSM) 39. On April 10, 1969, Nixon had ordered a review of U.S. policies in southern Africa, including Rhodesia, South Africa, the Portuguese territories, and their neighbors. The National Security Council’s final report, completed in December 1969, surveyed the region and American interests there and put forward five policy options each intended to guide American Africa policy for the rest of Nixon’s term in office. They ranged from “cutting ties with the white regimes” to normalizing “relations with all governments of the area,” including the white ones. Nixon chose to pursue closer relations with Rhodesia, South Africa, and Portugal and to end all support for black nationalists. The

premise of this option was that “the whites are here to stay,” which became the basis of Nixon’s Africa policies. Critics of Nixon labeled his decision “The Tar-Baby Option.”

As foreign policy, NSSM 39 produced no appreciable benefit yet came at great cost. The economic benefits of loosening restrictions on trade and investments were negligible. Worst of all was the outcome in Angola, where the United States colluded with South Africa in an intervention that Tim Borstelmann has called an extension of “Nixon’s Southern strategy” to win votes in the American South from disillusioned whites. The Angolan intervention represented the failure of Nixon’s strategic shift in Africa to achieve any of its stated goals, including “to minimize the likelihood of escalation of violence in the area and the risk of U.S. involvement…to improve the U.S. standing in black Africa and internationally on the racial issue…to protect economic, scientific and strategic interests and opportunities in the region…to encourage moderation of the current rigid racial and colonial policies of the white regimes,” and to keep the communists out of the region.

In practice, NSSM 39 was an elaborate dog whistle, a way to entice Southern Democrats to become Nixon Republicans, a political gambit that the President believed was low-risk and worth the cost. It was not merely an extension of the ‘Southern strategy;’ it was a central component. Southern conservatives had grown increasingly interested in Africa policy, and they made it clear throughout the 1960s that they viewed it as an important front of their struggle to maintain white supremacy in the United States. Following the advice of conservatives like Pat

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448 “Study in Response to National Security Study Memorandum 39: Southern Africa.”
Buchanan and Strom Thurmond, Nixon used Africa policy to communicate to Southerners that he understood and championed their cause. 449

Nixon brought his own expertise to African Affairs based on his pre-presidential trips to Portugal and Africa. As Vice President, he had advocated for America to engage with emerging independent African nations after his 1957 Africa tour. After losing the California gubernatorial election, Nixon took his family to Europe, including a memorable stay in Portugal. Ten years after his first trip to Africa, he returned in 1967 on the last leg of his ‘World Tour’ during his self-proclaimed “wilderness years.” These trips convinced Nixon that the threat of Communism in southern Africa was low, and that aid and diplomacy were not only enough to contain communism in the region, but also would outweigh any potential blowback from drawing closer to the white states. Comforted by those assumptions, the president believed he could follow the political advice of Pat Buchanan, his sole travel companion on the wilderness trip, to use southern Africa policy to make inroads in the American South.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

Richard Nixon’s bold vision for reinventing the international system and preserving America’s dominance required a reevaluation of American foreign policy. Nixon “intended to be a foreign policy president,” committed to demonstrating a greater understanding of the forces at work in the world than his predecessor. 450 He spoke of taking “the long view,” in international affairs, in order “to realize our destiny of preserving peace and freedom in the world.” 451 On the

campaign trail he promised to “end the war and win the peace” in Vietnam.\textsuperscript{452} It was a message designed to save a flagging superpower from decline. Part of Nixon’s proposed grand strategy for realpolitik—rapprochement with communist superpower based on matters of self-interest strategically and economically defined—was as reevaluation of American policy in Africa, and ultimately, the mapping of a new course.

Richard Nixon’s views on Africa began to shift after he lost the 1960 presidential election. During his failed 1962 California Gubernatorial campaign in 1962 he had received OCP materials from Ken Downs via their “mutual friend, Bill Rogers,” who had been Eisenhower’s Attorney General and would later serve as Nixon’s Secretary of State. Nixon filed these reports and pamphlets under “Basic to Research- re: U.S policy with regard to Portugal and Angola.”\textsuperscript{453} After his electoral defeat, Nixon heeded the advice of friends to go on a vacation. He chose Europe, including a leisurely jaunt in Portugal. The Nixon family stayed at the house of Manuel Espírito Santo, then head of the Banco Espírito Santo or (BESCL), and the Nixons reciprocated later that year when the Espírito Santos visited the Nixons in New York.\textsuperscript{454} Of course, as head of BESCL, Manuel was not only bankrolling the OCP, but in theory helped to run it. On November 22, 1963, the day Lee Harvey Oswald killed JFK in Dallas, the \textit{Dallas Times Herald} carried a story about a concert the night before and quoted Nixon as saying that “April in Portugal” was Pat Nixon’s favorite song.\textsuperscript{455}

\textsuperscript{452} Campbell Craig and Fredrik Logevall, \textit{America’s Cold War: The Politics of Insecurity} (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2009), 251.
\textsuperscript{453} Letter, Richard M. Nixon to Kenneth T. Downs, bcc William Rogers, 3/23/1962, Downs, Kenneth T., Box 223, Pre-President Papers, General Correspondence, 1946-1962, Series 320, RNL.
\textsuperscript{454} Letter, Kenneth T. Downs to Richard M. Nixon, 2/7/1964, Alpha! 1963-1965! Downs, Kenneth T., Box 10, Wilderness Years Collection, Series I: Correspondence, PPS 238, RNL; Letter, Richard M. Nixon to Manuel Espírito Santo, 4/15/1964, Trip File: Lisbon, Portugal (06/13/1963-06/16/1963), Box 2, Wilderness Years Collection, Series II: Trip File, PPS347, RNL.
To prepare for a political comeback after his defeat in the 1960 presidential election and then again in California’s 1962 gubernatorial race, Nixon changed gears. He paired down his staff and brought in young conservatives Richard V. Allen and Patrick Buchanan to improve his chances against conservative California Governor Ronald Reagan. Richard V. Allen was a rising conservative foreign policy expert with experience at the Center for Strategic Studies and the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace and served as Nixon’s chief foreign policy advisor for the 1968 campaign. He was a staunch anti-communist who could help win over followers of Reagan, Barry Goldwater, the John Birch Society, and the Christian Crusade. Allen had also helped to write the Abshire Portuguese Handbook and had helped American cattle farmers to invest in the Azores dairy and beef industry. Pat Buchanan’s role in the campaign was to write speeches that tapped into the same emotions fueling George Wallace’s rise from Alabama segregationist to nationally viable candidate for president. John Farrell called Buchanan “Nixon’s bridge to the conservative movement.” Buchanan had a keen interest in Africa, and he believed Goldwater and Wallace voters did too. When Nixon added Africa to his 1967 World Tour to raise his profile before the 1968 presidential campaign, he chose Buchanan as his only travel companion.

The goal of Nixon’s trip once again was to meet with world leaders and discuss world affairs. Nixon directed the conversation on the issues he was most interested in: Russia, China,

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and the Middle East war that broke out during his journey. On African issues, the leaders he spoke to made a point to stress “their desire to have more aid from the United States rather than depend on their former colonial masters.” Nixon concluded in his notes that leader after leader insisted that “the Russians had abandoned their designs on Africa, because they recognized the strong spiritualistic attitudes of the Africans which were unconducive to Communism.”

In Kenya, the foreign minister said that “Africa feels neglected,” erroneously reporting that the last high-level American official to come to Africa was Nixon, in 1957, neglecting Lyndon Johnson’s 1961 trip to Senegal. The only mention of the white regimes in southern Africa came from American foreign service officers, and the Zambians. The Zambian foreign minister told Nixon and Buchanan that they agreed with the British on South Africa, and that he was “suspicious of Wilson’s motives [in] playing ball with [Ian] Smith.” Overall unimpressed by the leaders he met with, Nixon wrote to Eisenhower that “it’s going to be two generations at best before there is anything we here in the United States would recognize as ‘freedom’ in Africa, and it’s doubtful even then.”

Nixon’s second appraisal of the Cold War in Africa left him convinced that the stakes were low. African leaders told him that they wanted closer ties to Washington via increased aid and high-profile events between American and African leaders. His hosts had repeatedly stressed that the danger of communist infiltration was minimal, which indicated a strong preference for economic, rather than military aid. Even when the issue of minority rule came up in Zambia, it

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460 Notes, Africa, June 1967, in Wilderness Years Collection, Series II, Trip File, PPS 347, Box 13, RN’s Handwritten Notes, RNL.
462 Notes, Africa, June 1967, RNL.
was not described as a pressing issue. Both Buchanan and Nixon felt strongly that the black states of Africa would ultimately accept a rapprochement between the United States and the whites of southern Africa. Perhaps no other statement gave them the green light more than Ivory Coast Foreign Minister Arsène Usher Assouan, who told the Americans that “the Big Powers should concentrate on the Big Problems and the small powers should do their best to deal with the problems of their own countries, and with regional problems so that they do not become matters of concern for the Great Powers.” Nixon was convinced that black leaders would overlook an American rapprochement with the white powers if Washington increased foreign aid and high-level visits from the American government.

Not included in either Buchanan or Nixon’s notes were any of their personal conversations, but it’s clear from their post trip correspondence that Buchanan stressed to his boss the American South. Shortly after their return, Moise Tshombe, the former Katangan secessionist leader and prime minister, was apprehended by Algerian authorities, and many feared he would be extradited to Congo and executed. Buchanan wrote to his boss that “this thing has the conservatives engaged. Both [National Review Editor William] Rusher and [conservative columnist Victor] Lasky have expressed great anger about it.” He wanted Nixon to write to Joseph Mobutu, whom they had just weeks earlier had a long productive meeting with, asking to save Tshombe. Worried that Nixon did not fully understand the gravity of the situation, he wrote to him again, emphasizing that “as noted, this is an issue which deeply concerns conservatives.” Nixon wrote the letter and sent it

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464 Memo to RN from Buchanan: Notes from African Trip, RNL.  
465 Memoranda, Memo to RN from Buchanan, 7/28/1967, Wilderness Years Collection, Series II, Trip File, PPS 347, Box 13, Congo, RNL.  
466 Memoranda, Memo to RN from Buchanan, 7/31/1967, Congo, Box 13, Wilderness Years Collection, Series II, Trip File, PPS 347, RNL.
to the American embassy in Kinshasa, but the ambassador ignored it once he sensed Mobutu would spare his political rival.467

Ultimately it was Harvard Professor Henry Kissinger, and not Richard Allen or Pat Buchanan, who became Nixon’s National Security Advisor. Kissinger understood that emerging national liberation movements in the “new nations” that “weigh little in the physical balance of power” had the power to change “the moral balance of the world.”468 Nixon and Kissinger understood all too well the power of decolonization to create superpower confrontation. The Vietnam quagmire illustrated this point clearly. The lesson of Vietnam for the Nixon-Kissinger Africa policy was to prolong decolonization as long as possible to avoid a Cold War conflict.

Kissinger’s desire to avoid decolonization in Africa perfectly gelled with Nixon’s willingness to accept Apartheid South Africa, Rhodesia, and Portugal as legitimate African powers. In 1967, Nixon told a crowd of California conservatives, “the Communist appeal was against colonialism…Now that the colonialists are gone, they must base their case on being for Communism.”469 In his first year in office, he naively told the OAU that his vision was for “the Continent to be free of great power rivalry or conflict in any form,” and he defined the “problems in the southern region of the Continent” as racial, rather than anti-colonial. Nixon believed racism was a two-way street, and he told African leaders that the United States rejected what he called racial violence perpetrated equally by whites and blacks in Rhodesia, South Africa, and Portuguese Africa.470 In private, Nixon told a gathering of American ambassadors “Africa will not govern


Before the official Africa review, Nixon had already begun the rapprochement with Portugal. In March 1969, shortly after Nixon took office, former President Dwight Eisenhower passed away from a heart condition. Despite the frosty relations between the United States and Portugal under Johnson, or perhaps because of them, Salazar’s successor, Marcelo Caetano, came to Washington “to show Portugal’s esteem for the late President.” Nixon agreed to meet with the Portuguese dictator, and together they agreed to end the bitterness between their countries.\footnote{Memorandum of Conversation, Secret, “Portuguese Prime Minister Caetano’s Call on the President,” Washington, 4/1/1969, Memos for the President, President’s Office Files, WHSF, RNL, \textit{FRUS}, 1969-1976, Volume XLI, Western Europe; NATO, 1969-1972, Document 253.} Foreign Minister Nogueira followed up Caetano’s trip weeks later and came to an understanding with Nixon and Kissinger that the U.S. would cut off all contact with the FNLA. Nixon assured Nogueira that “his was a new administration with a completely open mind.”\footnote{Memorandum of Conversation, Secret, “US-Portuguese Relations,” Washington, 4/19/1969, Memos for the President, President’s Office Files, WHSF, RNL, \textit{FRUS}, 1969-1976, Vol. XLI, Document 254.} At an official state dinner during the visit, Nixon went further and told the Portuguese diplomat “I’ll never do to you what Kennedy did.”\footnote{Schneidman, \textit{Engaging Africa}, 112; Antunes, \textit{Nixon e Caetano}.}

The Nixon-Caetano agreement portended the new American approach to African affairs. Portugal, the last of the colonial powers, was viewed negatively by every independent African state. The wars in Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea Bissau ranked with the Rhodesian war and apartheid as the greatest foreign policy concerns of the continent. Both the Organization of Africa
Unity and the United Nations had condemned Portugal for its colonial abuses, and both had standing committees whose sole purposes were to coordinate and finance the rebel movements against Portugal. That is precisely why Johnson and Kennedy refused to meet directly first with Salazar and later Caetano. The meeting between the heads-of-state and their quickly hashed out agreement revealed Nixon’s priorities.

The rapprochement between Nixon and Caetano presaged the outcome of the Africa review. Kissinger’s April 10, 1969, National Security Study Memorandum (NSSM) 39 “directed a comprehensive review of U.S. policy toward Southern Africa (south of Congo (K) and Tanzania).” NSSM 39 asked the National Security Council to “review…the area as a whole – including Southern Rhodesia, South Africa, the Portuguese territories, and adjacent African states.”476 The exercise was implicitly a review of the white dominated states, with the unspoken aim of improving relations with them. Mobutu’s Congo was outside of its scope. This decision to decouple the alliance with Mobutu from the racial conflicts to the south had grave consequences, as would the focus to appeasing the white powers, instead of building better relations with the black states.

In May of 1969, shortly after Kissinger ordered NSSM 39, but nearly seven months before finishing the report, Pat Buchanan did an “end-run around the [National Security Council] channel” to recommend to the President that he lift the embargo on Rhodesian chrome. Without consulting Kissinger or the NSC, Nixon had already overruled the State Department and made his decision to ignore the embargo. He ordered White House Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman to instruct

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Kissinger to implement his decision. Kissinger refused, stating he wanted to wait until the completion of NSSM 39.477

The final report, completed in December 1969, surveyed the region and American interests there and put forward five policy options. They ranged from “cutting ties with the white regimes” to normalizing “relations with all governments of the area,” including the white ones. The review lambasted the status quo as ineffective and costly, and declared that United States had no “vital security interests” in Africa. It also rejected “black violence” as a means to end post-colonial racial conflicts. Given this sharp rebuke to the status quo and its perceived lack of advantages, Nixon chose to pursue closer relations with Rhodesia, South Africa, and Portugal and to end all support for black nationalists. The premise of this option was that “the whites are here to stay,” which became the basis of Nixon’s Africa policies.478

Critics of Nixon labeled his decision “The Tar-Baby Option” for its focus on improving relations with the white powers.479 The choice was not surprising, given the close relationship between members of the incoming Republican administration and white African business interests, and Nixon’s view that Africa was “a peripheral issue.” Former Secretary of State Dean Acheson had lobbied Nixon to make a change, and Secretary of State William Rogers proved a willing instrument.480 These men devised the new policy which asserted American support of African self-determination, but in practice increased aid and commerce with the white regimes. NSSM 39 called for more intelligence sharing with Portugal, Rhodesia, and South Africa, as well as a

479 Lake, The “Tar Baby” Option.
softening of the various embargoes levied against them during the 1960s. Even though the memorandum stated it was “doubtful” that this change could improve relations with the white regimes and disengage with black rebel groups, it represented the closest strategy to Nixon and Kissinger’s preferences.481

The Rhodesian chrome embargo was an important test of this new southern Africa strategy. Strom Thurmond wrote to Nixon in 1970 “to suggest one small action which you could take by Executive Order which would greatly increase the influence of the Republican Party among those voters who would like to support you,” namely, to end the embargo on Rhodesian chrome, which had been imposed in response to a United Nations embargo over that country’s illegal Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI). Such an action, Thurmond argued, “would not alienate any group of voters already committed to you, but it would serve to strengthen the allegiance of many who find our Rhodesian policy puzzling and irrational.” 482 The arch segregationist argued that lifting the chrome embargo was the victory southerners needed after Nixon’s Supreme Court nominee, G. Harrold Carswell, had been voted down in the Senate. Nixon himself was angered over Carswell’s rejection. He stated that “I have reluctantly concluded that it is not possible to get confirmation for a judge on the Supreme Court of any man who believes in the strict construction of the Constitution, as I do, if he happens to come from the South.” 483 Nixon ultimately decided against an executive order, but when Virginia Senator Harry F. Byrd, Jr., led the charge in changing the law to allow for breaking the embargo in 1971, it was no surprise that Nixon signed it.

Nixon and Kissinger faithfully executed ‘tar-baby’ up to 1976. The United States allowed the sale of “non-lethal” or “dual use” materiel to all three white-dominated African governments. On Rhodesia, Nixon supported passage of the Byrd Amendment, which excluded chrome from the Rhodesian embargo. Tim Borstelmann has noted that the amendment made the United States “the only nation in explicit legislative defiance of its UN obligations regarding sanctions.”

A corollary of the dismissive attitude towards Africa was the official view that the continent had become a dormant theater of the Cold War. Reports throughout Nixon’s tenure downplayed the ‘soft power’ gains of the Soviet Union and China in Africa, and rejected the seriousness of their ability to make inroads in the region. Despite this optimistic outlook on the prospects for communist gains in Africa, Nixon’s team did concede two facts: that limiting South Africa’s latent influence in the Angolan War was in the national interest, and that the relationship with Mobutu was America’s greatest regional asset. Whereas Nixon and Kissinger ignored the concern about Angola, they invited Mobutu to the United States in 1970 with the hope of maintaining the strategic partnership.

**MOBUTUISM**

After the coup of 1965, Joseph Mobutu embarked on a grand project to build the state in his image. His ‘New Regime’ sought to create “a unified, centralized nation state, the restoration

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of the economic order and fulfillment of the manifest destiny of rapid development which its rich natural resource base seemed to promise.” During his early years in power, the economy experienced substantial gains. Mobutu initially claimed legitimacy as a transitional figure, the one leader able to rid the state of corruption and the influence of Tshombe and his Europeans allies. However, by 1967, he had installed single-party rule with himself as patrimonial leader. Crawford Young identified Mobutu’s “array of praise-names daily reiterated in the regime media: Guide of the Zairian revolution, the Helmsman, Father of the Nation, Founding President.” As part of the official policy of “Mobutuism,” his image appeared everywhere, including on the front page of all newspapers almost every day.487

Mobutuism existed despite the fact that the army, the national institution most identified with the regime, was the greatest weakness of the Congolese state. A continuation of the old Force Publique, the military had received training from a variety of nations during the 1960s with mixed results. By far the most effective units were the five airborne battalions trained by Israel. The CIA relinquished control of the air force, which had been a critical factor in defeating the rebels in 1964-1965, and the air branch languished without American oversight. After the 1967 rebellion the army discharged the last of Tshombe’s mercenaries. Mobutu continued to hope that new training regimens could make the military an effective fighting force.488 The American embassy in Kinshasa agreed upon the importance of supporting the military, and recommended a continuation of the “MAP, Defense Attaché and USIS language programs,” and to help modernize the Congolese army into a leaner, more effective fighting force.489 Despite its deficiencies, the army remained an important constituency and source of power for the ‘New Regime.’

487 Young and Turner, The Rise and Decline of the Zairian State, 276, 168, 190.
488 Young and Turner, 267–70.
To further consolidate his power, Mobutu dismantled the Binza group and stripped its members of power.⁴⁹⁰ As dictator, Mobutu could directly influence all matters of state without sharing power and access with the oligarchy. He was no longer America’s man in the shadows, but rather, a strong man in the mold of South Korea’s Yun Bo-seon and Reza Pahlavi, the Shah of Iran.

Holden Roberto survived Mobutu’s purge of political elites. He went to great lengths to secure his position in Kinshasa, including the controversial decision to divorce his first wife Suzanne; he then married a woman from the same village as Mobutu’s first wife, which established a form of familial bond between the two men.⁴⁹¹ Mobutu’s dismantling of the Congo’s political parties removed Roberto’s Bakongo rival, former-President Kasavubu and his ABAKO party from the scene. As a member of Mobutu’s inner circle and a businessman in Kinshasa, Roberto benefitted from the concentration of wealth and power of the regime. Free to politic in the Bakongo heartland, Roberto provided a modicum of stability in the critical Bas-Congo district. Past support for the Angolan revolution bolstered Mobutu’s revolutionary credentials, and temporarily masked his dictatorial intentions. His leadership in the last great anti-colonial struggle also raised his stature as an African statesman.

When President Nixon and Mobutu met in 1970, the Congolese leader stressed the need for modernization of the Congolese army and continued American support for Holden Roberto. His top priorities were C-130 transport aircraft and M-16 rifles, and he pressed for both throughout the Nixon presidency. These were pressing concerns, given the vast size of the Congo, the undependable nature of its roads, and the outdated Belgian weapons of the army. Nixon was

⁴⁹⁰ Young and Turner, The Rise and Decline of the Zairian State, 61.
⁴⁹¹ Melady and Melady, Ten African Heroes, 97, 99; Young and Turner, The Rise and Decline of the Zairian State, 376.
amenable to the demands but warned that finding the funds in Congress would be “a problem.” Mobutu closed their discussion with an impassioned plea for American support for Roberto and emphasized how critical Angola was to Zaire’s security. Nixon offered to raise the issue with the Portuguese but did not reconsider the moratorium on contact with independence movements.492

None of Mobutu’s entreaties affected American policy. Washington’s goal was to make Mobutu feel like an important head of state, and by wining and dining him, placate him enough to allow the U.S. to ignore the Congo entirely. To Nixon and Kissinger, Mobutu was an exotic holdover from an earlier time, a personality who only needed his ego petted to maintain the relationship. Kissinger regarded the rearmament as a ridiculous demand only meant to raise Mobutu’s prestige at home in the Congo.

On Angola, Kissinger believed that due to the importance of the Benguela railway to copper production, Mobutu would seek a U.S.-brokered rapprochement with Portugal and come to view the FNLA as a nuisance. The President, the NSC, and the State Department all agreed that the existence of Mobutu’s relationship with Roberto prevented the sale of weapons to the Congo. The State Department especially worried that Portugal would interpret arming Mobutu as a veiled attempt by the United States to support the FNLA and would therefore jeopardize negotiations to reach a new Azores agreement.493 As Mobutu moved his nation forward towards his vision of modernity, a profound divide developed between Washington and its African strongman because of their differing views of the Cold War in Africa and the anti-colonial struggle in Angola.


In 1971, Mobutu announced a new initiative to boost the Congo’s self-image; the nation would forsake all European names in favor of ‘authentic’ African ones. Congo became Zaire. Joseph Desiré Mobutu became Mobutu Sese Seko Kuku Ngbendu Wa Za Banga.\footnote{Wrong, \textit{In the Footsteps of Mr. Kurtz}, 2002, 4. Translated into English, the new name meant “the all-powerful warrior who goes from conquest to conquest, leaving fire in his wake.” (Ibid.)} The name changes were accompanied by a dramatic period of state expansion, economic growth, and the development of a highly sophisticated, dictatorial kleptocracy. According to Crawford Young and Thomas Turner, ‘Authenticity’ was “the centerpiece of state ideology,” Mobutu embarked on a vast public work’s program that included:

“The doubling of copper production; completion of the second stage of the Inga dam development; construction of a 1,200 mile, direct current high-tension power line to transport the dam’s energy to the Shaba mines completion of the national rail line from Shaba to Kinshasa, and its extension to a new deep-water port at Banana (with a huge bridge at Matadi), development of coastal and offshore oilwells, (sic) a steel mill near Kinshasa, an aluminum mill and a uranium enrichment plant near the Inga dam; promotion of a third “development pole” at Kisangani, linked by rail to the national network.”\footnote{Young and Turner, \textit{The Rise and Decline of the Zairian State}, 65.}

In total, the ‘authenticity’ program led a vast diversification of the Zairian economy, and a bold attempt to achieve economic independence. The Inga-Shaba complex gave Mobutu a ‘kill switch’ over the economy of Shaba (Katanga), and infrastructure improvements had the potential to end Zaire’s dependence on white-dominated regimes in the copper trade by replacing the Benguela railway. Mobutu turned to a wide group of international investors, not just his traditional Belgian supporters, to secure the credit required for the buildings program.

Mobutu grew wildly rich during this period. His wealth came from direct ownership of industries, and from a vast system of corruption. According to Young and Turner, corruption was not “a lubricant for the state”; “in Zaire corruption became the system.” In Mobutu’s own words, the government was “one vast marketplace,” with all services and transactions subject to an
“invisible tax.” As his wealth grew, Mobutu became more eccentric, and in the early 1970s he developed his iconic costume, which Michaela Wrong described as: the “leopardskin toque, Buddy Holly glasses and the carved cane so imbued with presidential force mere mortals, it was said, could never hope to lift it.” He was rapidly becoming the kind of character no administration in Washington could be associated with.

Yet, Sheldon Vance, American Ambassador to Kinshasa, cultivated the relationship with Mobutu with the skill and personality of Larry Devlin. Vance quickly grew close to Mobutu; the Zairian strongman told Nixon and Kissinger that the two men shared “morning coffee just about every day.” The American ambassador worked to portray Mobutu’s radical reforms as moderate and pro-American. Vance pointed out to Washington that Zaire was hiring American firms for large-scale construction projects, including the Inga-Shaba dam and transmission line. He also tempered Kissinger’s expectation that Mobutu planned to drop Roberto because support for the Angolan cause reinforced his “anti-colonial” credentials. Vance did not advocate for Roberto like he did for Mobutu, but he did not lobby against the GRAE leader either.

Meanwhile, the FNLA struggled to regain the initiative against Portugal, UNITA, and the MPLA. The war in Angola’s northern coffee region and the wooded Dembos area continued at its slow, monotonous pace. Roberto finally organized an eastern office of the FNLA in Katanga, but cross-border activity remained low. Roberto consolidated the leadership of the GRAE/FNLA and began focusing once again on party organization and political programming. However, his troops

496 Young and Turner, 43, 245.
497 Wrong, In the Footsteps of Mr. Kurtz, 2002, 4.
remained restless. Revolts continued at the FNLA’s main base at Kinkuzu.\textsuperscript{500} American National Intelligence Estimates interpreted these uprisings as a sign that Roberto was on the way out and speculated that Mobutu’s patience with the Angolan revolution had ended. Kissinger agreed and expressed the hope that Zaire would reject the FNLA and instead embrace Portugal as a regional trading partner.\textsuperscript{501} The Nixon administration was reading its own regional assumptions onto Zairian foreign policy. Washington had given up on Roberto and chosen Portugal, which led it to assume that America’s regional allies would follow suit. It was wrong.

**THE MPLA AND THE EASTERN FRONT**

While Kissinger and Nixon continued to ignore Angola, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) kicked off a general offensive at the start of the dry season in 1970. Although the MPLA had been a presence in the east since 1966, the new operation represented the fruits of four years of organizing. Led by Daniel Chipenda, an Ovimbundu, the ‘Eastern Front’ component of the MPLA broke the stalemate in the war against Portugal. MPLA fighters had used Zambia as a rear-base since 1966 and slowly infiltrated fighters and political operatives into Angola. By 1970, this insurgent force in lightly populated Eastern Angola was ready to engage Portuguese bases and population centers.

Unlike Holden Roberto’s 1961 offensive, or Jonas Savimbi’s first UNITA attacks, the MPLA undertook the war in the east as an integrated military and political effort. The strategy called for creating ‘liberated zones’ in the bush, where MPLA cadres could educate, recruit, and

train the local population. Made up of mostly ethnic Mbundu from around the capital or creoles, the MPLA political cadre suffered from a lack of language skills and ethnic credentials. The people of Angola’s far east comprised smaller ethnic groups, and few had been in contact with the Portuguese long enough for the colonial language to serve as lingua franca. Led by the poet-physician Agostinho Neto, the MPLA leadership struggled to foment revolution in the countryside.

Neto was an inspirational leader hailing from the Mbundu-Creole component of the MPLA. Born in 1922 in Luanda’s hinterland, Neto was the son of a Methodist preacher. He was famous amongst the Mbundu for being one of few native Angolans to attend one of Angola’s two high schools; he later studied medicine on a Methodist scholarship at the University of Lisbon and the University of Coimbra. Before Neto left for medical school in Portugal, he wrote poetry earning a place among the vibrant literary community of Luanda’s educated elites studying in Europe. In 1948, this small group of poets and scholars founded a literary journal, the Mensagem (Message) that became the handbook of the MPLA leadership in exile. As a college student in Lisbon, Neto met Portuguese dissidents and communists and joined the anti-Salazar resistance. Neto and Jonas Savimbi worked together for a short period before Neto’s arrest in 1960. By the time Neto finished his studies in Lisbon, he was a doctor of tropical medicine and had been in and out of Portuguese prisons since 1952. This small group of future MPLA revolutionaries reached out to the Soviet Union in 1958, and by 1960, senior leaders were making regular trips to Moscow. In response to their entreaties, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev announced, “the patriots of Angola can be sure that the sympathies of the peoples of the great Soviet Union are fully on their side.” Initial Soviet funding reached the MPLA in 1961.502

Neto’s fame grew during his time spent in prison. During the 1950s, leading intellectuals such as Jean-Paul Sartre, André Mauriac, Aragon and Simone de Beauvoir, Nicolás Guillén, and Diego Rivera protested his imprisonment. While abroad in Portugal, Neto married a Portuguese woman, Maria Eugénia, and took her and their new son to Angola in 1959. He opened his own general medicine practice in Luanda, but the PIDE arrested him in 1960 during a massive roundup of suspected dissidents. On February 4, 1961, Neto was in custody when hundreds of Africans armed with nothing but knives and clubs attacked the main prison in Luanda. In July 1962, he escaped from house arrest in Lisbon and smuggled his family into Morocco where he assumed the title of MPLA President. By that point in his career, Neto could lay claim to excellent contacts with intellectuals in Europe, and leftist guerillas throughout Africa, and according to Marcum, had established a reputation as “a political legend.”

Despite Neto’s leadership in the early 1960s the MPLA struggled to gain ground against Roberto’s GRAE. The MPLA finally opened an office in Leopoldville (Kinshasa) in October 1961. At first, its strategy focused on a merger of all Angolan movements, with the hope that once conglomerated, the MPLA would take the lead. The MPLA struggled to overcome ethnic Mbundu stereotypes of being elitists, a reputation exacerbated by the fact that many of the MPLA’s top leaders were European educated academics. In 1962, the movement appeared to be on the ropes when the OAU officially recognized the GRAE/FNLA as the one true Angolan movement, and the government in Kinshasa expelled the MPLA from the Congo. The Congolese authorities constantly harassed MPLA members who tried to continue their work in Kinshasa.

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503 Henderson, Angola, 1979, 167–68; Marcum, The Angolan Revolution, I:128, 263. February 4 is the day the MPLA government recognizes as the start of the Angolan War of Independence.
Angola’s communists moved across the Congo River to Brazzaville, the capital of the Congo Republic.

Brazzaville presented the MPLA with unexpected avenues of operation and support. Just before the MPLA’s move in 1963, a revolution in Brazzaville had pushed the Congolese government towards socialism. This change of fortunes for the MPLA improved further with the arrival in Brazzaville of Che Guevara and a Cuban delegation in 1965. Che was passing through on his way to the Eastern Congo to wage war against Mobutu, and after an “awkward” start to talks with the MPLA, Che agreed to sending Cuban military advisors to Brazzaville to train Angolans. With Cuban training, the MPLA started operations in Cabinda, a small Angola enclave that contained all of Angola’s oil reserves.⁵⁰⁵

In 1966, following in UNITA’s lead, the MPLA launched an offensive in Eastern Angola, with Zambia as a rear base. Rather than relocating their headquarters to Lusaka, MPLA leaders remained in Brazzaville, where they maintained their global contacts and shrewdly leveraged the war in the east to bring significant international attention to their cause. By 1970, the MPLA had forces in Cabinda, northern Angola, and the vast eastern provinces. Combined with the wars in Guinea Bissau and Mozambique, the MPLA expected that their offensive would bring an end to the Portuguese Empire.

PORTUGAL STRIKES BACK

Years of fighting three far-flung wars prepared Portugal for the latest Angolan uprising. By 1970, the Portuguese war machine that counterattacked the MPLA in the east was a different beast than had fought off Roberto’s invasion in 1961. Whereas the troops in 1961 arrived by boat,
1970 Portuguese soldiers arrived in Luanda by Boeing jumbo jet. Portugal had replaced the WWII-era American trucks and half-tracks used to fight Bakongo militants up Angola’s ‘Coffee Road’ with Panhard armored cars and helicopters. With West German financing, Portugal had built an indigenous arms industry that produced modern, NATO assault rifles. Airfields had sprung up throughout the African countryside, including the Henrique Carvalho base in eastern Angola, whose runways rivaled the capacity of Luanda’s airfield. Portugal supplemented its outdated aircraft with jet fighters purchased from West Germany.\textsuperscript{506} Parachutists landed deep in insurgent territory along the Zambian border, and helicopter assaults became the signature maneuver of the Portuguese army.\textsuperscript{507} By 1974 the war in Angola had come to resemble an African version of Vietnam, a war of advanced weaponry played out in a verdant landscape. But the MPLA and UNITA survived; war weariness set in.

Just as Vietnam had “Vietnamization,” Angola experienced ‘Africanization.’ As the Portuguese population grew tired of the colonial wars, the army suffered an acute manpower shortage due to desertions, emigration, and draft dodging. Each year of the war, Portugal called up nearly 90\% of all able-bodied twenty-year-olds for the draft. Portugal augmented its European forces with black auxiliaries, both in the second line of forces as guides, civil militia, and self-defense groups for villages, and as frontline combat-troops. To fill vacancies in the army, the Portuguese conscripted vast numbers of Ovimbundu laborers into the colonial army. Ovimbundu recruits eventually became the majority of the 34,500 African conscripts in the Angolan army by the early 1970s, as well as most of the 60,000 strong militia force. Supplementing these conscripts were special forces known as \textit{Flechas}/Arrows that were bushmen that hunted insurgents for the secret police, newly designated the ‘General Security Directorate’ (DGS) under Prime Minister

\textsuperscript{506} Bosgra and Krimpen, \textit{Portugal and NATO}, 20–33, 52–53.
\textsuperscript{507} Cann, \textit{Counterinsurgency in Africa}, 131–34.
Caetano. Tshombe’s former Katangan gendarmes served the Portuguese as an elite fighting force under their own leadership and officer corps on the Eastern Front.\textsuperscript{508}

The Portuguese implemented an ambitious counterinsurgency operation throughout the country that focused on economic development and the separation of the rebels from the populace. Marcum observed that the army “pulled back into small, armed, island-like outposts linked by rutted dirt roads and began resettling the sparse local populations in fixed, armed villages.”\textsuperscript{509} In important regions where white settlers lived, villagers became cheap labor for the regime, and many of the old abuses of the forced labor system reappeared.

The central highlands, home to both the Ovimbundu population and to a large contingent of Portuguese settlers, became in essence a giant strategic hamlet. The army successfully denied entry to the region by the rebels, which allowed businesses to abuse and exploit the hapless Angolans. Linda Heywood, in her study of the Ovimbundu people, described the situation thusly: “in many strategic villages the Ovimbundu were in effect slaves to the state,” forced to build the defenses, their own huts, and provide labor for local settlers. With their families scattered in the labor market, many women turned to prostitution, generally under the domination of newly arrived European madams. Ovimbundu prostitutes eventually spanned the whole colony, serving both settlers in the cities and the soldiers in the military resettlement camps. The war systematically destroyed every facet of Ovimbundu society.\textsuperscript{510}

The Portuguese counterinsurgency campaign demoralized and weakened Angolan resistance in the east. The war became a battle of competing camps: on one side, the MPLA built revolutionary villages in ‘liberated zones,’ on the other the Portuguese forced nearly a million

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\textsuperscript{508} Cann, 87–99; Heywood, \textit{Contested Power in Angola, 1840s to the Present}, 136; Bender, \textit{Angola Under the Portuguese}, 161.
\textsuperscript{509} Marcum, \textit{Angolan Revolution}, II:212.
\textsuperscript{510} Heywood, \textit{Contested Power in Angola, 1840s to the Present}, 149–50.
Angolans into strategic hamlets along an expanding system of paved roads and airfields. The MPLA’s leaders increasingly resided outside of the war zone, leaving local commanders to bear the burden of running the stagnating war. Under attack by the relentless Portuguese war machine growing resentment against the MPLA leadership among fighters in the field, the MPLA had fractured into three factions by 1974. Daniel Chipenda, the main MPLA commander in theater, led his troops in rebellion against Neto’s leadership in a movement known as the “Eastern Revolt,” and soon after an “Active Revolt” started in Congo-Brazzaville. The MPLA, FNLA, and UNITA increasingly fought each other rather than the Portuguese.\footnote{Davidson, \textit{In the Eye of the Storm}, 292; Shubin, \textit{The Hot \textquotedblleft Cold War,\textquotedblright} 24; Marcum, \textit{Angolan Revolution}, II:211.} Whereas the MPLA looked ascendant at the start of the 1970s, by 1973 it looked as if NSSM 39’s assessment of the resilience of the Portuguese military was correct.

The Overseas Companies of Portugal propaganda campaign continued to shape American public opinion of the war into the 1970s. With the deaths of Holden Roberto supporters JFK and his brother Bobby Kennedy and Richard Nixon in the White House, Portugal decided to move to a more low-key PR approach with a new, cheaper firm. Downs learned he was getting fired on a flight to Lisbon, and he decided to fight back. He told the businessmen and bankers of the OCP that his work “will go down as one of the great performances in public relations.”\footnote{Kenneth T. Downs, “Public Relations Presentation for the Overseas Companies of Portugal,” 4/10/1969, “Down and Roosevelt,” PT/AHD/3/MU-GM/GNP01-RNP/S0331/UI03870.}512 But his employers were convinced Downs had succeeded at winning conservative support for the \textit{Estado Novo} and white rule in Angola, and it was time to move on. The OCP and the Overseas Ministry wanted to shift their PR program to target liberal Republicans by downplaying racial tensions and highlighting environmental and economic concerns. To sell settler colonialism to a more liberal crowd, pamphlets in the 1970s focused on Portugal’s alleged multiculturalism, known as

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511 Davidson, \textit{In the Eye of the Storm}, 292; Shubin, \textit{The Hot \textquotedblleft Cold War,\textquotedblright} 24; Marcum, \textit{Angolan Revolution}, II:211.

lusotropicalism. Selling the colonies as an economic venture meant downplaying the war and playing up positive returns on investments, whereas the pitch to environmentally conscious liberals focused on the regime’s conservation efforts.\footnote{513}

To do this work the OCP hired M. Frederik Smith, one of the most connected men on Madison Avenue. Fred Smith had an impressive resume, having worked with almost all of the major New York public relations firms; he had worked in the New Deal to lead the War Bonds program, and was also close with the Espírito Santo banking family. But most important, he was the leading PR professional of the environmental movement, having led the campaign to save Dinosaur National Monument in the 1950s and led the way for the Wilderness Act of 1964. When Portugal hired him in 1969, he was the official PR man for Laurance Rockefeller, the environmentalist brother of New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller and Chase Manhattan President David Rockefeller.\footnote{514} The OCP hired him as much for his connections to the Rockefellers as for his public relations acumen.\footnote{515}

Fred Smith argued that liberals in the United States regarded the environment as the second greatest issue after Vietnam, and that it provided the perfect vehicle to manipulate more liberal voters like his bosses the Rockefellers. He suggested to Lisbon “the possibility that perhaps an important conservation and environmental protection policy for Angola and Mozambique could be organized, calling for setting aside of major parks, securing the cooperation of industry, the protection of wildlife in specified areas,” and “the preservation of natural phenomena where this

is feasible.” He wanted “the whole program wrapped up in a simple package that will provide a subject for lively discussion among people who otherwise are steadfastly against industrial development and colonization, and give them something constructive to write about.” Smith wanted Portugal to recast itself as a defender of the environment against rebels who would otherwise ruin the land. This would open up possibilities for the regime’s PR to “be “a little more liberal” without seriously interfering with existing relationships with the far right. Focusing on liberals would “build such acceptance among the people of the United States,” making the Portuguese empire seem less like a negative and more like an asset. He explained to Lisbon that “opinion is very largely controlled in this country by three groups of people: the vocal liberal intellectuals; the business community; and the more affluent, who, fortunately, do considerable traveling. Accordingly, this project should be aimed directly at each of these three groups, and at each of them separately, because their interests are so different.”

But the Portuguese Foreign Ministry, the Overseas Ministry, and the Overseas Companies of Portugal soon grew tired of Fred Smith. He had a poor working relationship with his co-contributors on the project, and Lisbon at times was left puzzled after reading his reports. It seemed that Smith did very little on behalf of OCP, and constantly cautioned his Portuguese employers to remain calm and slow-play the American media, which seemed baffling to a regime fighting three distant wars. After firing Smith, the OCP turned once again to Kenneth T. Downs to run their propaganda program until the OCP found a suitable permanent replacement. This time around Downs did little to hide his ties to the regime, going so far as to edit official government documents

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and boasting of his work with the Portuguese Mission to the United Nations, the MNE, the Overseas Ministry, and the Portuguese Embassy in Washington.\footnote{Kenneth T. Downs, “Progress Report March 1 to date, with enclosures,” 7/21/1971, Downs & Roosevelt, Processo 4,13, Maço 407, Embaixada de Portugal em Washington, PT/MNE/AHD.}

Downs built a strong and reliable relationship with two of the most conservative Congressmen of the early 1970s, Republican John G. Schmitz of California and Democrat John Rarick of Louisiana. Schmitz and Rarick were rabid anticommunists, who both ran for president in different years as the candidate from George Wallace’s American Independent Party. Downs and the Portuguese ambassador were in constant contact with Schmitz and Rarick. They both travelled to Portuguese Africa with OCP aid, and both regularly submitted materials into the Congressional Review on behalf of Portugal. Schmitz, a Bircher and General Howley follower, and Rarick, a Citizens’ Council leader in Louisiana, both were exposed to the deluge of OCP generated propaganda in the early 1960s.\footnote{Box 92, Folder 341: FC Portugal, John Rarick Papers, Center for Southeast Louisiana Studies, Special Collections of Southeastern State University; Congressman John G. Schmitz to Kenneth T. Downs, 5/16/1972, Schmitz – C, 1972, file #2, Box 12, Congressional Papers of John G. Schmitz, California (1970-1973), Wichita State University Libraries Special Collections.}

In 1973 Portugal hired a permanent replacement for Downs, Republican Richard V. Allen, who would be the \textit{Estado Novo}’s last PR counselor. Richard V. Allen was relatively young but enjoyed connections within the Republican establishment. He had worked at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in the 1960s, where he was an uncredited author on David Abshire’s \textit{Portuguese Africa: A Handbook}. Allen travelled with Downs and Roosevelt’s staff in Angola as part of his work on the book for Abshire and Praeger Publishers.\footnote{Richard V. Allen to Henry A. Kissinger, Washington D.C., 1/24/1976, Azores 1976-1977, Correspondence, Box 2, Richard V. Allen Papers, Hoover Institute.} In 1968 served as Nixon’s foreign policy advisor during the presidential campaign. But it was Henry Kissinger, not Allen, who became the National Security Advisor. A disgruntled Allen had heard about the OCP
job through some consulting work on the cattle industry in the Azores, and he used his role in the
White House to meet the Portuguese Ambassador. In 1973 his consulting company, Potomac
International Corporation, took on the OCP contract.521

Allen made it very clear he did not plan on running an expensive media campaign. Instead,
he would “use of [his] personal connections and influence with both the Congress and the [Nixon]
Administration” to further the aims and objectives of OCP.” What few brochures and pamphlets
he did produce would be aimed at American businessmen designed to encourage investment in the
colonies and participation with major Portuguese firms in their internationalization schemes. Allen
also pitched the idea to Lisbon that the Azores could make a very attractive off-shore tax haven,
which would make it a very popular destination for American businessmen, conservatives in
particular.522

NIXON’S TRIUMPH AND TRAGEDY

The final stage of Angola’s war for independence was interwoven with the rise and fall of
Richard Nixon. Nixon’s promise to be a foreign policy president finally bore fruit. In time for his
re-election in 1972, Nixon fulfilled his détente strategy by signing agreements with both the Soviet
Union and Communist China, which were nearly unimaginable diplomatic achievements when he
first took office.523 After an escalation, the invasion of Cambodia, and a harrowing Christmas
bombing of Hanoi, Nixon extracted the United States from the war in Vietnam, albeit on terms
similar to those available to him on his first day in office. Then came Watergate.

do Ultramar, Processo 4,13, Maço 407, Embaixada de Portugal em Washington, PT/MNE/AHD.
do Ultramar, Processo 4,13, Maço 407, Embaixada de Portugal em Washington, PT/MNE/AHD; Richard V. Allen to
407, Embaixada de Portugal em Washington, PT/MNE/AHD.
As Nixon’s administration floundered in the wake of the break-in at the headquarters of the Democratic National Committee, and subsequent scandal, responsibility for foreign policy increasingly fell on Henry Kissinger’s shoulders. Not only was he given credit for the opening to China and the Soviet Union, but the media hailed his ‘Shuttle Diplomacy’ after the 1973 Yom Kippur War for reshaping the landscape of the Middle East and paving the way for an Egypt-American alliance. These developments and Kissinger’s ascendency profoundly influenced the actors engaged in ending Angola’s colonial status.524

The 1973 October War had an immediate impact on Angola. Anwar Sadat’s surprise attack on Israel proved that despite an improvement of relations between the Soviets and the Americans, third world actors still could draw the superpowers into direct confrontation. Furthermore, the arms race and diplomatic offensive that followed the war underscored the true nature of détente; both superpowers expected to secure gains in the third world at the other’s expense even as bilateral relations improved. Both of these truths fueled the Angolan Civil War. However, it was Portugal’s role in the Middle East drama that most affected Angola, Zaire, and Washington’s response to the crisis there.

At long last, the Azores airbase proved its worth during the American airlift in support of Israel during the October 1973 Yom Kippur War. All of Europe except Portugal refused America landing rights to refuel planes for the operation. Lajes Airfield sat on a direct line between Washington and Tel Aviv. All 22,395 tons of cargo that the United States airlifted to Israeli flew on planes that refueled at Lajes airfield or by mid-air refueling aircraft stationed there. According

to an Air Force history of the airfield, the crucial role the Azores played in helping Israel
“confirmed the importance of the Air Force maintaining basing facilities at Lajes.”

Portuguese approval of the airlift did not come easily, and it did not immediately improve
U.S.-Portuguese relations. When Kissinger requested use of the base, Lisbon responded by
demanding advanced American weaponry. Kissinger responded angrily: “I must tell you in all
frankness Mr. Prime Minister that your failure to help at this critical time will force us to adopt
measures which cannot but hurt our relationship.” Washington was willing to pay for the use of
Lajes but did not want the two overtly linked. Caetano agreed to the airlift without further
questions. Both Washington and Lisbon understood that compensation was already under
discussion as part of the ongoing Azores negotiations set for completion in the spring of 1974.

Just before the airlift during the early fighting between Israel and Egypt, Mobutu came to
Washington for his second meeting with Nixon. Although they discussed the Middle East, the
meeting focused on economic issues and problems in U.S.-Zaire relations. Mobutu complained
about a general lack of access to Nixon and Kissinger, and how American policies regarding
copper and grain were hurting Zaire. Mobutu did not mention Roberto but expressed his pleasure
with American Ambassador Sheldon Vance and their close relationship. Mobutu asked if Vance
could stay in his post “for a long time yet.” Nixon assured him there were no plans to move him.

Sheldon Vance reassured both Mobutu and Washington that their respective partner was
well intentioned. Following Nixon’s opening to China, Mobutu Sese Seko, and Holden Roberto
had made their own forays to Beijing and the east. Vance spun Mobutu’s outreach to China as a

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plan “to enhance his image as a leader of Africa and a major voice among the non-aligned states.” Just as the United States had not veered towards socialism after Nixon’s visit to China, Vance expected no “basic change in Mobutu’s policy towards the United States.”

At the same time, the ambassador lobbied hard in Washington for the M-16 rifles Mobutu had long sought.

Mobutu forged ahead after the October crisis and raised his profile as a revolutionary and a statesman. In November 1973, he expanded the ‘Authenticity’ campaign and announced a new economic policy known as ‘Zairianization.’ Zairianization was a program to seize the “vast swath of the economy from foreign hands” that the government had not already nationalized. Almost immediately, it became clear that friends of the dictator would own the confiscated industries. New Zairian managers, eager to maximize profits, refused to pay taxes and laid off workers, which led to riots; Kinshasa was bedlam, and Mobutu its architect.

With revolution threatening at home, Mobutu toured the Middle East looking for support. He secured oil from Shah Reza Pahlavi in Iran, and discussed Israel with the Muammar Gaddafi and Saudi King Faisal. The Zairian leader met with Sadat, who “welcomed him as a younger brother.” Ironically, it was the ‘older brother’ that sought wisdom from his junior. Curious to learn the ramifications of his recent commitment to the West, Sadat peppered Mobutu with questions about his American patron. America’s African ally told its new Arab one that although “the United States and Zaire disagreed on some things,” the “Americans were completely sincere friends and have never interfered in Zaire’s Affairs.”

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530 Young and Turner, The Rise and Decline of the Zairian State, 326–27, 343, 348.
531 Embassy Kinshasa to Department of State, Telegram 02199, 3/11/1974, 1974KINSHA02199, AAD.
Despite his efforts to promote the United States’ global leadership, Mobutu’s superpower ally failed to return the favor. After years of deliberation, the State Department denied the sale of M-16s to Zaire out of concern for ongoing negotiations with Portugal over use of the Azores airbase. Five weeks later, the government in Portugal fell. The fate of the Azores and Angola remained undecided.

CARNATIONS

The collapse of the Portuguese government in 1974 came as a total surprise to Washington. On April 25, a group of young Portuguese officers calling themselves the Movimento das Forças Armadas/Armed Forces Movement (MFA) removed Marcello Caetano from power in a bloodless coup. Greeted as liberators, MFA members soon received a gift of carnations from a flower merchant, which they placed in their rifle barrels and tank cannons. The “Carnation Revolution” had completely toppled Washington’s Portugal policies.

The coup shocked the American embassy in Lisbon. Whereas under Kennedy and Johnson ambassadors like Elbrick and Anderson had taken active steps to ingratiate themselves with dissidents and military alike, under Nixon, Lisbon became a retirement post. The United States did not even have an Ambassador in Portugal for all of 1973. Kissinger’s appointee, Stuart Scott Nash, arrived in country only three months before the coup. The entire American intelligence community failed to notice the faintest sign of instability. The week of the coup, Nash visited the Azores en route to the annual meeting of the Harvard Law School Association. When he learned that flights


to Lisbon were delayed indefinitely, Nash decided to leave Lajes for Harvard rather than find a way back to his post.\footnote{Schneidman, \textit{Engaging Africa}, 136–42; For a closer look at Kissinger’s role in the Portuguese Revolution, see: Pero, \textit{The Eccentric Realist}.} Kissinger, deeply involved with the Middle East, had a new crisis on his hands.

The MFA promptly announced it planned to transition all of Portugal’s colonies towards independence. Ending the African wars headed the agenda for the young officers who took over; after years of stalemate, the Portuguese people had had enough.\footnote{Westad, \textit{The Global Cold War}, 220.} In Guinea Bissau, PAIGC had already established itself and gained limited international recognition before the revolution. In Mozambique, FRELIMO had failed to achieve similar success, but their status as the only rebel group in that colony had earned them international recognition as the government-in-waiting. The liberation movement in Angola, however, remained fractured, a tripartite state whose actors operated in different regions, amongst different ethnic groups, under competing notions of Angolan nationality. Imperial retreat left Angola with no clear path.
VI. THE SCRAMBLE FOR ANGOLA

The fall of the New State in Portugal brought in foreign powers into south-central Africa on a scale reminiscent of the ‘scramble’ of the late 19th century. Neither Roberto, Savimbi, nor Neto believed that the Portuguese exit meant the end of their liberation struggle. The long, fruitless war of independence had transformed all three men and their movements into dogmatic, ethnocentric organizations that hated one another as much as they hated the Portuguese. The FNLA, UNITA, and the MPLA each fought for their own imagined Angola: Roberto for a mirror of Mobutu’s corrupt kleptocracy with himself at the top of a vast patronage system; Savimbi for an Ovimbundu dictatorship pursuing a policy of neutral toward the superpowers; and Neto, for a revolutionary state along communist lines that would still maintain its commercial ties to the west. Angola’s leaders spent the independence struggle constantly at odds, rebuffed all efforts by the world community to unite them, sabotaged each other’s political and military efforts, and at times fought each other more fiercely than they did Portugal. The war entered a new stage, where their interpersonal competition left the bush and evolved into politicking and conventional warfare.536

Kissinger, at the helm of American foreign policy after Nixon’s resignation, failed to recognize the severity of the situation in Angola. By the time Kissinger realized the importance of the revolution and latent civil war there, it was almost too late to implement a strategy to help Holden Roberto wrest control of Angola. Once he did pick a course of action, Kissinger chose a flawed approach, codenamed IAFEATURE. Before Congress ended the covert operation, it had already failed militarily, diplomatically, and politically. Cuba, the Soviet Union, and the MPLA were able to defeat the United States in a direct confrontation little more than six months after the Fall of Saigon. In the process, Washington embraced an alliance with South Africa. Angola

536 On the opening moves of the Angolan Civil War, see: Guimarães, The Origins of the Angolan Civil War; Marcum, Angolan Revolution; Westad, The Global Cold War; Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions.
became the center of the Cold War in Africa, and the United States became mired in a strategic partnership the ultra-nationalist, racist regime in Pretoria.537

The disastrous chain of events that played out during Portugal’s withdrawal from Angola in 1975 was not preordained. In fact, the unraveling of twenty years of American relations with Holden Roberto and the plight of Angola was the result of conscious decisions by the Nixon and Ford administrations. Although Kennedy and Johnson were unable to liberate Angola or build a strong Congolese (Zairian) military, they had adopted a policy that committed the U.S. to black Africa in its struggle against white oppression. It was only after the loss of Angola and the diplomatic fallout from the entente with South Africa that Kissinger realized the importance of aligning America against the white regimes in Africa. It constituted a complete turnaround for the man who as National Security Advisor had disregarded the importance of the conflict five years before. But it was too late. The price of Kissinger’s miscalculation and ignorance regarding Africa a strategic and propaganda defeat for the United States, and an escalation of the Cold War.

**MOBILIZATION**

International support quickly lined up in accordance with the alliance system of the past fourteen years; however, Savimbi’s UNITA and Chipenda’s MPLA offshoot added a new twist to an otherwise predictable situation. The Organization of African Unity continued to support both the FNLA and the MPLA, and in May 1974 began funding UNITA as well. Zaire remained resolutely behind Roberto. Zambia, which had served as a rear-base for the MPLA’s Eastern Front, initially sided with Chipenda and reached out to Savimbi. MPLA members in Cuba, present for

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July 26 celebrations, asked for money, weapons, and training and the Cubans proved forthcoming. Odd Arne Westad, whose access to Soviet sources remains unmatched, claimed that the Carnation Revolution “sent Moscow’s Africa policy into high gear,” and the Russian embassies in Zambia and Tanzania played host to several attempts to repair the rift in the MPLA leadership between Neto and Chipenda. In contrast to Moscow’s hyper-activity, Henry Kissinger ignored Angola well into the summer of 1974 with the collapse of the Nixon administration and the fall of Saigon keeping him busy. When Kissinger did study implications of the Carnation Revolution, he did so primarily with Portugal and NATO in mind.

Henry Kissinger’s first priority after the April 25 coup was the situation in Lisbon, and understandably so. Information continued to be a problem as the revolution ran its course. Kissinger appointed Frank Carlucci, an old hand from the Congo Crisis of the 1960s, to be Ambassador to Portugal. Carlucci was a brilliant chose for the post, given his experience not only in the Congo but also as a Foreign Service officer in Chile during the coup in 1972. Intelligence from the embassy in Lisbon slowly improved and had come up to speed by the end of 1974. Carlucci understood that in the face of limited options for influencing the revolution, information gathering was his top priority. But Portugal seemed more an excuse for not focusing on Africa, as far as Kissinger was concerned.

Joseph Mobutu certainly felt neglected after the Carnation Revolution. On March 26, 1974, shortly after the final denial of the M-16 purchase, Sheldon Vance left Zaire to take another...

538 Marcum, Angolan Revolution, II:248–52; Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, 237–45.
539 Westad, The Global Cold War, 222.
541 For the more on the American response to the Carnation Revolution and the fall of the Portuguese Empire, see: Pero, The Eccentric Realist; Schneidman, Engaging Africa.

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position in the Nixon administration. There would not be another U.S. Ambassador in Kinshasa until late August. With the United States focused on the outcome in Lisbon, Mobutu worked with regional partners on a diplomatic solution to Angola’s peculiar, tripartite nationalist situation. In May, he flew to various leadership summits with Roberto in tow. Mobutu’s ideal solution involved a merger of all three groups, with Roberto installed as President. The talks produced little results, however, reflecting the ongoing divisions within the MPLA.

Meanwhile, Mobutu himself was distracted from the Angola crisis. At the beginning of the month, a group of Americans came to Kinshasa to go over the logistics of the upcoming ‘Rumble in the Jungle’ fight between Muhammed Ali and George Foreman. At the head of the entourage was Don King, who was in charge of working with Zairian officials on the details of the fight. It was to be a showcase for Mobutu’s Zaire, a symbol of the progress made since the tumultuous 1960s. However, by May, Zairianization had wrecked the economy, as tax payments plummeted and protests swept the country. With the unrest threatening the nation’s grand spectacle, the unthinkable happened: the price of copper fell drastically. Copper had enjoyed historically elevated prices from 1967-1974, and it hit an all-time high in April, which raised the prospects of success for Mobutu’s development schemes. The crash that began in 1974 sent prices to an all-time low, which robbed the state of revenue, and endangered development; Mobutu had mortgaged future copper shipments to pay for his grand projects. The copper crash left Zaire in a credit crisis. Now, more than ever, the dictator needed American guidance and finances.

542 Department of State to All Posts, Telegram 066122, “Narcotics Control: Designation of Sheldon B. Vance as Senior Adviser,” 4/2/1974, 1974STATE066122, AAD.
543 Embassy Dar Es Salaam to Department of State, Telegram 01694, “President Mobutu Visits Tanzania,” 5/28/1974, 1974DARES01694, AAD.
In June, Mobutu began to work on capturing Washington’s attention. On June 3, 1974, he facilitated an agreement between China, Zaire, and Roberto to train and equip an FNLA conventional army. The same day, Zairian officials pressured the American embassy to support the FNLA in response to China’s “obvious” effort to “gain a foothold in Angola.” The embassy reported to Washington: “This is probably not the last feeler from (the Government of Zaire) on subject of US aid to FNLA.”

Mobutu worked with China to train and arm the FNLA as an anti-Soviet force. Chinese and North Korean advisers and weapons poured in to Kinshasa throughout June. In July, Mobutu again met with American contractors in an attempt to purchase a fleet of transport helicopters and other advanced U.S. equipment. He was successful in securing an order for C-130’s, but due to credit issues and a lack of pressure from Washington, Lockheed promised delivery of the planes no sooner than 1977. Despite the growing budget crunch from the copper crash, Mobutu was obsessed with Angola and the need to upgrade his military. Without American aid, such an upgrade seemed unlikely.

At the end of July, Mobutu requested an urgent meeting between his Foreign Minister and Kissinger. At that point the Nixon administration was in its death throes. Zairian Foreign Minister Umba-di-Lutete originally scheduled the meeting for August 9, 1974, but Nixon’s resignation that morning forced a delay. Luckily for all parties involved, President Ford retained

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546 Embassy Kinshasa to Department of State, Telegram 04817, “FNLA to Create Regular Army Division with Chinese Help,” 6/4/1974, 1974KINSHA04817, AAD.
547 Embassy Kinshasa to Department of State, Telegram 04860, “Helping Angolan National Liberation Front (FNLA),” 6/4/1974, 1974KINSHA04860, AAD. Roberto likewise had used the threat of Chinese aid in 1963/1964 to force Washington to consider an aid package to the GRAE.
549 Embassy Kinshasa to Department of State, Telegram 066992, “Potential Sale of Boeing-Vertol Chinook Helicopters to Zaire,” 8/2/1974, 1974KINSHA06692, AAD.
550 Embassy Kinshasa to Department of State, Telegram 06673, “Sale of Three More Lockheed C-130s to Zaire,” 8/2/1974, 1974KINSHA06673, AAD.
551 Embassy Kinshasa to Department of State, Telegram 06601, “Zaire and Future of Angola,” 7/30/1974, 1974KINSHA06601, AAD.
Kissinger, and the meeting went off as planned three days later. Umba gave Kissinger a full report on the situation in Angola, including a direct request for American support to Roberto. Umba stressed the need for diplomatic, political, and military aid for the FNLA; “the situation in Angola could very well move quite fast.” He said, “It is important that events not pass us by.” Kissinger thanked Umba for bringing the situation to his attention and promised to “do something about it.”\footnote{“US-Zaire Relations,” \textit{FRUS}, 1969-1976, Vol. XXVIII, Document 99.} Rather than consider a deeper American involvement, Kissinger simply asked the CIA to increase Roberto’s pay “high enough to assure President Mobutu” that Angola was important. The payments were low enough that they did not require approval from an oversight committee.\footnote{Memorandum from Director of Central Intelligence Colby to the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger), Secret, “Mobutu’s Request for Material Support to Holden Roberto,” Washington, 9/19/1974, Outside the System Chronological File, Box 1, NSA, GRFL, \textit{FRUS}, 1969-1976, Vol. XXVIII, Document 100.} At that point, Kissinger still believed the United States could avoid a major commitment.\footnote{Department of State to Embassy Lusaka, Telegram 181055, “US-Zambian Relations: Southern Africa,” 8/17/1974, 1974STATE181055, AAD.}

On August 17, Vernon Mwaanga, the Zambian Foreign Minister, also travelled to Washington to meet with Kissinger to discuss the worsening crisis in the region. It was a similar exercise in futility. Mwaanga brought up the whole gauntlet of regional issues: South Africa, Namibia, Rhodesia, the Byrd Amendment, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, and Angola. Kissinger feigned an interest in each topic, and even expressed American “willingness to play a constructive role in the area,” if only Zambia would write a memorandum “as to how to be helpful.” On Mozambique and Guinea Bissau, Kissinger expressed America’s acceptance of the socialist groups in waiting to take control from the Portuguese. On Angola, Mwaanga stressed the need for “a united front” between “all three groups.” Kissinger mentioned that “another African minister had told him that” only Holden Roberto should be included in the post-independence government. If pressed to choose one side at that moment, which Zambia did not believe was the correct course
of action, Mwaanga indicated that it would be the MPLA.555 The meeting revealed Kissinger’s total disinterest in the region.

Mwaanga later wrote an opinion piece in the *Times of Zambia* that reflected his true feelings about America’s interest in African affairs. He said that based on his private discussions with Kissinger, it was clear that the United States had “not necessarily formulated what would be really described as a definitive policy for Africa.” Zambia had produced a comprehensive memorandum for Kissinger after the August meeting, yet the United States chose to remain on the sidelines. From reading the tealeaves, Mwaanga feared that there was “imminent danger” that Washington would “make a closer commitment to South Africa.” He prophesized that if the United States “failed to confine South Africa to its own territory,” with its “tremendous influence,” then America would lose its credibility with black Africans.556

Even though America’s African allies desperately sought American intervention in Angola, Kissinger’s Undersecretary for African Affairs, Donald Easum, advocated against involvement with “any of the Angolan liberation movements.” He represented the post-‘Congo Crisis’ African Bureau, focused on economic aid and non-alignment on the continent. Easum preferred to leave Angola to the Angolans, and for the United States to quickly embrace newly independent Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique. In July 1974 he vetoed a CIA proposal to arm and train the FNLA. Easum incessantly pushed for aid to the regimes in Bissau and Maputo, for which Kissinger took to calling Easum “Mr. Guinea-Bissau” in meetings. Frustrated by Kissinger’s disregard for his proposals, Easum took an unauthorized trip to Mozambique in October. It was

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556 Embassy Lusaka to Department of State, Telegram 02054, “FonMin Mwaanga Fears US Will Move Closer to South Africa,” 10/7/1974, 1974LUSAKA02054, AAD.
the last straw for Kissinger, who had the State Department reassign Easum as Ambassador to Nigeria after only nine months in office.557

In Zaire, new American Ambassador Deane Hinton showed little patience for Mobutu’s interest in Angola. Hinton viewed his role as a fiscal conservative meant to reign in Mobutu’s spending with the Zairian economy in tatters. At their first meeting, Mobutu spoke at length about “the independence of Angola” as “Zaire’s most important problem.” Hinton intimated to Mobutu that Angola was a top priority in Washington, even though Easum had just vetoed aid for Holden Roberto. His real concern was on Zaire’s debt and balance of payment issues, and Hinton viewed Mobutu’s interest in Angola and military preparedness as unaffordable obsessions. The Ambassador took neither seriously while focusing more on the upcoming Ali-Foreman boxing match than his host country’s interests.558

Mobutu wanted Washington to support a military buildup in preparation for war in Angola. He continuously pushed Hinton for new arms agreements, much to the consternation of the fiscally conservative American ambassador. Hinton encouraged the State Department to finally approve the sale of M-16 rifles to Zaire in the hopes it would appease Mobutu’s demands. Instead, Mobutu responded with demands for even more military hardware, including C-130 transport airplanes, A-4 fighter-bombers, tanks, armored personnel carriers, and air defense systems. Hinton was completely shocked and dismayed at what he perceived to be Mobutu’s lack of gratitude over the M-16 purchase. The American Ambassador did not find the new aid request at all realistic, not from a military or financial perspective. Hinton reported to Washington that at he repeatedly pointed out the “costliness of [the] armament program,” Mobutu “repeated several times that “to

557 Schneidman, Engaging Africa, 193–96; Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, 281.
have peace one had to prepare for war.” Mobutu made it very clear he had offers from China, the Soviet Union, and North Korea to provide the weapons he wanted, but that he “preferred to deal with us [USA].” In response to the request, Kissinger approved sending a team of military advisors to Kinshasa to appease Mobutu. However, the State Department did not want to actually give Mobutu what he wanted. State hoped that the team “might be able to induce greater cost consciousness and awareness of military/non-military tradeoffs on part of [the Government of Zaire].” The Military Technical Advisory Team had orders to “avoid implication that U.S. is assuming responsibility for assessing Zaire’s military,” or that the United States would provide any military hardware. It was a clear sign that even in late 1974, Washington was not working with Zaire towards an intervention in Angola. However, Mobutu graciously accepted the offer of technical support, and he expressed the hope that the advisors would lead Washington once again acknowledge threats to Zaire’s security and “respond as in the past.”

**POLITICAL PARTIES WITH ARMIES**

Meanwhile, the military situation in Angola in the summer of 1974 remained fluid. Whereas UNITA and the MPLA worked out cease-fires with the Portuguese by the end of July, the FNLA went on the offensive. Using their newly acquired training and weapons, Roberto’s men engaged with Portuguese troops who were growing increasingly disinterested in the fighting. The FNLA only agreed to a cease-fire with Portugal on October 12, after they had established a zone

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561 Embassy Kinshasa to Department of State, Telegram 01494, “President Mobutu and Zaire’s Defense Problems,” 2/20/1975, 1975KINSHA01494, AAD.
of control in Angola’s extreme north along the border with Zaire. The MPLA formalized peace with Portugal by signing their own cease-fire with the Portuguese on October 21.\textsuperscript{562} What was to come next was not exactly clear. Amidst the uneasy truce with Portugal, and with animosity and distrust amongst themselves growing, the FNLA, MPLA, and UNITA entered Luanda in late 1974 intending to seek recruits, establish a foothold in the capital, and impress foreign powers with their legitimacy.

By the time of their respective entrances into Luanda, both the FNLA and MPLA had begun lining up aid from their international patrons. Roberto had already secured Chinese and North Korean aid, and Mobutu kept hammering away at Kissinger in the hopes of securing major American support. On February 4, the anniversary of the 1961 riots in Luanda, Neto was met by a crowd of 300,000 to 400,000 supporters as he entered the capital. He arrived by airplane after stops in Paris and Lisbon, and the pilots diverted the plane from Luanda’s main airfield because they could not land due to the crowd waiting for him on the tarmac. Moscow took this and other signs of Neto’s personal popularity to mean that the MPLA was the most powerful movement in Luanda, and that the people recognized Neto as its leader. Westad claims that as early as December 1974, Moscow “drew up an elaborate plan for supplying the MPLA with heavy weapons and large amounts of ammunition.”\textsuperscript{563} Only Savimbi and Chipenda remained without external support.

Shut out by the superpowers, Savimbi turned to South Africa. According to Hilton Hamann, Savimbi told the South Africans in secret meetings in Angola throughout the end of 1974 that “the MPLA was supported by the communist bloc and that Holden Roberto, leader of the FNLA…would become a military dictator.” Savimbi needed small arms, uniforms, and boots. He told the South Africans that “Zambia would support South African military action in Angola – if

\textsuperscript{562} Marcum, \textit{Angolan Revolution}, II:246, 251.
\textsuperscript{563} Marcum, II:258; Shubin, \textit{The Hot “Cold War,”} 33, 38; Cited in Westad, \textit{The Global Cold War}, 224–25.
it was kept secret.” In response to his request, on October 9, 1974 Pretoria provided Savimbi a
token number of light weapons including carbines, pistols, and ammunition. In December of 1974,
South African intelligence officers visited Luanda and returned to Pretoria with the
recommendation that UNITA receive more clandestine assistance, particularly food and clothes.564

South Africa’s support for Savimbi, like all the outside aid at this point in the conflict,
represented small but important escalations on behalf of all parties involved. During the summer
and fall of 1974, regional diplomacy failed to merge the MPLA factions, let alone the three major
nationalist movements. While each party met to determine peaceful terms for their integration into
Angolan political life, they all built conventional armies in areas under their control. This early aid
set the escalation cycle in motion and from January 1975 forward, the United States, Soviet Union,
Cuba, South Africa, and Zaire all increased their involvement.

Lisbon worked with Angola’s three independence movements, the FNLA, UNITA, and
MPLA, to agree to an armistice and set terms for Portugal’s withdrawal from the country. Holden
Roberto, Jonas Savimbi, and Agostinho Neto met with Portuguese Foreign Minister Mário Soares
at the Penina Hotel and Golf Resort in the Algarve to negotiate a settlement between them for a
transitional government. The Alvor Accords they signed in January 1975 established a transitional
government with a novel and unwieldy configuration of three Prime Ministers, one from each of
the movements. All decisions required a two-thirds majority. The agreement likewise split the
army and all other ministries in three. The keystone of the agreement was parliamentary elections
scheduled for October 1975 before the planned November 11 Independence Day.565 From the start,
none of the three parties committed to the government. Roberto, Savimbi, and Neto all sent trusted

564 Hilton Hamann, Days of the Generals: The Untold Story of South Africa’s Apartheid-Era Military Generals (Cape
Town: Zebra, 2001), 16–17; Jamie Miller, “Things Fall Apart: South Africa and the Collapse of the Portuguese
Empire, 1973–74,” Cold War History 12, no. 2 (May 2012): 183–204.
565 On the Alvor Agreement, see: Guimarães, The Origins of the Angolan Civil War, 93–94.
confidants to serve in the ministerial council, freeing themselves from governing in order to focus on war strategy.

After the Alvor Agreement, the CIA succeeded in securing funds for Roberto. CIA Director William Colby briefly explained the situation in Angola to the 40 Committee, which oversaw all American covert operations, and asked for $300,000 for Roberto and another $100,000 for Savimbi. He presented both requests as support “for non-military aid” to prepare for the election. The 40 Committee denied funds for Savimbi but approved the full amount for Roberto’s FNLA.566

Roberto immediately put the American money to work. Even though the U.S. committed $300,000 to the FNLA, there was still no coordination between Roberto and Washington. Kissinger did not consider the money a means to an end, but rather, an end itself. Nevertheless, the MPLA and the Soviets interpreted Roberto’s actions and the rumors of American money as a major move by the United States. Meanwhile, relations between the parties remained tense; indeed, the peace barely held for two weeks before street violence erupted in the capital.

The first open confrontation in Luanda occurred in mid-February between the MPLA and Daniel Chipenda’s MPLA splinter group. Chipenda, whose forces the Alvor Accord did not recognize, opened offices in Luanda in early 1975. On February 13, an MPLA militia aligned with Neto murdered fifteen to twenty of Chipenda’s supporters and ran the rest out of town. Despite their political differences, a desperate Chipenda turned to Roberto, and on February 22, he proclaimed the merger of his forces with the FNLA. Chipenda’s 2,000 men became the FNLA – South, or the FNLA/Chipenda. They were the best-trained and experienced forces available to

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Roberto and provided the FNLA inroads into ethnic groups and regions outside of the Bakongo north.\textsuperscript{567}

The alliance between Chipenda and Roberto was possible for several reasons. First, the FNLA had fought against MPLA troops in the Bakongo north, mainly against Mbundu forces from Luanda and the surrounding hinterland. Chipenda’s mostly Ovimbundu and Chokwe troops came from the South and East of the country, and their campaigns against the Portuguese in the east rarely brought contact with the FNLA. There in the eastern front, Chipenda and his men had also fought against the Ovimbundu troops of Savimbi’s UNITA. The rivalry between Chipenda and Savimbi to lead the Ovimbundu people and the history of violence between their armies made an alliance between them out of the question.

The MPLA also recruited unlikely allies. In April, Neto successfully brought the former Katanga Gendarmes into his army. These former soldiers of Moïse Tshombe’s secessionist movement in the Congo, had served the Portuguese in the eastern theater of the Angolan war since 1967. The Katangans fought UNITA and Chipenda’s MPLA forces but had had relatively few interactions with Neto and his associates. Both Savimbi and Chipenda were mortal enemies of these forces, which aided Neto in attracting the elite fighters. The Katangans would remain the MPLA’s best fighters in country up until independence.\textsuperscript{568}

The mood in Luanda remained tense, and members of the new government carried revolvers to work. During the last week of March, Roberto’s forces attacked MPLA offices in Luanda with grenades and targeted training camps along the coffee route into the city. All told, the FNLA killed over fifty MPLA members. On March 30, five hundred FNLA soldiers crossed the border from Zaire by truck and invaded the musseques, or slums, on the outskirts of Luanda.

\textsuperscript{567} Marcum, Angolan Revolution, II:258.
\textsuperscript{568} Marcum, II:259.
Fighting in the *musseques* raged for days with the FNLA carving out safe havens along the approaches to the city. The MPLA responded by indiscriminately distributing weapons to its supporters, including teenagers. A flow of Soviet arms reached the MPLA through Congo-Brazzaville, Cabinda, and eventually entered directly into Angola by sea and air. By late April, the fighting had turned into a full-scale assault by the FNLA in all of the *musseques*; over seven hundred died and over a thousand were wounded. Fighting spread into the North and East as the MPLA counterattacked in district capitals. In early May, Mobutu dispatched 1,200 Zairian troops to fight alongside the FNLA.\(^{569}\) While the provisional government continued to meet, the civil war steadily intensified.

UNITA was conspicuous in its absence from the warfare in Luanda; instead Savimbi built his political machine in the countryside and lobbied the South Africans for military backing. In fact, Savimbi, like Roberto, had yet to enter the capital since the coup.\(^{570}\) He understood UNITA’s innate weaknesses. He possessed the smallest army, and he was a relative unknown in Luanda. However, the Ovimbundu, Savimbi’s ethnic group and political base, represented Angola’s largest population bloc. If the provisional government survived long enough for elections, his large Ovimbundu base would put him in the presidency through the ballot. The problem was surviving until then.

After Kissinger and the 40 Committee refused to fund UNITA in January, Savimbi deepened his South African connection. On February 12, 1975, he met at length with several South African Defense Force (SADF) officers and discussed his personal politics, vision for Angola, and attitude toward whites. Savimbi’s assurances appeased the Apartheid state’s emissaries. UNITA,


\(^{570}\) Bridgland, *Jonas Savimbi*, 120.
according to Savimbi, would allow “whites to remain in Angola, as either Portuguese or Angolan citizens.” On the important subject of South Africa’s enemy in Namibia, SWAPO, Savimbi “admitted UNITA had worked with them for years” but that he was willing to set them aside as an ally to “concentrate all his efforts” on winning power in Angola. A week later South Africa approved more support for UNITA, including 402 pistols, 95,000 rounds of ammunition and $200,000 in cash. In April, Savimbi met with South African secret police (BOSS) agents four times in three different countries, including Britain and France. He pushed them for financial and political assistance, as well as light weapons for 8,000 men and equipment to broadcast election propaganda.\(^{571}\) The South Africans denied this request but did not rule out future aid. UNITA armed the troops it could, and Savimbi scoured the capital and the Ovimbundu highlands for recruits.\(^{572}\)

On April 25, the anniversary of the MFA coup in Lisbon, Savimbi entered Luanda. Despite the MPLA’s strength in the city, large crowds met him at the airport, a turnout reminiscent of Neto’s grand entrance in February. The Portuguese had brought large numbers of Ovimbundu into the capital to replace Mbundu and Creoles in the colonial administration to limit the MPLA’s presence in the bureaucracy. Savimbi had a larger natural political base in Luanda than Roberto. With the MPLA and FNLA engaged in firefights in and around the capital, Savimbi returned to Nova Lisboa (Huambo) to organize his forces. In early June, the MPLA surrounded and slaughtered 260 UNITA members in the suburbs of Luanda.\(^{573}\) More than ever, Savimbi needed external support. He kept the alliance with South Africa, his accommodationist stance on Angola’s

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\(^{571}\) Hamann, *Days of the Generals*, 17.


whites, and his tacit agreement to end his alliance with SWAPO out of his political rhetoric. Savimbi possessed the smallest army in Angola, but his politics and covert diplomacy steadily attracted supporters of whom none was more important than Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda.

ALLIES

Kaunda, like Mobutu, had grown tired of American inaction in Angola. Zambia’s position in the conflict had evolved since the previous August. Above all, Kaunda needed to preserve the Benguela railway and with it the flow of Zambian copper to western markets. The copper crash further heightened the importance of keeping the link to the Atlantic open. With Daniel Chipenda’s forces out of the MPLA and subsumed into Holden Roberto’s forces, Kaunda looked to Jonas Savimbi for an alliance.

Savimbi had become an attractive ally for several reasons. UNITA emerged as a uniting force for the Ovimbundu, whose population remained concentrated along the Benguela railway. Savimbi campaigned along the tracks and politicked in the same villages and towns in which his father had built churches earlier in the century. By appealing to their shared experience of exploitation and the promise of development in the fertile highlands, UNITA created what Linda Heywood calls “a Pan-Ovimbundu ethnic identity.”574 Because of this, Kaunda began talks with Savimbi in late 1974 intended to strengthen UNITA’s international position. It was Savimbi, with Kaunda’s support, which had led to the Alvor Accord, the agreement between Portugal and the nationalists that created the transitional government.575 After news of Roberto’s American support became widespread in early 1975, Kaunda wanted his chosen client included in America’s plan.

574 Heywood, Contested Power in Angola, 1840s to the Present, 157.
The Zambian president, his Foreign Minister, the U.S. Ambassador, and his trusted confidante Mark Chona travelled to Washington D.C. in April to meet with President Ford and Secretary Kissinger in an effort to convince the Americans to get more involved with Angola, and Savimbi specifically. Kissinger later credited Kaunda with bringing Angola to the attention of the Ford Administration.\textsuperscript{576} Kaunda knew that with the fall of Saigon imminent, his American counterpart would be distracted from the brewing disaster in southern Africa. With no bilateral problems between Zambia and the United States, Kaunda could focus on the Angolan Civil War. He made it clear that Zambia’s preferred outcome to the power vacuum in Luanda was for Savimbi to become Angola’s first president. Kaunda argued that Savimbi was “someone who could save the situation.” He gave Savimbi credit for the Alvor Accord and mentioned that his associates were “impressed with Savimbi’s sincerity and his honesty of purpose.”\textsuperscript{577}

Kaunda did not mince words regarding the consequences of American failure to act in Angola. The Zambian President himself had met with the South Africans regarding the ongoing war against Ian Smith in Rhodesia, and during those talks, the South Africans confided in him that an MPLA takeover in Luanda was “too ghastly to contemplate.” Kaunda worried that delay and inaction would leave Ford and Kissinger without enough time to formulate an effective policy. In a moment of desperation, the United States would have no choice but to turn to South Africa. He observed that the prospect that the situation in Angola and in nearby Rhodesia was on the verge of “an explosion” that “would not be confined to South Africa alone.” Due to “South Africa’s ability to strike all of Africa,” an escalation in the racial conflict would envelop the region. Kaunda warned Kissinger: act in Angola, or “events may overtake you and the U.S. could find itself

\textsuperscript{576} Henry Kissinger, \textit{Years of Renewal}, First (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999), 791.
fighting on the side of the racists.” Kissinger and Ford, busy with the North Vietnamese assault on Saigon, promised the Zambians that they would decide on a course of action in June.578

The State Department compiled reports in May in preparation for a full policy review. He gave the State Department, the Department of Defense, and the CIA until June 30 to prepare the complete study. In the meantime, Kissinger and the 40 Committee began preparations without the participation of the State Department for a major American intervention.579

The 40 Committee took on a siege mentality. Kissinger worried that “We have been diddling around…we have given Roberto a bit, but he needs weapons and discipline…Kaunda doesn’t have the horsepower…Mobutu is a bloody bastard but he is the only hope.” Above all Kissinger and his advisers wanted to prevent an MPLA takeover. Angola was too big, too resource rich, and too strategically located on the frontline of the black-white conflict to allow it to fall to the communists. Losing Angola would constitute a total disaster for Kissinger’s Africa policy up to 1975. Nixon and Kissinger had chosen the whites in 1970, and antagonized America’s black partners in the region. With Angola’s independence fast approaching, Kissinger’s anger with the American foreign policy establishment grew. Kissinger complained that “no agency supported doing anything—State, JCS.” Brent Scowcroft, Kissinger’s deputy, remarked that even the CIA “haven’t a position really.”580

In truth an MPLA victory in Angola would have had far reaching consequences for the remaining white dominated states of southern Africa. With the Portuguese exiting the scene, only Ian Smith’s Rhodesian government and the National Party government in South Africa remained.

With a majority-ruled government coming into power in June in Mozambique, landlocked Rhodesia would find itself surrounded by black states. South Africa feared that if Angola fell into the hands of a communist government, the former Portuguese colony would become a staging ground for cross-border raids into South African occupied Namibia. Mozambique had the same potential for raids into South Africa itself. From the view from Pretoria, the African dominos were falling. Angola constituted an existential crisis for the whites, an alliance with whom had been the foundation of Kissinger’s regional policy. Kissinger understood by May that inaction was not an option.

State Department officials were adamantly opposed to intervention and CIA involvement in Angola. State argued that “everything” was already “going our way so we don’t need to do anything,” and that “Angola was not of great importance.” They preferred a “hands off” approach to Angola, and to “let nature take its course.” William Colby of the CIA and Kissinger’s deputies insisted that the United States needed to take action; the real question was to what extent and whether or not to include Savimbi. The CIA prepared an opinion paper suggesting “covert political action” and “covert military aid” for both Roberto and Savimbi. The State Department countered those sentiments with the argument that Mobutu would not let Roberto lose, and that Kaunda would maneuver Savimbi into the presidency, even though those outcomes were mutually exclusive. Opening the debate on Angola had brought Washington no closer to consensus.

In June Mobutu broke the logjam in the policy debate as the U.S.-Zaire relationship hit its nadir. He announced he had discovered a plot against his life; the United States was orchestrating

a bloody coup because he had publicly lambasted Nathaniel Davis, the newly appointed Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs in January, and because of his position on Angola.\textsuperscript{584} Zaire formally asked Ambassador Hinton to leave; Mobutu threatened to send him home as \textit{persona non grata}.\textsuperscript{585} This alarming chain of events finally convinced Kissinger that Angola was the reason for Mobutu’s military requests and the strain in U.S.-Zaire relations. He recalled Hinton, but more important, Mobutu’s tantrum convinced him of the need to intervene in Angola.\textsuperscript{586} In a meeting with his close confidants, Kissinger confessed that he “didn’t focus on (Angola) early enough.” Furthermore, he admitted, “We’ve mishandled Mobutu and the whole area. I have not given too much attention to it, so it’s partly my fault.”\textsuperscript{587} Kissinger finally saw the crisis through Mobutu’s eyes: “He must think we are out of our damn minds…to have the whole country go communist without doing anything…It will end up in Angola as it did in the Congo… Someone will get on top by force.”\textsuperscript{588} To reach out to the African dictator, Kissinger recalled Sheldon Vance from his new duties and brought him to Washington to join the Angola discussion.

Kissinger assigned Vance the delicate mission of repairing relations with Mobutu and bringing him on board in regard to an American aid program to Roberto and Savimbi. Kissinger told Vance he worried that Mobutu believed that “if we’re letting Angola go, then in essence we’re letting him go.” Vance, who had not seen Mobutu in a year and a half, agreed. By now, Kissinger had already decided on covert action, but was unsure what such a program would entail. What he needed was Vance to sort through the Hinton-Coup row and have Mobutu sign off on a CIA


Upon his arrival in Zaire, Vance met with Mobutu for a two-hour breakfast meeting. After he stated the purpose of his visit and Mobutu aired his complaints, the President laid out the situation from his point of view. Roberto had 15,000 men in Zaire, “but they were not adequately equipped, certainly not comparably with those of Neto,” despite Chinese arms and training they had received in 1974. Mobutu still needed “M-16 rifles, mobile artillery, ammunition, and money” for his own forces. The situation was dire but not impossible.

Mobutu’s plan was simple. The United States would funnel weapons and cash to Roberto and Savimbi through Zaire. By his estimation, the United States and Zaire had until independence day, November 11, to prevent Neto from declaring a Soviet-allied Angola. The overall aim of the plan was to achieve a military stalemate between Roberto and Neto in northern Angola, and to offer Savimbi as a compromise candidate for president. Vance fully agreed with the program envisioned by Mobutu. On his own initiative, he met with Holden Roberto and discussed the military situation in the North. The former ambassador returned to Washington bearing good news.

Vance’s debrief on June 27 determined the shape, speed, and ultimately the deficiencies of America’s program to thwart an MPLA victory in Angola. Sheldon was enthusiastic about Roberto’s chances for victory if the United States gave “substantially more money to Holden and Savimbi.” When the Secretary asked the definition of “substantial,” Vance replied “several millions I think and arms also given through” Mobutu. On top of the aid to Roberto and Savimbi, Vance advocated giving Mobutu the rifles, C-130s, and light armor he had sought for the past five years.

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years. Although Vance did not suggest sending U.S. military officers, he did make it clear that the mission “would [require] a lot of direct advice.” Capturing Luanda would be the critical aim of the operation, because “the history of Africa has shown that…whoever has the capital has a claim on international support.” Kissinger wanted to send Larry Devlin, or “somebody like Devlin” to run the operation. He did not want to hold back: “If we’re going to do it we should do it. I don’t understand the difference in virginity between giving money and giving arms.” Despite Kissinger’s eagerness to begin the operation, he did not want to bring the matter to President Ford yet. The two men were soon to leave for a meeting with the Soviets to finalize the Helsinki Accords. Kissinger, worried about the reaction to covert action within the State Department if the mission began while he was abroad, State would “turn its (opposition) into a religious movement.” Kissinger delayed action for another two and a half weeks.

THE DIE IS CAST

Despite the efforts of regional leaders and the residual Portuguese colonial army, the Angolan Civil War had begun in earnest by July. Despite an uneasy truce orchestrated by Kenyan President Jomo Kenyatta between Neto, Savimbi, and Roberto, on July 9, heavy fighting broke out in Luanda, and quickly spread throughout the countryside. The Battle for Luanda had begun; in less than a week, the MPLA had ejected the FNLA from the capital. Johnny Eduardo Pinnock, the FNLA’s top man in the transitional government, resigned. The ephemeral transitional government dissolved. With the fall of the government, Savimbi withdrew UNITA from Luanda.

He assembled the core of his forces into a column of 180 trucks intending to return to Nova Lisboa (Huambo). MPLA forces massacred the UNITA column in an elaborate ambush at Dondo. Following yet another MPLA ambush at the end of July, Savimbi committed to civil war. 597

The same month that parties in Angola escalated their skirmishes into a full-blown civil war, South Africa, the United States, and Cuba all decided to intervene. 598 These decisions occurred in parallel, independent from each other. 599 The FNLA and UNITA consolidated their gains in their traditional territories. Soviet aid continued to reach MPLA forces in Luanda throughout the summer. The one-time guerrilla war had evolved into a massive conflict waged for territory between organized, externally funded armies.

The MPLA likewise consolidated control of their ethnic base and key points throughout the country. The Portuguese government, constantly in flux between conservatives and leftists after the coup, was keen to avoid further involvement in the war. The young officers of the MFA, who espoused socialist political theory, began to allow Soviet supply ships to unload directly in Luanda harbor. 600 With the FNLA ejected from the capital, the MPLA went on the offensive. They secured the railroad through the Mbundu heartland to its terminus in Malange. From there, Neto’s forces moved beyond their stronghold in Luanda’s hinterland and pushed to the eastern city of Henrique de Carvalho, the site of the second largest Portuguese airbase in Angola. 601 The airbase, combined with their control of the capital and the oil-rich enclave of Cabinda, enabled the MPLA to control every strategic site in country except for the Benguela railway and its port, Lobito.

598 Miller, “Yes, Minister”; Miller, “Things Fall Apart.”
599 Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions; Westad, The Global Cold War. Gleijeses and Westad claim that Cuba and the Soviet Union escalated their interventions in response to American moves in the region. Both authors allege that South Africa and the United States colluded together to plan their covert operations; Miller remains unsure, and as of yet, no documentary evidence exists proving a direct link between Pretoria and Washington before the start of Operation IAFEATURE and Operation Savannah.
600 George, The Cuban Intervention in Angola, 61.
601 Marcum, Angolan Revolution, II:261.
With the FNLA and UNITA dislodged from the capital, Daniel Chipenda convinced Roberto and Savimbi to join forces and accept aid from South Africa. Chipenda had already met with the South Africans in April to discuss an alliance between Savimbi, and Roberto. At a meeting in Kinshasa between Roberto, Savimbi, Chipenda, and Mobutu, the Angolans promised cooperation with South Africa against SWAPO and the ANC in exchange for $14 million in weapons.\(^{602}\) The South Africans suggested that the FNLA and UNITA fight in a “more conventional way.”\(^{603}\) South Africa had provided the incentive and the direction for the grand alliance between the three factions. The goal was to take control of Luanda from the MPLA.

Back in Washington from Helsinki, Kissinger was ready to take on the peaceniks in the State Department. On July 14, 1975, nearly fifteen months after the Portuguese Revolution, the 40 Committee seriously considered an armed intervention. Nathaniel Davis, Undersecretary for Africa, was not present. Colby reported that the MPLA had complete control of the capital, but he anticipated the Zairian response to that setback, along with American covert funds, “would have (an) immediate impact” on the situation. An American arms package would take “weeks to months” to reach the front lines, but Mobutu’s military aid could reach Roberto’s troops sooner. American arms would travel both by sea and by air with up to “69 C-141 flights.”\(^{604}\) Colby made it clear that his agency believed action needed to be taken as quickly as possible if there was any chance to retake Luanda.

The massive, sudden program envisioned by Colby and Kissinger was much larger than even the hawks in the State Department could handle. Undersecretary of State Sisco and Director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research William Hyland made an impassioned plea to their

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\(^{603}\) Cited in Miller, “Yes, Minister,” 16–17.

boss against such an intervention. Sisco thought that Angola was “simply not important enough…to warrant covert action.” Kissinger asked him directly if he was “willing to let (Angola) go Communist”; he promptly responded in the affirmative. Sisco, uncomfortable with the prospect of a secret war, suggested an alternative option; move forward with a long-awaited military aid package to Mobutu to show the American commitment to the region. Hyland argued that Roberto was “weak,” and had already squandered “every opportunity but has lost ground.” He thought that America’s advantage was that the U.S. had yet to enter the war, which might allow it to pose as an honest broker. Further, Hyland argued that a winning policy in Angola required “massive intervention,” which America, in the wake of Vietnam, lacked the heart to accomplish. On that, his final point, he proved doubly correct. Sisco ultimately voted against intervention, arguing that no vital interests were at stake, that the risks remained too high, and that the proposed program would lead to stalemate at best.605

Kissinger and the military establishment dismissed the last-ditch attempt by the State Department to scuttle the covert operation. America’s chief diplomat commented that Roberto was weak “because we’ve not supported him.” The State Department’s protestations were merely statements of fact, not policy prescriptions, he complained. Kissinger scoffed at Hyland’s suggestion that the $300,000 disbursed in January represented a meaningful involvement, pointing to the millions spent in the intervening period by the MPLA’s allies. Deputy Secretary of Defense William Clements backed up the Secretary of State. He argued that Mobutu was our ally, and “by God we should help him” in Angola. America needed to work “as quickly as possible.” Colby agreed, but moved the discussion away from arms towards direct cash payments. He was “scared of the Congress” on the issue, which cash would avoid. His concern sprang in part from the fact

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that the CIA Director would have to brief six congressional committees about any covert expenditures. Despite these concerns, Colby was adamant that the United States needed to stand by Mobutu and intervene in Angola. Moreover, the DCI noted that beyond the Cold War implications of the crisis, “the big issue is the black/white one.” Ultimately, Kissinger argued that American credibility was at stake, especially “coming on top of Vietnam and Indochina;” he quipped: “if the USSR can do something in a place so far away, what is the U.S. going to do?”

The Secretary wanted to prove to America’s allies, including Mobutu, that despite the fall of Saigon, the United States was prepared to confront the Soviets anywhere. The Committee decided to send Vance to Kinshasa yet again, and to wait for a response from Mobutu before moving forward.

President Ford did not want to wait for another round of talks with Mobutu. On July 18, he told Kissinger “I have decided on Angola…I think we should go.” Ford approved $6 million for both UNITA and the FNLA, and the President did not preclude more funds in the future.

Nathaniel Davis submitted his resignation immediately. Without a point man for Africa, or an ambassador in Kinshasa, Kissinger once again sent Vance to inform Mobutu of Washington’s plans and to deliver the first million dollars of the CIA’s money to Roberto and Savimbi.

Over several dinners and breakfasts, Vance and Mobutu refined the plan they had concocted in June. During dinner with Mobutu, Vance met again with Holden Roberto. Roberto had finally returned to Angola, and he reported to Mobutu and Vance on the military situation in country. Mobutu had limited aid to Roberto to some old small Belgian armored cars, anti-tank

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608 Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, 293.
609 Embassy Kinshasa to Department of State, Telegram 06688, “Vance-Mobutu: First Meeting,” 7/19/1975, 1975KINSHA06688, AAD.
weapons, towed artillery, and heavy mortars. Mobutu lamented that despite the weapons, the offensive had stuttered. His “rueful comment” to Vance was that “Holden is not a military leader.”

Nevertheless, Roberto’s men carried the heaviest load of the fighting, and therefore needed the majority of American weapons and funds. Even if Mobutu was ready to pick Savimbi over Roberto for president, he was not ready to abandon his close friend. Mobutu “did not consider Savimbi as important militarily.” The fastest way to change the situation on the ground was to give Zaire modern American equipment, so that Mobutu could pass on his old, outdated arms to Roberto.

Over dinner with Mobutu’s family present, the two men filled out an order for $6 million in materiel, and a wish list for an even larger program to “have a real impact on the Angolan situation.”

Upon Vance’s return to Washington, Kissinger decided to adopt Mobutu’s plan as America’s covert program. He directed Colby to immediately deliver the goods requested by Mobutu. Shortly thereafter, the 40 Committee and Ford approved another $8 million for the program, dubbed operation IAFEATURE. The 40 Committee overlooked a warning note that Roberto’s men had encountered Cubans near Caxito, on the road to Luanda.

The Cubans which the FNLA fought in July were the beginning of a massive mission to train, equip, and defend the MPLA. In July, Fidel Castro approved the expenditure of $100,000 to help the MPLA free-up weapons stored in Tanzania. Just a few weeks later, on August 8, Cuba

610 “Vance-Mobutu: First Meeting,” 7/19/1975, 1975KINSHA06688, AAD.
611 Embassy Kinshasa to Department of State, Telegram 06691, “Vance-Mobutu: First Meeting,” 7/19/1975, 1975KINSHA06691, AAD.
614 Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, 293.
615 “Vance-Mobutu: First Meeting,” 7/19/1975, 1975KINSHA06688, AAD.
executed a plan to send 480 troops to build and man four training centers where some 5,300 Angolans would receive training over the next three to six months. Furthermore, Castro was prepared to provide those MPLA soldiers enough guns, ammunition, food, clothing, camping gear, toiletries, medicine, cots, and bedclothes to sustain them for the next six months. The Cubans envisioned four training centers, one each in Cabinda, Salazar (N’Dalatando), Benguela, and Henrique de Carvalho (Saurimo). Keenly aware of the need to protect the strategic gains of the MPLA: the oil fields, the main airfields, and the southern approaches to the capital, Fidel Castro himself chose the location of the camps. To the North, the MPLA dug in at Quifangondo, in the small hills that overlooked the main road from Caxito to Luanda that ran through the wide swampland at the mouth of the Bengo River.616

JOHN STOCKWELL AND IAFEATUER

On July 30, the CIA brought John Stockwell to Washington to lead operation IAFEATUE. Stockwell had been with the CIA over ten years, and had only returned from Vietnam on April 23, a week before Saigon fell. He was precisely the ‘Devlin-like’ character Kissinger wanted to run the program. Raised by Presbyterian missionaries in the Kasai province of Zaire, Stockwell had joined the CIA in 1964 after a tour of duty as a marine in a parachute reconnaissance company. Stockwell had been to Luanda in 1961 as a marine, and in 1967, the CIA sent him to eastern Zaire during the mercenary rebellion. In 1969, Stockwell visited an FNLA camp along the Angolan border and left unimpressed. In 1972, after service in Burundi and as chief of the Kenya-Uganda section, he went to Vietnam to take charge of Tay Ninh province.617

616 Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, 254–56; George, The Cuban Intervention in Angola, 64–73.
Stockwell had a resume few could match, and given his experience in central Africa, he seemed the perfect man to lead the secret war in Angola.

IAFEATURE was rife with contradictions. The main CIA mission was to transport weapons and materiel from warehouses in the United States to Zaire, a simple enough task. The arms shipments were to be concealed in regular U.S. Air Force military flights which routinely delivered supplies to Kinshasa to the U.S. military mission there, as well as for the Zairian army. But, once delivered, who would know how to use them, and be willing to actually go into Angola to engage and defeat the MPLA was another question entirely. Roberto, with advice from Mobutu, was chosen to execute the overall military strategy. This despite the fact that the slow march to Caxito and the approaches to Luanda had already proved Roberto a rather poor general.

Colby argued before the National Security Council that the CIA would have to spend $100 million to win, which was not possible because it would require direct funding from Congress. The CIA interpreted its job in IAFEATURE to be to invoke a Roberto-Neto stalemate, not defeat him. Stockwell called this the “no win” strategy. Colby and James Potts, head of the Africa section for the CIA, rejected departmental plans to use a secret air force like the one used by Devlin and Mobutu in the 1960s and another to use Portuguese commandos to seize control of the colonial government. The CIA eventually shipped more weapons than the FNLA and UNITA had soldiers; 28,800 World War II era carbines alone for an estimated 10,000 Angolan combatants. IAFEATURE quickly blew through its funds. On August 20, the 40 Committee approved another $10.7 million.

Stockwell and the agency wanted to do more, but the vague and indecisive orders from President Ford and his staff made it difficult. To get a better idea of what was possible given the

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618 Stockwell, 59.
619 Stockwell, In Search of Enemies, 44–45, 78–80, 263; Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, 293.
time, financial, and operational constraints of the mission, Stockwell went to Zaire and Angola in August to assess the situation firsthand. He found Roberto to be a poor leader and an even worse military commander. Nevertheless, after touring the fighting in northern Angola, just 32 kilometers from Luanda, Stockwell expressed the view that “abundant, immediate support” could provide “a total victory.” (original emphasis) Despite this positive report, Kissinger remained committed to the idea that the United States did not “need a total victory,” only for the fighting to be competitive enough for diplomacy to win the war.

Washington continued to fund a slow escalation. Into September, the 40 Committee debated whether to send advisers to Zaire, which parts of Angola were of strategic importance, and where to find non-American commandos to fight in Angola alongside Roberto and Savimbi. Eventually Stockwell expanded the number of CIA officers in the field to 83, and distributed them among the Kinshasa, Luanda, Lusaka, and Pretoria stations. According to Stockwell’s memoir, he sent CIA paramilitary experts into Angola even though the 40 Committee strictly prohibited it. Training operations extended into Angola, and CIA communications teams in the field relayed updates to Washington. The CIA even hired French mercenaries to fight with UNITA and the FNLA. IAFEATRUE became larger than the 40 Committee had anticipated, but the operation remained insufficient to win. The American team coordinated with the South Africans, who had intervened separately in Angola in an operation codenamed ‘Savannah.’ Stockwell recalled that “coordination was effected at all CIA levels and the South Africans escalated their involvement in step” with the CIA without any direct orders to do so from Langley.

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623 Stockwell, In Search of Enemies, 162, 177, 184, 188.
As the MPLA steadily lost ground in the North to Holden Roberto’s FNLA, it expanded offensive operations in the South. South Africa feared that an MPLA presence along the border of Namibia would encourage SWAPO infiltration. To prevent such an outcome, the SADF took control of the Ruacana hydroelectric plant and the Calueque Dam along the border. Jamie Miller has called this seizure “something of a Gulf of Tonkin incident” for South Africa in that it was used to justify the invasion that followed.624

To counter the MPLA offensive, the SADF decided to train and equip Daniel Chipenda’s forces in the south. On August 29, General Jan Breytenbach began training Chipenda’s former MPLA troops at Mpupa, near the Namibian border. Breytenbach would claim that Chipenda’s troops decided, on their own volition, to put him in operational command of the FNLA’s southern wing. After a meeting between the SADF, Roberto, and Savimbi, South Africa agreed to deploy a conventional invasion force. The first clashes between the South African Defense Force (SADF) and the MPLA occurred on October 5. On October 14, Prime Minister B.J. Voerster authorized an invasion of “no more than 2,500 troops and 600 vehicles.” South Africa divided the force into two initial components, battle group Foxbat, composed of UNITA and South African armored cars, and battle group Zulu, a force composed of South Africans and Chipenda’s Angolans. Zulu easily moved through southern Angola to Serpa Pinto and Cuchi, Daniel Chipenda’s hometown.625 Zulu and Foxbat’s mission was to capture the Ovimbundu heartland, including complete control of the Benguela railroad, before independence.

624 Miller, “Yes, Minister,” 20–21.
625 Miller, 23, 30; Jan Breytenbach, They Live by the Sword (Alberton, South Africa: Lemur, 1990), 14, 17, 28; Cited in Hamann, Days of the Generals, 31.
The scope and speed of the South African invasion drastically changed the balance of power in the south. P.W. Botha, the South African Minister of Defense, hoped to establish control of the countryside before independence, and to launch a final attack on Luanda shortly thereafter. After taking the important railhead and port at the twin cities of Benguela and Lobito, the advance stalled for four days while the South Africa decided whether or not to expand the operation beyond its original objectives. After the lull, the advance continued up the coast toward the bridges spanning the Quanza River that commanded the approaches to Luanda. The rapid SADF advance in the South met little resistance, and it seemed the MPLA would be unable to stop the onslaught.

With the MPLA on its heels, Fidel Castro took decisive action. Worried for the safety of the Cuban trainers in country, the Cuban leader unilaterally approved a massive increase in support for the MPLA. Codenamed Operation Carlota, the Cuban initiative committed to defending the MPLA at all costs. On November 4, Castro ordered a unit of Cuba’s elite special forces to Angola to stage an immediate defense of Luanda. This force included the elite of the Cuban military, including many soldiers with doctorates in technical and military sciences. The MPLA dislodged the Portuguese from Luanda’s airport shortly before the arrival of the Cubans, making possible the direct delivery of arms and reinforcements to Angola. Cuba’s troops flew in old Bristol Britannia aircraft on the forty-eight-hour trip with stops in Barbados, Bissau, and Brazzaville. Along with the Special Forces, Castro sent artillerymen to assemble and operate advanced Soviet BM-21 multiple rocket launchers which were deployed along the MPLA defensive position at Quifangondo in the North. Castro dispatched 232 Cubans to Cabinda, along with one fully trained

626 Miller, “Yes, Minister,” 25; Piet Nortje, 32 Battalion: The inside Story of South Africa’s Elite Fighting Unit (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2004), 33; Breytenbach, They Live by the Sword, 56.
MPLA infantry battalion. In the south, the Cubans sent MPLA forces to key choke points along river crossings in an attempt to delay the South African advance.

On November 10, the eve of independence, Holden Roberto launched an assault on the Cuban-MPLA defenses in an effort to capture Luanda. Roberto knew that if he took the city in time, he would become the first president of an independent Angola. The last remaining Portuguese troops had left the capital earlier that morning, clearing the way for the winner of the climactic battle to become the first Angolan in 400 years to rule in Luanda.

Roberto’s army was the end product of Stockwell’s work with IAFEATUR. His column of troops included the FNLA army, two Zairian armored car battalions, four South African artillery crews, and a hundred Portuguese-Angolan commandos. The Zairian troops were Mobutu’s best, the elite Seventh and Fourth Commando battalions which had trained with the Israelis in the 1960s. South Africa contributed three Canberra bombers to soften the Cuban-MPLA positions. At the same time, Savimbi flew to South Africa to coordinate the war in the South. In Langley, Virginia, Stockwell and the Angola Task Force threw a party to celebrate Angolan Independence Day.

Roberto later called November 10, 1975, “the worst day in my life.” The combined CIA-FNLA army advanced within sight of the capital and into the range of Soviet-supplied, Cuban rockets. Stockwell wrote that the rocket barrages rained down on Roberto’s army, “not like single claps of thunder, but in salvos, twenty at a time.” Holden watched rockets pummel his troops, and he later lamented, that “he wished the ground had opened up and swallowed him.”

627 Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, 305, 308; George, The Cuban Intervention in Angola, 80–82.
628 Stockwell, In Search of Enemies, 213.
629 Stockwell, 213–14; George, The Cuban Intervention in Angola, 93; Hamann, Days of the Generals, 35–36. The bombers only carried three bombs each; all missed their targets, and one of the three planes failed to drop any at all. See: Hamann, 35–36.
630 Cited in George, The Cuban Intervention in Angola, 317.
631 Stockwell, In Search of Enemies, 214.
632 Cited in George, The Cuban Intervention in Angola, 317.
bombardment broke the back of the FNLA, which began a hasty, chaotic retreat back to the Zairian border.

Meanwhile, Mobutu invaded Cabinda in an attempt to pry Angola’s oil reserves from the MPLA. But with the help of Cuban troops, the MPLA drove the Zairians out of Cabinda. The attack was a total failure. This victory ensured MPLA control of Angola’s greatest resource and with it the means to fund and operate the central government.

After Neto achieved victory in the north, he declared the birth of the People’s Republic of Angola. Shortly thereafter, the USSR, Cuba, East Germany, Poland, Mozambique, Mali, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, Sao Tome and Principe, Somalia, Romania, and Brazil recognized the MPLA government. Kissinger, America’s top diplomat, had done relatively little to prepare the international community. Due to the covert nature of IAFEATURE, the only real diplomatic push from Washington came in the form of a telegram to all posts that described the MPLA as a communist entity and declaring that the United States wanted “a peaceful, negotiated solution” to the situation. No state recognized the FNLA/UNITA government.

Russia sent aid directly to Luanda following independence. In early January 1976, the Soviets assumed logistical operations for Cuba’s Operation Carlota, and formalized the chain of command between Cuba, the U.S.S.R., and the young People’s Republic of Angola. First, Russia replaced Cuban Air Force planes with their own Il-62’s, which were modern jetliners. The increased range of the Il-62’s allowed for trans-Atlantic flights from Cuba directly to communist Guinea-Bissau before reaching Luanda. Second, the Soviet Union promised to supply all future

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633 Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 312.
weaponry for Agostinho Neto’s army. The Cuban-Soviet-Angolan forces went on the offensive against Roberto’s men in the north, and developed plans to do the same in the south.

Washington faced a major dilemma. Operations thus far had used most of the available money: provision of further funds required an act of Congress. The unexpected Cuban airlift swung the tide of battle in the north, and it was reasonable to expect that Castro’s next move was to wheel his forces south to meet the SADF. Colby argued that an American initiative was needed to rally the broken-FNLA, introduce air power to the northern front, and bring in more foreign troops to fight the professional Cuban army. The Director observed that success hinged on continued South African involvement, which everyone acknowledged was “political dynamite.”

As had been the case in Vietnam, Kissinger remained in total denial. Despite the fact that the stated goal of IAFEAT was to achieve a stalemate to encourage a diplomatic settlement, Kissinger declared “diplomacy no alternative” to covert action. He replied to the CIA’s insistence that more diplomacy was needed by declaring the “god-damn CIA does not push us!” Kissinger derided the failings of the ICA program as “the sign of amateurs at work.”

In mid-November, Henry Kissinger drafted his own plan to vastly escalate the war and force a negotiated settlement. His new scheme centered on convincing France in the short term to become the main financier and arms dealer for Mobutu, Roberto, and Savimbi. With the fighting stabilized, Kissinger would then assemble a military force comprised of soldiers, tanks, and planes from Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Iran. Such a massive escalation would take months to implement,
could not guarantee victory, and would overcommit the United States to a region that had thus far only been of symbolic importance.

Congress stepped in to end American involvement in the war before Kissinger even got to the planning stages. By December, the press had blown the cover on IAFEATURE and Savannah. For the first post-Watergate Congress, the parallels between Angola and Vietnam were clear. Senator John Tunney of California declared Angola to be the subject of “the greatest foreign policy debate in the American Congress since the end of the Vietnam War.” Senator Ted Kennedy called the war in Angola “secretive, insular policy-making” that “is not only antithetical to good decision-making within an open society such as ours, but has led us into disasters of major proportion.” Congress passed the Tunney Amendment in December of 1975 which ended funding for IAFEATURE. The Clark Amendment passed in early 1976 permanently banned future American covert action in Angola. The involvement of South Africa in IAFEATURE seemed to most Americans to constitute collusion with white supremacists, rather than support for black nationalists.

With the Americans out, Roberto defeated, the Cubans wheeling south, and the Soviets bringing ever more sophisticated arms into Angola, the South Africans reconsidered their commitment. After a skirmish with Cuban forces at a key river crossing, known as the Battle of Bridge 14, the SADF saw little chance for victory. Jan Breytenbach, commander of South African forces in the battle, exclaimed that “There was no way to cross the rivers” between the SADF

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invasion force and Luanda. Dejected, the SADF began a lengthy withdrawal to Namibia. In their wake, the SADF left behind arms for Savimbi and UNITA. The war was over; the MPLA had won.

CONCLUSION

After a fourteen-year struggle for independence, Angola became a free nation under a Marxist regime. A far cry from Henry Kissinger’s bold claim that “the whites are here to stay.” The Portuguese fascist state collapsed under the weight of three colonial wars, a stagnated economy, and nearly 50 years of autocratic rule. The Kissinger years, divided between the Nixon and Ford administrations, was a period marked by neglect and disarray in America’s Africa policy. The decision to side with the white powers was a vain component of Nixon’s Southern Strategy and the result of a major misread of the undercurrents of African affairs, and failed to prepare for the crisis of Portuguese decolonization.

The anticipated fruits of NSSM 39 proved elusive; neither relations with Portugal nor security in Africa improved. Negotiations over American use of the Azores continued to demand constant attention from Washington during the Nixon years. The policies of Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford up to 1975 angered and antagonized American allies in Africa. Even after the Carnation Revolution, Kissinger refused to listen to black African voices. It was only after a slow, drawn out, ineffective secret war in the summer of 1975 that Kissinger realized that to contain revolutionary nationalism in Africa, the United States needed to take the lead in the dismantling of white rule. Kissinger’s 1976 visit to Africa, during which he called for an end to Ian Smith’s regime in Rhodesia, was an easy step for American policy that was available since the day he came to office in 1969.

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644 Breytenbach, They Live by the Sword, 59.
America was defeated. Holden Roberto, the Angolan revolutionary who had worked for twenty years for independence, faded into obscurity. Jonas Savimbi, the once-promising GRAE foreign minister and eventual founder of UNITA, withdrew into the bush to continue resistance to the MPLA regime. Mobutu became more important than ever to Washington, a key ally with a massive border next to a communist nation home to thousands of Cuban and Soviet military personnel. By 1975 it was clear that Africa was an important front in the global Cold War. Once again, the United States had chosen to array itself against the forces of revolutionary nationalism.
CONCLUSION

American relations with Angola and the white powers of southern Africa began during World War II. South Africa fought alongside the allies, most notably against Rommel’s Afrika Corps in northern Africa. The Belgian Congo (Zaire) provided the nuclear material for the first American atomic bombs. Portugal, itself a fascist power, furnished raw materials and most notably rights to an airbase in the Azores Islands. Those small volcanic islands became the crucial impediment to America’s Angola policy from 1945 to 1975, with the Pentagon viewing them as a prized strategic possession. Lajes Airfield on the island of Terceira remains an integral part of the U.S. military, and the base played key roles in American military action in the Persian Gulf (1991), the Balkans (1993-1999), Afghanistan (2001-present), Iraq (2003-present), and Libya (2011).645 Truman and Eisenhower supported the New State regime of Antonio Salazar, despite its despotism, because of this strategic imperative, including helping Portugal gain entry into NATO in 1949 and the United Nations in 1955.

The sweep of decolonization in Africa that began in the 1950s complicated American interests in the region. The CIA responded to instability in the Belgian Congo by cooping local elites. This included Holden Roberto, a prominent Angolan exile, and Joseph Mobutu, a former colonial soldier, in the later 1950s. These two men emerged to lead the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) and the independent nation of Zaire, respectively. Staunch American allies, Roberto and Mobutu remained loyal to Washington despite periods of intense neglect and efforts by the United States to dump them in favor of other regional allies. At the same time, the National Party in South Africa intensified its policy of Apartheid, or legal separation, between whites and blacks. Washington, a newcomer to African affairs, increasingly felt pressure to choose

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between the black rebels and the white extremists. The mood of 1960, ‘the year of Africa,’ portended two possible futures for the continent: the tide of independence triumphant, or the cruel hand of white domination.

The United States engaged in African affairs during this early decolonization period in the context of America’s own race problems and the desire to present an alternative to communism for Africa’s newest countries. Under Kennedy and Johnson, the United States became deeply involved in the Angolan revolution and invested in the stability of the former Belgian Congo. These presidents struggled to break or at least modify America’s ties to the white regimes, and experimented with armed insurrection against them. In the Congo, a decade of intervention succeeded in keeping out communist infiltration. In Angola, neither Washington nor Holden Roberto made serious gains toward achieving Angolan independence.

The policy of covert aid to black nationalists yielded scant results. Business and security concerns moderated the most radical proposals of the period, including the South African arms embargo under Kennedy and the decision whether or not to arm Roberto against Portugal. At times, aid to the Congo and to Roberto were at odds, as when Moïse Tshombe came to power in Leopoldville (Kinshasa) and prevented a substantial American covert program of aid to the FNLA. Roberto’s FNLA soldiered on without American support, and by the end of the 1960s his most skilled advisors had left to form their own movement, UNITA. U.S. policy failed to bring a black revolutionary government to power in Angola, but its efforts strained U.S.-Portuguese relations to the point that jeopardized American access to the strategically important Azores airbase. Although the policy stood on firm moral ground and its aspirations were in line with those of Africans, straddling the fence between the reactionary whites and the forces of Black Nationalism was a tedious job that failed to bring about a breakthrough in southern Africa.
Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger abandoned their predecessors’ policies in the hope that ignoring black Africa would improve business and strategic relations with the white powers. Known as the ‘tar-baby option,’ the foundation of this strategy was the belief that the Cold War was dormant in Africa, and that the white-ruled governments would maintain total domination through the mid 1970s. Despite their best efforts, Nixon and Kissinger gained very little from South Africa, Rhodesia, and Portugal in return for their friendship. None of the white powers presented less to Nixon and Kissinger than Portugal, which remained an annoyance for Washington. Even after the 1973 Yom Kippur War, when the Azores base proved crucial for American aid to Israel, Portugal remained a fickle, troublesome ally.

The Carnation Revolution in Lisbon took Washington by complete surprise, and it took nearly a year for Henry Kissinger to formulate a response to the crisis of Portuguese decolonization.\(^\text{646}\) Events in southern Africa did not wait for an American response; in the absence of American leadership, the Angolan revolutionaries, South Africa, Cuba, and the Soviet Union plotted the future of Angola. Although Kissinger claimed in July 1975 that the delay in American action was not because of him, but rather, that he had “tried to get something going six weeks” prior.\(^\text{647}\) Unfortunately, by that point it was already too late.

A major consequence was America’s absence from the political and diplomatic deals in 1974 that determined the parameters of the Angolan crisis. With his attention on the revolution in Lisbon and Southeast Asia, Kissinger allowed the Portuguese to draft the Alvor Accord, which did little to ensure a peaceful transition to independence in Angola but provided for Portuguese withdrawal. By waiting and ignoring the African implications of the revolution in Portugal, the

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\(^{646}\) For a detailed study of Kissinger’s role in the decolonization of East Timor during the same period, see: Hanhimaki, *The Flawed Architect*.

United States gave up an opportunity to influence the composition of the Angolan transitional government, to preempt South African meddling in the crisis, and to ensure a friendly government in Luanda. By the time Washington gave $300,000 to Holden Roberto in January 1975, the Alvor Accord had already locked in a defunct transitional government and American-allied Angolans were already taking South African weapons and cash. Despite a covert American military intervention, codenamed IAFEATURE, the United States and its regional allies were unable to overcome the Soviet Union, Cuba, and their Angolan allies in the opening salvo of the Angolan Civil War.

The defeat of the United States in Angola at the hands of a Cuban-Soviet alliance and the formation of an American-Apartheid alliance were not preordained. America’s loss was the result of longstanding weakness in American regional policy and specific decisions made by Richard Nixon, Henry Kissinger, and Gerald Ford in the critical months following the Carnation Revolution in Portugal. In direct contrast to Washington’s handling of the Portuguese withdrawal, Havana and Moscow took decisive action during the same period. Whereas the Russians and Cubans immediately began addressing the crisis in April 1974, the Americans only slowly came to grips with the severity of the situation and the significance of the outcome. American policy makers struggled to understand the historic connections between Washington and Angola, Holden Roberto and the CIA, Zaire and Angola, and the role of the other white powers in regional affairs.

The civil war in Angola outlived the failure of IAFEATURE and the Cold War itself. Unlike the chilling effect brought about elsewhere by the fall of the Berlin Wall, the end of the Cold War and the withdrawal of Cuban and South African troops did not bring peace. Jonas Savimbi, strengthened by years of support from South Africa, Mobutu, and Ronald Reagan, fought
on until his death in 2002.648 Neto was long gone, taken by cancer in 1979; his replacement, the implacable José Eduardo dos Santos, remained in power to 2017. Holden Roberto ran for president in 1992 and won a narrow 2.1 percent of the vote.649

Since the beginning of Holden Roberto’s crusade to expel Portugal from Angola, the United States had been a principal supporter for both sides of the conflict. This bizarre arrangement was due to Angola’s divided nationalists and their competing visions of an independent nation as well as an autocratic regime in Lisbon that loathed American political ideals yet depended on aid from Washington. Roberto, a man who proved to be a weak leader and a poor client, was America’s chosen instrument for maintaining control of Angola after the anticipated fall of the Portuguese empire. It was not a war that began in 1975 as part of a post-Vietnam, “search for enemies” to recover from the embarrassment of the fall of Saigon.650 Rather, it was a conflict whose root was the essence of the Cold War in Africa, a competition between the United States and the Soviet Union to control movements for racial equality in the third world.

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650 Stockwell, In Search of Enemies.
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