“Africa’s Czechoslovakia”: Internationalism and (Trans)national Liberation in Angola, 1961-1976

by

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Abstract

The list was found in a private archive in Lisbon. It recorded the names of a squadron of Angolan nationalist fighters, who throughout the 1960s and 1970s were embroiled in a protracted war of national liberation against the fading Portuguese empire. Little is known about these individuals, such as Commander Miguel Sebastião João or Commissioner João Constetavél, but their *noms de guerre* – “Che Guevara” and “Lumumba”, respectively – spoke volumes. By deliberately choosing such value-laden pseudonyms, Angolan nationalists invoked the revolutionary heritages of other Third World leaders, and situated their own independence struggle in a global battle against colonialism, racism, and minority rule.

Despite British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan’s famous 1960 assertion that the “wind of change” in Africa was a political reality, Portugal fought steadfastly to remain the ‘last empire’. The ensuing battle for Angolan independence was many things: fifteen years of intense anticolonial struggle and the launch of almost three decades of civil war, a threat to white minority rule in southern Africa, and another battle on the long road to ending empire and colonialism. For some, Angolan independence represented the opening salvo in a period of
renewed global competition, one that would take advantage of a weakened “west” to renegotiate the positions of power in the international system. The escalation of the crisis in 1975 cast doubts on the resilience of the bipolar cold war world order and indeed on the international system itself, drawing in actors from around the globe including the United States, South Africa, Cuba, and the Soviet Union. For others, Angola demonstrated how national liberation movements, as transnational actors, learned to operate within the international system to gain necessary material and moral support to help achieve their political goals. By studying Angola this dissertation addresses a constellation of neglected topics: the end of the Portuguese empire, the rise of Angolan nationalism, the roles of transnational actors, and the under-theorized relationship between the meaning(s) of liberation, revolutionary movements, and the wider international system.
Acknowledgements

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## Abbreviations and Acronyms

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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACOA</td>
<td>American Committee on Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>AF</td>
<td>Africa Division, US Department of State</td>
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<td>ANC</td>
<td>African National Congress, South Africa</td>
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<td>BOSS</td>
<td>Bureau of State Security, South Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIA</td>
<td>Central Intelligence Agency, United States</td>
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<tr>
<td>CONCP</td>
<td><em>Conferência das Organizações Nationalistas das Colónias Portuguesas</em> (Conference of Nationalist Organizations of the Portuguese Colonies)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSAD</td>
<td>Central and Southern Africa Division, United Kingdom</td>
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<tr>
<td>EUR</td>
<td>Europe Division, US Department of State</td>
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<tr>
<td>FCO</td>
<td>Foreign and Commonwealth Office, United Kingdom</td>
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<td>FM</td>
<td>Foreign Ministry, United Kingdom</td>
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<tr>
<td>FNLA</td>
<td><em>Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola</em> (National Liberation Front of Angola)</td>
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<tr>
<td>FRELIMO</td>
<td><em>Frente de Libertação de Moçambique</em> (Liberation Front of Mozambique)</td>
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<tr>
<td>FRUS</td>
<td>Foreign Relations of the United States, US Department of State</td>
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<tr>
<td>GRAE</td>
<td><em>Govêrno revolucionário de Angola no exílio</em> (Revolutionary Government of Angola in Exile)</td>
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<tr>
<td>GRFL</td>
<td>Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>GOP</td>
<td>Government of Portugal</td>
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<tr>
<td>JSN</td>
<td><em>Junta de Salvação Nacional</em> (Junta of National Salvation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MFA</td>
<td><em>Movimento das Forças Armadas</em> (Armed Forces Movement)</td>
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<td>MMCA</td>
<td>Cuban Civilian Military Mission in Angola</td>
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<td>MPLA</td>
<td><em>Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola</em> (Popular Movement for Angolan Liberation)</td>
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<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAM</td>
<td>Non-Aligned Movement</td>
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<tr>
<td>NARA II</td>
<td>National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, United States</td>
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<td>NATO</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organization</td>
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<td>NIE</td>
<td>National Intelligence Estimate</td>
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<td>NSA</td>
<td>National Security Agency, United States</td>
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<td>NSAM</td>
<td>National Security Action Memorandum</td>
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<td>NSSM</td>
<td>National Security Study Memorandum</td>
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<tr>
<td>OAU</td>
<td>Organization of African Unity (now African Union)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PIDE/DGS</td>
<td><em>Policia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado/ Direcção Geral de Segurança</em> (International and State Defence Police/ General Security Directorate), Portugal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRC</td>
<td>People’s Republic of China</td>
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<td>SADF</td>
<td>South African Defence Force, South Africa</td>
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<td>SWAPO</td>
<td>South West Africa People’s Organization</td>
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<td>TNA</td>
<td>The National Archives of the United Kingdom</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNITA</td>
<td><em>União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola</em> (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola)</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNGA</td>
<td>United Nations General Assembly</td>
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<td>UNSC</td>
<td>United Nations Security Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>UPA</td>
<td><em>União das Populações Angolanos</em> (Union of the Angola Peoples)</td>
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<tr>
<td>UPNA</td>
<td><em>União das Populações do Norte de Angola</em> (Union of the Peoples of Northern Angola)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USG</td>
<td>Government of the United States</td>
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Introduction: Cape Town, 1960

For years, Angola was a sleepy Portuguese colony in Africa where nothing ever seemed to change and about which outside powers did not concern themselves. As a result of the revolution that culminated there in 1975, however, Marxist Cuba and white-ruled South Africa each sent thousands of troops to Angola, which would be an arena of Soviet-American competition for the next fifteen years.

Mark N. Katz, Political Scientist, 2001

The wind of change is blowing through this continent, and whether we like it or not, this growth of national consciousness is a political fact. We must all accept it as a fact, and our national policies must take account of it.

Harold Macmillan, British Prime Minister, 1960

Wind(s) of Change: Postwar African Independence

When British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan stood before the Parliament of the Union of South Africa on 3 February 1960, he faced an unenviable task. He was there to convey what was to many South Africans, and certainly to the ruling National Party, an unwelcome and uncomfortable truth – Britain was getting out of the business of empire. Moreover, a mere twelve years after the formal institution of apartheid, Macmillan seemed to be suggesting that the days of white supremacy as an organizing principle of political rule and relations among states were numbered.

This “wind of change” address was the centre point of Macmillan’s tour of African nations which had already achieved, or were close to attaining, full membership in the Commonwealth. A post-facto April 1960 British Cabinet Memorandum noted that Macmillan

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“was conscious of the rising tide of nationalism in Africa and wished to inform himself at first hand of the problems to which this would give rise – for the Commonwealth and for the world at large.”

The Cabinet memo specified that this particular Commonwealth trip was unlike the others, because “[i]n Africa the Prime Minister was concerned throughout with the problem of race relations – a problem of immense intellectual difficulty and one which can quickly arouse strong prejudice and bitter controversy.” The “wind of change” speech was not simply political rhetoric as usual, but used carefully crafted language to signal a significant change in British foreign policy. In the words of scholar Frank Meyers, it was the “centerpiece of the final chapter in the history of the British Empire.”

Due to a scheduling change, a variant of the speech was first delivered in newly-independent Ghana, on 9 January 1960 (three years earlier, on 6 March 1957, Ghanaian independence had been a watershed moment in international affairs, as Ghana had been the first black African country to achieve independence from colonial rule). It was in the Ghanaian capital of Accra that Macmillan first delivered the famous line “[t]he wind of change is blowing right through Africa.” Macmillan continued:

This rapid emergence of the countries of Africa gives the continent a new importance in the world. One hundred years ago it would not be unfair to say, in spite of the many ancient cultures which have survived in certain regions, the continent as a whole played little part in world affairs. To-day it will have to play its full part in shaping the destinies of the world.

Reports suggest the speech was met with polite applause, and the visit carried on with none of the feared major irruptions from aspiring African nationalists who coveted political independence for their own peoples. It was Ghanaian Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah, the ‘father’ of African independence and the “Nelson Mandela of the 1950s and 1960s”, who had confidently exhorted other hopeful African nationalists to “seek ye first the political kingdom” three years earlier. Still, Nkrumah had been at pains to present himself as “moderate and reasonable.”

Even a meeting between Macmillan and a pan-Africanist contingent proceeded

5 CAB/129/101, 2.
6 CAB/129/101, 2-3.
7 Myers, 556.
8 CAB/129/101, 25.
10 CAB/129/101, 7.
uneventfully, as the “supposed extremists listened with deference” to Macmillan’s evolving thoughts on democracy and multiracial societies.\(^{11}\)

A month later, however, the tone of the speech and the responses to its second hearing were quite different. In front of the South African parliament, this time Macmillan’s thoughts on the new-found importance of the African continent were tempered with a tinge of grimness: rather than celebrating the continent’s new prominence, now Macmillan noted that whether Britain, or South Africa, “like[d] it or not”, political change was coming.\(^{12}\) A world comprised of empires and defined by white minority rule would no longer be the standard geopolitical order. To South African Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd this abdication of the ‘white man’s burden’ was unconscionable. The high-level visit of an historic foe was intended as a political victory for Verwoerd; it was expected that Macmillan’s arrival would lend some much needed support to the embattled National Party government. Instead, the speech seemed to highlight South Africa’s increasing isolation from the community of nations, and hardened Verwoerd’s resolve to strengthen the racist regime. South Africa’s response to the “wind of change” was to voluntarily exclude itself from part of the international community. The constitutional referendum of 1960 transformed the Union into a Republic, which unlike Ghana’s republic left the British Commonwealth and removed Queen Elizabeth II as the Head of State.

In many ways the speech at Cape Town symbolized the different approaches to the social, political, and ideological struggle that was brewing over national liberation, race, and decolonization, and the growing rift between those who advocated large-scale, rapid political change, and those who opposed it. This division, between groups determined to challenge the racial and spatial hierarchies of the international system and those determined to defend their privileged positions, often over issues of self-determination and independence, was one of the most significant problems of the twentieth century. One illustrative and overlooked case of the tensions of decolonization was the fifteen-year long campaign for Angolan independence.

This dissertation, entitled “‘Africa’s Czechoslovakia’: Internationalism and (trans)national liberation in Angola, 1961-1976”, examines the conflicting and contradictory international efforts to support, and to restrain, Angolan nationalism, investigating the ways in which decolonization, internationalism, and revolution destabilized the bipolar world. The battle

\(^{11}\) CAB/129/101, 7.
\(^{12}\) CAB/129/101, 155.
for Angolan independence was many things: fifteen years of intense anticolonial struggle and the launch of twenty-eight years of civil war, a threat to white minority rule in southern Africa, and another battle on the long road to ending empire and colonialism. It was also a struggle to define and create a viable state out of a foundering colonial territory, and an attempt to radically transform the sociopolitical structure of Angolan society. In short, Angola was a twentieth century revolution. Recent scholarship on Angolan independence has provided an impressive chronology of a complicated affair, yet has surprisingly little to say about the wider consequences and ramifications of a crisis that, while located in southern Africa, was international in scope. For some, Angolan independence represented the opening salvo in a period of renewed global competition, one that would take advantage of a weakened “west” to renegotiate the positions of power in the international system. The escalation of the crisis in 1975 cast doubts on the resilience of the bipolar cold war world order and indeed on the international system itself. For others, Angola demonstrated how national liberation movements, as transnational actors, learned to operate within the international system to gain necessary material and moral support to help achieve their political goals. Angolan nationalists defined their struggle in international terms. The enemy was not simply Portugal, but an international cabal of imperialists, mercenary capitalists, and racists who supported Lisbon’s occupation of Angolan territory. Thus Angolan national liberation was a truly international process. To borrow a phrase from historian John Lewis Gaddis, the internationalization of Angolan independence sheds light on “the macro-implications of a micro-movement”, albeit a “micro-movement” that spanned fifteen years and four continents.

“Making State Conform with Nation”: National liberation as international relations

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13 In the Anglophone literature the crisis in Angola is variously termed a revolution, a civil war or a war of independence. This essay considers the unrest in Angola from 1961-1976 a political revolution. The period from 1976 to Jonas Savimbi’s death in 2002 is generally considered a civil war, despite the presence of international combatants.


As historians Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper have noted, the contemporary international political world is a relatively recent development: “We live in a world of nearly two hundred states. Each flaunts symbols of sovereignty – its flag, its seat in the United Nations – and each claims to represent a people. These states, big and small, are in principle equal members of a global community, bound together by international law. Yet the world of nation-states we take for granted is scarcely sixty years old.”

For much of human history, the authors note, “most people have lived in political units that did not pretend to represent a single people.” As Burbank and Cooper note, this process of “[m]aking state conform with nation is a recent phenomenon, neither fully carried out nor universally desired....” And yet the drive to create, define, and reify the nation-state has been one of the most significant and consequential developments of the past three centuries.

This study borrows and interrogates analytical concepts and categories from the discipline of International Relations (IR) because these concepts, categories, and terms have become the global vernacular of politics and policy-making. Though historians are necessarily skeptical of IR’s tendency towards ahistoricism and prescriptive theory, the tenets and terms of IR theory have influenced political decision-makers, and in particular attitudes towards the use of power and the maintenance or regional or global stability. The goal of studies of the history of IR (often abbreviated as ‘international history’) is to integrate traditional historical approaches and methods (a focus on primary sources and a respect for individuals, context, and contingency) with the more abstract, yet highly influential theories of IR. As historian Marc Trachtenberg noted, international historians also widen the analytical categories of IR, considering not only the traditional dimensions of statecraft (politics, economics, and war), but also culture, intelligence, gender and non-state actors, and especially the role of ideas and ideology in policy formation.

Similarly, rather than accept the notion of the international system as an “objective social realm”, historians view the playing field of international relations as a fluid backdrop where the constituent elements, and the explicit and implicit ‘rules’ (both normative and ad-hoc) by which their relations are governed, have shifted, changed, and were challenged over time.

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16 Burbank and Cooper, 1.
17 Burbank and Cooper, 1.
Any investigation of decolonization and national liberation involves coming to terms with core concepts such as ‘the nation’ and ‘the state’. Empirically groups coalesce into states, states rise and fall, fragment and reassemble, and types of political organization come into existence, seem to thrive, and then are de-legitimized. Thus for adherents of international history the nation, the state, and the international system must be historicized to render them valid categories of analysis. The relationship between ‘nation’ and ‘state’ is imprecise at best.¹⁹ There is little agreement among scholars, policymakers, or self-proclaimed nationalists about how the nation should be defined. Nations can be claimed on the basis of a perceived shared kinship or ethnicity (ethnie), culture, religion, and language, among other criteria.²⁰ Similarly, there is also little agreement about whether nations, however constituted, were primordial (having always existed in some form, which is unlikely given the history of human migration) or modern (creations of the modern political world).²¹ In now classic texts such as Benedict Anderson’s Imagined Communities, Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger’s The Invention of Tradition, and Ernest Gellner’s Nations and Nationalism, the ‘nation’ is modern sociopolitical construction; in Anderson’s famous definition, a nation is an “imagined political community.”²² Thus to extend Anderson’s logic, nationalism is the expression of, identification with, and adherence to an “imagined political community”, expressed through symbol, ideology, or political action. Thus “nationality…nation-ness, as well as nationalism, are cultural artefacts of a particular kind.”²³ However, “imagined” does not equal “imaginary.”²⁴ Nationalism is a potent force and appeals to protect the nation, whether predicated on supposedly shared racial, religious, or ethnic characteristics, have often resulted in violent conflicts. Anderson and others provided a necessary critique of the notion of primordial nationalism, as the twentieth century was especially prone to

¹⁹ To quote Anderson, perhaps the pre-eminent scholar of nations and nationalism: “Nation, nationality, nationalism – all have proved notoriously difficult to define, let alone analyse.” And this is before the further complication of ‘the state’. Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism, Revised Edition, (London, UK: Verso, 2006), 3.
²⁰ Anthony Smith listed the characteristics of ethnie as “a collective name; common myth of descent; shared history; distinctive shared culture; and association with a specific territory; and a sense of solidarity.” Smith quoted in Azar Gat with Alexander Yakobson, Nations: The Long History and Deep Roots of Political Ethnicity and Nationalism, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 17.
²¹ Thanks to Thomas Borstelmann for this point.
²³ Anderson, 4.
²⁴ A point made very briefly by Anderson. Anderson, 118.
wide-ranging extreme violence in the name of far-right, far-left, and irredentist aspirations couched in nationalist terms.

Historians have spent endless hours examining and describing various nationalist movements and moments, but it has largely been left to adherents of IR theory to define and describe ‘the state’ as a category of analysis. Questions about the nature of the state, its organizing principles, imperatives, reach, legitimacy and prerogatives, are essential to the wider understanding of human societies, both past and present. Definitions of the state are as numerous as those of the nation, but many definitions agree that states share a body of characteristics and privileges, primarily sovereignty, defined as “the capacity to determine conduct within the territory of the polity without external legal constraint.”

In the Andersonian tradition, which has come to dominate thinking about nations and nationalism, the state generally precedes the nation. That is, after the formal creation of a nation-state, a concerted program of nationalist consolidation and expression further defines the values, ideologies, and symbolism of the new (“imagined”) political community. As Azar Gat has written, those who believe that states and nations are modern creations “claim, with some justification, that the state created the nation more than the other way around.” This is an especially prevalent intellectual approach in African history, as it is common knowledge that multiple ethnicities were artificially consolidated into imperial territories, and those boundaries were later reified into contemporary nation-states. In Angola, it can be argued that the ‘myth of nation’ was even more pronounced, as ethnic diversity, low population density, and the oppressive reach of the Portuguese metropole limited opportunities to create new sociopolitical communities. This was exacerbated by the existence of three antagonistic liberation movements, each with claims to different ethnicities within their respective ‘zones’.

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25 In classical IR the state is unceasing and unchanging, unitary and universal, a principle which does not appear to be borne out by the historical record and requires largely ignoring the numerous non-state political communities that existed before the post-Westphalian model.

26 After a decline in academic favour in the 1960s and 1970s, the so-called “return of the state” is, in political scientist Crawford Young’s term, “the most momentous theoretical event in political science during the 1980s.” M. Crawford Young, *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 18. “The state” underwent another period of disfavour in the early 1990s with the end of the cold war and the dissolution of the Soviet Union. From this point forward ‘nation-state’ and ‘state’ will be used interchangeably unless specified.


28 Gat with Yakobson, 13.
However, the reality of the relationship between nation, nationalism, and the state can be decidedly more complex. As Ernest Gellner explained,

...Neither nations nor states exist at all times and in all circumstances. Moreover, nations and states are not the same contingency. Nationalism holds that they were destined for each other; that either without the other is incomplete, and constitutes a tragedy. But before they could become intended for each other, each of them had to emerge, and their emergence was independent and contingent. The state has certainly emerged without the help of the nation. Some nations have certainly emerged without the blessings of their own state.29

Thus one of the hallmarks of modern political life is increasing identification of nation with state, linking the sociopolitical community with a territorial home(land), or ‘nation-state.’ The nation-state can be seen as the formal, legal representation of the nation. The state bounds, contains, and situates the nation; it is the formal, legal transformation of ethnie into polis. In many cases, the state becomes the only internationally-recognized iteration of the nation.

An equally important consideration is how do all of these nation-states relate? To borrow concepts from IR again, IR theory presumes an ‘international system’, where states and their agents interact. The international world was an assembly of interacting units, where the primary unit of analysis was the legally sovereign and territorially bounded nation-state, and the primary level of analysis consisted of relations between such states and their representatives (whether individuals or institutions).30 The contours and guiding principles of the international system varied according to differing intellectual traditions and world views, which had significant geopolitical consequences. Theories are ‘ideal types’, and rarely convey the complexity of the historical record, yet they remain resilient and powerful political, economic, and social ideas. The realist tradition, which dominated elite-level thinking about the state in international politics from the time of Thucydides and Sun Tzu, through Machiavelli, until the post-1945 period resurgence exemplified by scholars such as Kenneth Waltz, privileged the state as the only true unit of political organization, and inter-state relations formed the only level of analysis. The realist state is a unitary, rational actor, concerned only with maximizing power and state survival, operating in a wholly anarchic international system (that is, lacking an overriding supranational authority), where cooperation is opportunistic at best. Thus the realist vision of the international

29 Gellner, 6-7.
30 The formal and informal interactions among these static, sovereign entities and their agents were in turn described by a rigid body of IR theory including realism, liberalism, Marxism, constructivism, and their variants.
system is defined by anarchy, intense competition among states, and a belief in a ‘zero sum’
game (where one state’s gain is inevitably another state’s loss). In a realist international system
great powers not only determined the ‘rules of the game’, but were also responsible for enforcing
‘correct behaviours’. Unsurprisingly, the realist school was very popular in the post-Second
World War United States (US), where this vision of the international system seemed particularly
applicable to the US’s new-found “preponderance of power” (to borrow Melvyn Leffler’s
phrase) and preoccupation with containing communist expansion.31 Prominent adherents of this
approach included several key American policymakers and intellectuals, including Hans
Morgenthau, George F. Kennan (the ‘father’ of the containment doctrine), secretaries of state
Henry Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezinski, and President Richard Nixon.

A second broad vision of the international system, the liberal internationalist perspective,
was the heir of the classical liberal tradition, and arose as a counterpoint to the aggressive self-
interest advocated by realists. Liberal internationalists still privileged the state and power, but
felt that inter-state cooperation was not only desirable, but could – in certain cases and under
specific circumstances – lead to states better achieving their own goals.32 A liberal
internationalist international system was characterized by multinational institutions, such as the
United Nations, and international covenants or regimes which established norms for acceptable
behaviours. Aspects of the liberal international tradition can be found in international covenants,
such as the Geneva Conventions (1864-2005). The liberal international tendency became
prominent briefly in the United States during the presidency of Woodrow Wilson, who
championed multinational institutions and American moral and practical leadership in the wake
of the First World War (though despite Wilson’s concerted efforts the US Senate refused to
ratify the Treaty of Versailles, and the League of Nations was most noted for a series of
catastrophic failures). The liberal internationalist tradition gained prominence again in the wake
of the devastation of the Second World War, when it became clear that states left to their own
devices could have ruinous effects not only on their own populations, but on the entire
international system, and was exemplified by the postwar human rights regime, such as the

31 See Leffler’s book A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War,
32 Kara Santokie has pointed out that liberalism is also concerned with the individual’s right to thrive and succeed in
the wider society.
Third, there is the Marxist vision of the international system, which in the guise of socialism and/or communism posed the greatest challenge to the liberal-internationalist and realist traditions. Classical Marxism, and its later Leninist, Stalinist, and Maoist variants, differed substantially yet shared the same contempt for the privileging of capital accumulation and a dialectical and materialist approach to historical development. Marxism was a wide-ranging (often all-encompassing) body of theory, which touched on multiple aspects of the social and economic worlds. As an international system, the Marxist tradition saw the state not as a unitary political actor, but as an appendage of predatory capitalism and a product of, and vehicle for, the perpetuation of the class antagonisms that drove history. A true Marxist international system was by definition anti-status quo, as it rejected the primacy of the state (in Marx’s adage the state ‘withers away’), and in turn both the hegemonizing influence of great powers and the complicity of liberal internationalist institutions. However, in the interstitial period between industrial capitalism and true communism, formally constituted states might exist, if only to create communism in ‘one country’ to further the spread of communism to all states. In reality, however, the most vocal adherents of a Marxist international system, the Soviet Union, the People’s Republic of China (PRC), and the post-1959 Cuban state, each instituted authoritarian rule within their own societies even while fomenting revolution abroad. However, this did not stop the proliferation of Marxist-inspired political movements. Their sheer numbers, variety, and geographical scope, from the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution through the heyday of African national liberation in the late 1960s, from the Sandinista National Liberation Front’s (Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional, FSLN) 1979 victory in Nicaragua to the recent Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front, points to the importance and prevalence of such movements in the twentieth century.

All three visions of the international system share a Comtean positivism which implied an ‘objective’ assessment of the ‘natural laws’ of history, politics, and relations among nations (though liberalism and Marxism each possessed a corresponding normative vision of how the international system ‘should’ be). Such distinctions are important because at a very real level the history of twentieth century politics can be understood, at least in part, as a clash between these three visions of the international system and their adherents. Yet the international system of

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33 In IR theory, many of these substantial differences in ideology and practice would be subsumed under the headings of Classical Marxist or Neo-Marxist theory. Thanks again to Kara Santokie for this point.
sovereign states was also challenged by the rise of the ‘transnational.’ The ‘transnational’ is a blanket term covering all manner of non-state actors, networks, and processes: multinational corporations, religious groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society, etc. As one anthropologist has noted, transnationalism can be seen as a “social morphology, as a type of consciousness, as a mode of cultural reproduction, as an avenue of capital, as a site of political engagement, and as a reconstruction of ‘place’ or locality.”  

Transnationalism, in the form of long-distance networks, preceded the nation-state. Yet transnational actors have taken on a particular importance in an international system comprised mainly of sovereign nation-states. Thus in Thomas Risse-Kappen’s classic definition, transnational relations are “regular interactions across national boundaries when at least one actor is a non-state agent or does not operate on behalf of a national government or an intergovernmental organization.”

Transnational groups and networks often formed to address or promote issues which were too complex, widespread, or contentious to be solved by an individual nation-state or collective of nation-states, such as environmental and ecological concerns, global health epidemics, and terrorism. Transnational actors did not operate in wholly parallel, discrete realms, but still interacted with states and contended with the international system. As Jeremi Suri noted, “States remain[ed] the central actors, but they no longer serve[d] as the exclusive agents of change….Ideas, images, and cultural assumptions now deserve[d] serious consideration in conjunction with traditional, and still crucial, assessments of material capabilities.”

The rise of the transnational posed a direct challenge to realist IR, which presumed that only great powers were able to affect the international system. Transnational actors also challenged the liberal internationalist view, which soon had to accommodate and incorporate, both practically and theoretically, non-state actors into institutions traditionally designed for sovereign states (such as ‘observer status’ in the United Nations). The transnational also challenged the Marxist conception of the international system. Though this tradition was

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35 Vertovec, 447.
theoretically the most amenable to non-state actors, with a privileged position for revolutionary vanguard parties, many emerging Marxist movements ran afoul of the Soviet Union and the PRC. While transnational actors could have very conservative (i.e. status quo-oriented) goals, as a category of political actor their increasing prevalence and presence forced changes in thinking about international relations.

The post-Second World War international system came to be characterized by the ideological and military antagonisms between the United States and the Soviet Union. This cold war variant was defined by the presence of ‘superpower’ states with hegemonic properties, a subsystem of alliances, and the existence of so-called ‘client states.’ While the superpowers battled for pre-eminence, it was assumed that client states (deemed “weak” states in IR parlance), were somehow disadvantaged or prohibited from exercising their full range of privileges as sovereign nations. Weak states were compelled by the exigencies of the cold war to adhere to the general military, political, and economic currents established by greater powers. In short, weak states were not considered “system-determining nations.” Rather, they were expected to abide by the ‘rules of the game’ established by the United States or the Soviet Union, depending on their ideological affinities. One result of this traditional preoccupation with power was the virtual exclusion of the African continent from international relations. In such a system, it could be argued that Africa (an entire continent of weak client states, with the potential exceptions of Egypt and South Africa) hardly mattered at all.

However, there are alternative ways to think about and describe the postwar international system. Much like the two world wars, economic depressions, and the cold war, the twentieth century was also characterized by the ideological and institutional shifts that precipitated and accompanied the disintegration of empires. A key theme of the twentieth century was the fall of

38 Scholars have defined weak states in terms of geographic area, population, using anywhere from 20 million to under one million as an upper limit, and economic productivity and industrial capacity. Certain scholars have added an economic dimension by linking population with Gross National Product. Small and weak states generally possess limited markets, relying on one or two main exports (usually an agricultural or natural resource) and a heavy dependence on international trade. As such, weak states are more vulnerable to shifts in the international political economy. Therefore, using Michael Handel’s ‘ideal types’ as a basis, a weak state can be defined as having a small GNP in absolute terms, a small domestic market and correspondingly high reliance on foreign markets and capital, dependence on foreign states for war materiel and military support, a limited scope of interests and little influence on the international system. Michael I. Handel, Weak States in the International System, (London, UK: Frank Cass, 1990), 31.


40 The creation of multinational institutions and regional blocs, in an effort to shift the balance of power in the international system, is discussed in chapter 3.
formal empires as a model of political and social organization. Empire, broadly defined, was the exertion of formal control of one nation over another. Empire itself was not a twentieth-century phenomenon, nor a western one, yet the rise and decline of the European-colonial variant had long-term global consequences. Though not commonly expressed in such terms, colonialism was by definition an international political enterprise. Subject territories were often geographically separated from the metropole and the colonial administration existed in a separate space to the centres of power. There was often a physical transfer of subject and citizen, both moving across space to destinations and positions determined by the metropole based on demographic or economic need. Most significantly, the maintenance of a colonial empire required a level of acceptance and collusion on the part of the wider international community. The colonized did not accept their subjugation, but the other great powers often did, recognizing the ‘right’ of one state to take possession of territory. In other words, there existed a tacit collusion between imperial powers, first accepting the idea of empire and colonialism as a legitimate way to organize international relations, and second accepting the international ‘boundaries’ of the emerging colonial empires. The prime example was the 1884 Berlin Conference, which permitted European powers to further pursue their imperial designs in Africa free from the interference of other claimants. Perhaps more than any other continent Africa was marked by “international action in the form of European colonialism.”

Struggles against formal empire were the root causes of many twentieth century clashes, and many of the century’s most high-profile political crises were, at least in part the result of a decolonization process gone awry. Often overlooked in the triumphal narrative of the western victory over the Axis in the Second World War was the fact that the fatally weakened European empires entered directly into another series of long, vicious battles to retain their colonial possessions. Mau Mau, Dien Bien Phu, Lumumba, Sétif: these names of persons and places remain potent signifiers of the violence which characterized decolonization. As a global

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41 In contrast, “informal empire”, is mainly an economic phenomenon, and does not necessitate a formal process of decolonization, though economic independence may be a popular goal. See for example Gregory A. Barton and Brett M. Bennett, “Forestry as Foreign Policy: Anglo-Siamese Relations and the Origins of Britain's Informal Empire in the Teak Forests of Northern Siam, 1883–1925”, Itinerario, 34 (2010): 65-86.
42 The fourteen signatories were: Austria-Hungary, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Sweden (including Norway), Turkey, and the United States of America. Not everyone pursued an African empire, most notably the United States, which chose to concentrate its imperial energies in the western hemisphere.
phenomenon, decolonization upset the apple cart of international relations more rapidly and more intensely than expected. Despite the volumes written on specific moments of decolonization, relatively few scholars have considered decolonization as a constituent element of twentieth century international relations. Certainly the individual stories of decolonization in its many forms and places are needed to populate the long twentieth century. Yet there is also a place for investigating decolonization as a phenomenon of international relations – as a series of processes of large-scale sociopolitical change which continually challenged a system expressly designed to keep such transformations at bay. In very real terms Third World independence was an unprecedented challenge to the international system, causing United Nations membership to rise from 51 states in 1945 to 117 only twenty years later.44

Decolonization comprised at least two distinct, yet mutually-reinforcing stands. First was the commitment to formal independence and juridical statehood – legally ending the global colonial project and delegitimizing empire as an acceptable type of political organization. Second, since so much of the colonial political project was intimately bound up with notions of white supremacy and racial hierarchy, another strand was the campaign to end white minority rule and grant non-whites full rights and citizenship. After a global offensive countering Nazi racism, Italian fascism, and Japanese imperialism, the European powers were unable to maintain similar discriminatory and divisive polices at home. Two devastating global conflicts in a generation and the rise of Japan had rendered the old justifications for colonial rule untenable; the twin sustaining myths of absolute white supremacy and the mission civilisatrice were permanently shattered. Though the first waves of decolonization crested in the 1950s, reverberations from these foundational changes in the international system were felt for decades. When cold war tensions were superimposed over civil or anticolonial conflicts, the results were often devastating.

The linkages between the cold war international system and processes of decolonization are complex and difficult to disentangle. On the one hand, decolonization movements and their intellectual antecedents predate the crystallization of tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union, and often proceeded whether or not a particular movement attracted the attentions of the superpowers. Neither the US nor the Soviet Union were formal colonial powers, thus the

primary loci of specific decolonization movements were the colony and the metropole. As scholars and activists reconstructed and recounted the stories of the politically dispossessed, there developed an understandable desire not to have each tale subsumed by the dominant cold war narrative. On the other hand, it would be a mistake to diminish the impact of cold war tensions on decolonization processes. Both the US and the Soviet Union were predisposed to viewing the cold war as a ‘zero-sum game’ and were keenly interested in changing the global balance of forces. Not only were there obvious examples of direct intervention, such as the US military action in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, but the Soviet Union carefully courted emerging nations with promises of military supplies and accelerated socialist development. One way to proceed is to disaggregate and unpack the notions of ‘cold war’ and ‘decolonization’ and see where specific threads intersect, explicitly or implicitly. The cold war was mainly ‘cold’ only in areas not consumed by the politics and passions of decolonization. In much of the recently-decolonized and decolonizing world the cold war was very hot indeed. Thus an alternate approach is to consider the history of decolonization as a history of the attempted reversal of power and influence in the international system. Individual decolonization episodes began as nationally-bounded and focused on the local, but soon posed a direct challenge to the key arbiters of the international system. In this view of the international system African politics mattered a great deal, as waves of national liberation movements agitated for independence.

If decolonization itself was a profound challenge to the cold war international system, then decolonization’s agents, movements of national liberation, were the embodiment of this challenge. Many postwar decolonization movements could claim two shared characteristics: the presence of charismatic leadership, and a profound desire to wholly reconstruct their societies into a postcolonial nationalist political community. The rise and mobilization of national liberation movements created flashpoints across the globe, primarily in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, and provided a cogent argument for the importance of the rise of transnational non-state actors in twentieth century international relations. Despite their prevalence, national liberation movements remain surprisingly understudied and under-theorized. Some permutation of the term ‘national liberation movement’ appeared to be the favoured designation of numerous postwar independence groups and armed forces, including the Front de Libération Nationale in Algeria, the Movimiento de Liberación Nacional in Mexico, and the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam. Historians have carefully examined individual movements, and
political scientists have examined the exact tactics used by specific groups, yet there is no formal definition of the concept. In legal theory, the literature concentrated not on what constitutes a liberation movement or what roles these groups could and should play, but on the idea of sovereignty and the legitimacy of the use of force by such groups (the use of force being a traditional prerogative of sovereign nation states). Heather Wilson defined a war of national liberation as “a conflict waged by a non-State community against an established government to secure the right of the people of that community to self-determination.” Thus determining who or what constituted a national liberation movement, or even determining what national liberation meant in a given context, was no easy task. Perhaps the designation’s utility lay in its ambiguity – ‘national liberation’, like ‘freedom’ or ‘liberty’, could be defined and redefined to mean whatever a charismatic leader wanted it to mean. To use the experiences and goals of the Angolan nationalists as a guide, a national liberation movement is a non-state group whose ultimate goal is the radical restructuring of a dependent society and the formation of a new, independent political community in its place. This ‘independent political community’ took the form of a legally sovereign nation-state recognized by the majority of the international community. To achieve this goal, national liberation movements use a number of tools, including appeals to the international community and international organizations, forming transnational networks with like-minded groups, and appropriating and legitimizing the use of force. National liberation movements pursued their revolutionary agendas across multiple levels of analysis: local, national, regional, international, and transnational. The postwar wave of decolonization and national liberation was a series of moments of “making state conform with nation”, with profound consequences for the international system.

“Africa’s Czechoslovakia”: Internationalizing Angolan independence

In April 1974, when a revolution in Lisbon ended forty years of authoritarian rule and five centuries of Portuguese imperialism seemingly overnight, the Angolan war of independence quickly became an international cause célèbre. Swept up in the momentum of the cold war, with the arrival of rival troops from the South African Defence Force (SADF) and the Cuban Military Mission (MMCA), the ‘externalization’ of Angola independence captured the attention of

pundits and policymakers from the US to Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo), from Colombia to Luxembourg. And yet a careful examination of the historical record suggests that Angolan independence had become a serious international issue long before the dramatic events of 1974. The “sleepy Portuguese colony in Africa where nothing ever seemed to change and about which outside powers did not concern themselves” was in fact the site of fifteen years of agitation, conflict, and struggle between Angolans, the Portuguese state, and international and transnational actors.46

During the period of intense anticolonial struggle, the three main Angolan national liberation movements, the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola, FNLA), the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola, MPLA), and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola ( União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola, UNITA), were locked in a destructive three-way battle to dominate the independence struggle and defeat the Portuguese. To achieve this task, the movements actively solicited military aid and moral support from the international community. Contiguous African states harboured revolutionaries, and great and medium powers, including the US, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, the German Democratic Republic, the Soviet Union, Cuba, China, and apartheid South Africa, provided weapons, combat troops, and mercenaries to the three main national liberation movements.47 They also received support from international and regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, and other members of ‘civil society’. Cognizant of their own material limitations and the dynamics of the cold war international system, each of the Angolan liberation movements actively engaged this very system to achieve the collective goal of Angolan independence, and their respective goals of destroying each other and dominating the struggle.

The full trajectory of Portuguese colonialism in southern Africa is beyond the scope of this dissertation. In brief, Portuguese explorers arrived on the western coast of southern Africa in the late 15th century, where they began relations with the Kongo Kingdom. The Portuguese established the settlement of Luanda in 1575, and retained only limited authority over the region until strategic rivalries with other European empires (namely the Dutch in the 1640s and the

46 Katz, 1.
47 Collectively the MPLA, FNLA, and UNITA (and others) have been called many things including revolutionary movements, nationalist groups, and liberation parties. For consistency this dissertation will use the term national liberation movements, as this is the term the movements most frequently used to describe themselves.
participants of the ‘Scramble for Africa’ in 1884-85), forced Portugal to consolidate control over its southern African territory. Angola was only incorporated as a colony on 12 May 1886. Despite the relatively late formalization of colonial status, in time Portuguese officials began to argue for the existence of five centuries of uninterrupted integration of Luanda and Lisbon. Portugal’s colonial territories became sources of resource wealth, coerced labour, and national pride. It is arguable that no other European colonizer embraced the notion of the ‘civilizing mission’ as wholeheartedly, or for as long, as Portugal. Perhaps unsurprisingly, as one of Western Europe’s weakest states, Portugal was the least willing to relinquish its overseas territories. Similar to metropolitan France’s behaviour in Algeria, Portugal claimed that its African colonies were integral to its existence as a state. And, also similar to France and Algeria, the result was a violent and protracted battle between the forces of national liberation and the imperial metropole. In the face of increasing calls for decolonization in the United Nations, in 1951 Portugal officially changed its geographical boundaries to include the African territories of Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, and São Tomé and Principe, replacing the Portuguese empire with the semantic fiction of um nação (one nation) with continental and ultramar (overseas) territories, ‘transforming’ Angola from Portuguese West Africa to the Overseas Province of Angola.48

However, if the nomenclature of Portuguese colonialism changed, the substance of it did not. Centuries of racial, ethnic, and economic stratification had a profound effect on the Angolan anticolonial movements and were reflected in the historical development of the national liberation parties. The FNLA, led from Kinshasa by committed anticommunist and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) asset Holden Roberto, was the first favourite of the US.49 The MPLA, led by Marxist Dr. Agostinho Neto, received military assistance from the Soviet Union.50 Finally, in 1966 Jonas Savimbi’s UNITA entered the fray. Savimbi’s carefully calculated portrayal of UNITA as rural and populist exploited Angola’s racial and ethnic tensions. By 1974

50 The CIA believed that this aid was halted in 1973 when it became appeared that the MPLA had made little progress toward an independent socialist Angola. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), “Soviet and Cuban Aid to the MPLA in Angola from March through December 1975”, Interagency Intelligence Memorandum (NIO IIM 76-004), 24 January 1976, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, (hereafter: NARA II), Central Intelligence Agency Records Search Tool (hereafter: CREST), Annex 1.
the liberation movements had been fighting each other and collecting external support for thirteen years.

Though Angolans had been fighting for their independence since 1961, the international response escalated during the period of crisis between 1974-1976, contingent upon the collapse of the metropole in Lisbon. By the early 1970s Portugal’s simultaneous colonial wars, against the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde, PAIGC) in Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, the Liberation Front of Mozambique (Frente de Libertação de Moçambique, FRELIMO) in Mozambique, and the FNLA, MPLA, and UNITA in Angola, were sapping the nation’s resources and straining its social fabric. On 25 April 1974, a group of disillusioned left-wing military officers, the Movimiento das Forças Armadas (Armed Forces Movement, MFA), overthrew the right-wing government of Marcelo Caetano, itself a successor regime to that of dictator António de Oliveira Salazar. The new government moved quickly to end Portuguese colonialism and negotiate settlements with each territory. Negotiations with the other African territories proceeded quickly. Angolan independence, complicated by the mutual intransigence and animosity of the three national liberation movements and the economic value of Angola’s natural resources, could not be resolved so easily. On 25 January 1975, the three Angolan movements and the new Portuguese government signed the Alvor Accords, agreeing to an immediate ceasefire. Alvor created a provisional tripartite government and set Angolan independence for 11 November 1975. Despite the ceasefire, fighting erupted within days, and as November closed in fighting around Luanda intensified.\footnote{Piero Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959-1976, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 257.} Inadvertently the stage was set for an epic battle, as each movement vied to control the capital on Independence Day. In autumn 1975, military interventions from the South African Defence Force, supporting UNITA, and the Cuban Military Mission, supporting the MPLA, shocked the world. The Cuban forces helped the MPLA to take control of the capital and declare itself the government. In what was viewed by many contemporaries as a tremendous victory for the progressive, anti-imperialist forces of the world, an independent, MPLA-led Angola was recognized by the OAU on 10 February 1976, and took
its seat in the United Nations General Assembly on 1 December 1976, ending the wars of liberation.\textsuperscript{52}

In the US, however, the Ford Administration had convinced itself that the very foundations of global stability were being undermined from the African continent. In the US’ reductionist cold war perception, the Cuban intervention was assumed to have been ordered by the Soviet Union, and thus undermined the policy of détente in the eyes of many American observers and put the Ford administration on the defensive. By June 1976 Secretary of State and National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger was insisting at a high-profile meeting in Beijing that the US would “not permit another Angola.”\textsuperscript{53} Angola was in danger of becoming, in the words of Zambian presidential political advisor Mark Chona, “Africa’s Czechoslovakia.”\textsuperscript{54}

\textbf{Structure and Organization}

Early scholars of West Central Africa viewed the region’s peoples as apolitical and thus ahistorical; a proverbial “Dark Continent” of jungles and deserts, populated by an unsystematic and unsophisticated assortment of clans and tribes.\textsuperscript{55} A facile yet resilient equation developed: “statelessness” was equated with a lack of political development, which was in turn erroneously conflated with a lack of political history. This view has been replicated, both deliberately and inadvertently, by generations of scholars who have neglected to consider African politics when studying international relations, as though one geopolitical entity could somehow be exempt from the international system. In the \textit{Philosophy of History} Hegel “left Africa, not to mention it again. For it [was] no historical part of the World; it [had] no movement or development to exhibit.”\textsuperscript{56} In 1963 Hugh Trevor-Roper infamously lamented the “the unedifying gyrations of

\textsuperscript{52} Sadly, the suffering of Angolans did not end with \textit{de jure} independence. An equally brutal civil war continued between the MPLA and UNITA until Jonas Savimbi’s death in a guerilla battle on 22 February 2002.
barbarous tribes in picturesque but irrelevant corners of the globe.” To the extent that there was an African history at all, it was “only the history of Europeans in Africa. The rest [was] darkness.”\textsuperscript{57} Particularly in a cold war context, it was often difficult to overturn (or even question) the unofficial hierarchy of states, determined by the United States and the Soviet Union, where African states were often the lowest priority. Thus, in the dramatic words of influential French political scientist Jean-François Bayart, “Africa south of the Sahara [was] often said to be the limbo of the international system, existing only at the outer limits of the planet we inhabit.”\textsuperscript{58} In more recent literature on globalization, for example, Africa has been called the “‘black hole’”, the “‘blank space’”, and the “‘hopeless continent’”, as though one geopolitical entity was somehow removed from the international system.\textsuperscript{59} International history and international relations have become habituated to excluding political affairs on what anthropologist James Ferguson once called “the inconvenient continent.”\textsuperscript{60}

Since the pan-Africanist movement of the early 1900s, and accelerating after decolonization in the late 1950s, academics of various disciplines and theoretical perspectives rightly challenged these assumptions, and there is now an expanding body of literature on African international relations (not to mention copious works on social movements and transnationality). The complexity of Angolan independence has subsequently generated its own body of work. This brief literature review is not comprehensive. There were innumerable articles, speeches, and short pamphlets published during the fifteen years of the Angolan independence struggle, in multiple languages (including Portuguese, French, German, Spanish, Swedish, and Russian). Rather, this list focuses on seminal texts which explicitly placed the events in Angola in a broader international context (as opposed to histories of Angola proper, Portuguese government documents about the Territories, and post-independence texts on the current MPLA-led ‘petro-state’). Since the wars of liberation began in 1961, there have been approximately three ‘generations’ of scholarly writing on Angolan independence. The first generation, which was roughly concurrent with the struggle for Angolan liberation, focused


\textsuperscript{60} Note that Ferguson does not endorse this view of African affairs. James Ferguson, \textit{Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order}, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 25.
mainly on recovering the history of Angola (especially pre-contact with the Portuguese), journalistic reports from within Angola, and combating Portuguese misinformation. Many of these authors were scholar-activists who wrote with a deliberate agenda to support Angolan independence and to expose the hypocrisy and racism of the western world. Authors such as Basil Davidson (The African Awakening [1955] and In the Eye of the Storm: Angola’s People [1972], among several other general works on African history and politics), Gerald Bender (Angola Under the Portuguese: The Myth and the Reality [1978]), and George M. Houser (South African Crisis and United States Policy [1962] and No One Can Stop the Rain: Glimpses of Africa’s Liberation Struggle [1989]) were prolific and astute commentators throughout the duration of Angolan independence. They wrote from an explicitly African nationalist perspective, arguing for the end of Portuguese colonialism and white minority rule in southern Africa (and in the case of Houser, for the end of racial segregation in the United States).


A second strand emerged in the 1990s, in part a response to Namibian independence and the end of apartheid in South Africa. In particular, these works were often focused on US-Africa

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61 This of course excludes the body of work supporting the Portuguese posture which focused on the unity of the Portuguese world, and the ‘lies’ emanating from the liberation movements and their ‘communist’ allies, including the UN. Certain of these works are discussed in chapter 1.

62 Houser’s story is discussed in detail in chapter 3.
policy, such as Chester A. Crocker’s *High Noon in Southern Africa: Making Peace in a Rough Neighborhood* (1992) and Fernando Andresen Guimarães’, *The Origins of the Angolan Civil War: Foreign Intervention and Domestic Political Conflict* (1998), or were military histories of the South African engagement, such as W.S. van der Waals’, *Portugal’s war in Angola, 1961-1974* (1993). Special mention should be made here of 1978’s *In Search of Enemies: A CIA Story*, by John Stockwell. Stockwell was chief of the CIA’s Angola Task Force in 1975, having previously served during the Congo Crisis and in Vietnam. Stockwell resigned from the CIA in 1976 after a successful twelve year long career, citing concerns over the CIA’s covert actions in Angola. *In Search of Enemies* was an immediate sensation upon publication, as it revealed details about the US’ covert actions in Angola and the inner-workings of the CIA. Ryszard Kapuściński’s 1987 work *Another Day of Life* was a personal memoir of time spent with the MPLA. Perhaps the most infamous book of the period is Fred Bridgland’s entirely uncritical biography *Jonas Savimbi: A Key to Africa* (1986).

Finally, the 1990s-2000s and the rise of international history have witnessed a third generation, this time focused on the ‘externalization’ of the Angolan independence wars. Not only did they add to the understanding of the US role and make use of new information from the Portuguese record, such as Malyn Newitt, *Portugal in European and World History* (2009), Witney Schneidman, *Engaging Africa: Washington and the Fall of Portugal's Colonial Empire* (2004), and Norrie MacQueen, *The Decolonization of Portuguese Africa: Metropolitan Revolution and the Dissolution of Empire* (1997), but two key works focused on the Cuban intervention, Edward George’s, *The Cuban Intervention in Angola, 1965-1991: from Che Guevara to Cuito Cuanavale* (2005), and Piero Glijeses’ *Conflicting Missions* (2002), which traces the Cuban involvement in Africa from Ernesto ‘Che’ Guevara’s unsuccessful attempts to foment global revolution from Congo-Kinshasa in 1965 until the Angolan intervention almost a decade later. *Conflicting Missions* can perhaps be credited with the resurgence of interest in Angola and cold war Africa. Finally, edited collections have appeared which focus on the history of the Lusophone world, such as Patrick Chabal and Nuno Vidal’s 2008 collection *Angola: The Weight of History* and Chabal’s *A History of Postcolonial Lusophone Africa* (2002) or the end of the peace process, such as Margaret Joan Anstee’s *Orphan of the Cold War: The Inside Story of the Collapse of the Angolan Peace Process, 1992-93* (1994).
This dissertation explores the internationalization of Angolan independence – the multiple ways in which the Angolan nationalist project engaged with the international system, and how the international community responded to this engagement. Few recent scholars have investigated Angolan nationalism, and even fewer have traced the transnational flows of ideas and principled beliefs that shaped the transition to independence. The main scholarly contribution of this dissertation is a critical examination of the relationship between transnational non-state actors in contentious epistemic and affective communities (such as national liberation movements and non-governmental organizations), and the challenges posed by such groups to the traditional sources of international authority, what Secretary of State Henry Kissinger once called the “historic elements of power”, and to concepts of global order and equilibrium. Other studies have termed this ‘externalization’, which suggests a dynamic that is accidental and exogenous. In this reading Angola was a site acted upon by external forces, and Angolans had little, if any, control over the situation. However, this dissertation argues that these international aspects are more accurately seen as the consequences of ‘internationalization’, a deliberate and endogenous process of framing the struggle for Angola independence in internationalist terms, raising the issue in international forums, creating transnational support networks, and operating across borders and oceans. In other words, by establishing Angolan independence as part of a wider global battle against imperialism, racism, and western hegemony in the early 1960s, the Angolan national liberation movements established the preconditions for the military interventions and cold war political theatre of the 1970s.

As a work of diplomatic and intellectual history, this dissertation does engage substantially with elite actors, as these voices are most often represented in the diplomatic archival records. It is difficult to ‘hear’ the voices of Angolans, as there are no formal archival collections for the liberation movements themselves. The records that do exist are mainly speeches and other forms of political propaganda or interviews with party members or noted activists and disproportionately reflect the MPLA. However, it has been possible to find representative documents from all three movements. By beginning the story of Angolan national liberation with the movements themselves, rather than with the external interventions of the 1970s, this discussion has tried to challenge the boundaries of diplomatic history by incorporating revolutionary propaganda from the liberation movements, including poetry.

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literacy manuals, and pamphlets. Such documents provide some of the voices of Angolan independence, which reflected many aspects of an extended and complex series of historical processes. These voices were later echoed in the activist campaigns of pro-independence organizations around the world, from Lisbon to New York City, from Toronto to Dar Es Salaam. In this approach Angolans are no longer ‘outsiders’ in their own liberation struggle, but become key actors, domestically and internationally.

It would neither be appropriate nor possible to summarize the entire body of international relations theory on self-determination, independence, and revolution, nor is it possible to review the entirety of the literature on African states or empire, colonialism, and post-colonial discourse. Thus this research is necessarily bounded by certain theoretical and methodological constraints. However, it uses source material that is multi-lingual (French, Portuguese, and Spanish), multi-archival, and multi-disciplinary, sitting at the intersection of diplomatic history, intellectual history, and international relations. The majority of archival research was conducted at six archives: the National Archives of the United Kingdom, the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library (GFPL) in Ann Arbor, MI and the National Archives and Records Administration (Archives II) in College Park, MD, and the Arquivo Histórico-Ultramarino (AHU), Instituto dos Arquivos Nacionais/Torre do Tombo (IAN/TT), and the Serviços do Arquivo Histórico-Diplomático (AHD), all in Lisbon. Additional research was conducted at two private Lisbon archives, the Arquivo Mário Soares (AMS) and the Centro de Intervenção para o Desenvolvimento Amílcar Cabral (CIDAC), which helpfully provided the most insight into the liberation movements themselves. Finally, digital archival databases, including Aluka.org, the Cold War International History Project, the African Activist Archive (hosted by Michigan State University), the Digital National Security Archive (hosted by The George Washington University), and the Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) collection, published by the US Department of State’s Office of the Historian, were very helpful.

The structure of this dissertation was influenced in large part by three recent scholarly works, Vijay Prashad’s The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World (2008); Melvyn P. Leffler’s For the Soul of Mankind: The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War (2007), and Odd Arne Westad’s The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the
Though these works are quite different, all have eschewed traditional chronological accounts in favour of chapters concerned with key sites, spaces, and moments in their respective narratives. Similarly, this dissertation is organized around five “sites” – specific moments in the story of Angolan independence which emphasize its increasing internationalism. Choosing sites outside of Angola proper highlights the internationalization of the independence struggle and of national liberation movements in general. Several key moments in the liberation struggle and revolutionary process happened beyond Angolan soil, such as debates over the status of the Portuguese territory in the United Nations General Assembly, the US decision to support Holden Roberto, or the collapse of the Portuguese Empire in 1974.

Despite the growing interest in African international history, and in Angolan independence in particular, what is often missing from this approach is a sustained consideration of the Angolan side of the equation. Little attention is paid to the intellectual and ideological aspects of Angolan independence, or to the role of the liberation movements. This dissertation begins to redress this imbalance by considering the ideologies, perspectives, and strategies of western (primarily US) foreign policy decision-makers, and of the Angolan nationalists and allies who challenged them. As Westad has argued, being a Third World revolutionary was often a “losing proposition” – most ended up imprisoned or assassinated.65 That so many took up the mantle of anticolonial revolution was testament to the brutality of colonial exploitation, the paucity of other avenues for radical sociopolitical change, and the “growing attraction of revolutionary ideologies.”66 For many in the postwar Third World, “the rhetoric of anti-imperialism furnished key ideas and concepts to those who wanted to change their societies and their states.”67 The ways in which the international community responded to these challenges helped to create the international system we see today.

Chapter 1 begins the story of the internationalization of Angolan independence in neighbouring Léopoldville, Belgian Congo (now Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo). Congolese independence, symbolized by the charismatic leadership of Patrice Lumumba, captivated the world and many of the intellectual luminaries of African independence and black

65 Westad, 82.
66 Westad, 42.
67 Westad, 83.
internationalist movements passed though the newly-independent Congo-Léopoldville. Congolese independence also directly influenced the origins of the first Angolan independence movement, the FNLA. Its leader, Holden Roberto, lived most of his life in Congo/Zaire, and eventually married the sister of later Zairian dictator Mobutu Sese Seko. In contrast, the chaos that surrounded Lumumba’s murder and Mobutu’s coup also emboldened the opponents of African independence, especially the Government of Portugal, which used the Congo to justify the continued domination of Angola. The intellectual milieu of the early 1960s influenced the shapers of Angolan nationalism, who chose to see their struggle for national liberation as part of a global anticolonial movement centered in Africa. Thus independence and decolonization were not isolated, geographically-bounded events, but took place in the full view of the international community. The site of Léopoldville represented the origins of the internationalization of Angolan national liberation.

Chapter 2 traces the story to Washington, DC, and examines the evolving US responses to the question of independence for Portugal’s African territories. As noted earlier, the trajectory of Angolan independence was irrevocably bound to currents in the cold war international system. The shifting postures of the US directly affected the course of Angolan independence, as diplomatically-isolated Portugal was dependent on the US and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies for war materiel as well as moral support. Despite not being a formal colonial power, postwar US decision makers were very much caught up in the politics of decolonization, especially as they intersected with the cold war. With the Soviet Union attempting to ‘seduce’ the world’s emerging nations with tales of anticolonialism and socialist development, the US had no choice but to offer a competing counternarrative of liberal democracy and industrial modernization. This dynamic was further complicated by the politics of racial discrimination and African-American civil rights at home, as disenfranchised and angry American blacks found common cause with decolonization movements in Africa and Asia. Most significantly, US decisionmakers had to balance these imperatives with maintaining the western alliance and supporting NATO allies. Portugal aggressively courted US favour, and its success in helping to shift US attitudes away from supporting Angolan independence would have profound consequences for the shape and development of Angola nationalism.

Chapter 3 investigates Angolan independence on the world stage, namely at the United Nations (UN) and the Organization of African Unity (OAU, now the African Union), represented
by the site of New York City. Angolan nationalists and their allies framed the issue of independence and its impediments, colonialism and racism, as threats to international peace and security. This is a clear step forward in the internationalization of Angolan independence: not only did the debate itself move to a high-level international forum, but the very thrust of the argument was itself international – by failing to grant Angola immediate independence Portugal was in contempt of the will of the international community, a community now with an Asian, Arab, and African demographic advantage. Portugal was cast along with South Africa and Rhodesia as a threat to the entire international system. Second, international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other affective activist groups entered the picture on the side of the supporters of Angolan independence, further internationalizing the issue. This chapter presents the example of the American Committee on Africa (ACOA), an important US-based organization which used its influence not only to lobby domestic constituents, but also collaborated with the OAU and UN sub-agencies to raise support for Angolan nationalists and to exert pressure on Portugal.

Chapter 4 focuses on the events of 1974-1975, which saw the collapse of Portuguese colonialism, formal Angolan independence, and the Cuban and South African interventions. The period from 1974-1975 was not only the highpoint of ‘externalization’ in the traditional sense, but also saw the intersection of three revolutionary trajectories – Portuguese, Angolan, and Cuban. This chapter first investigates the immediate decline of the Caetano regime and the rise of the Armed Forces Movement. The revolution in Lisbon brought the end of the Estado Novo regime, but it did not immediately signify independence for Angola. Angolan nationalists now negotiated the difficult transition from independence war to civil war, and the differences between the rival movements took on greater importance. Finally, chapter 4 looks at the example of Cuban internationalism. The Cuban military intervention changed the course of Angolan independence, bolstering the flagging MPLA until it formed the government in Luanda. However, rather than focus on the military campaign, this chapter investigates the ideological motivations behind Cuban actions. The Cuban intervention in Angola was the resumption of an earlier commitment to international acts of antiracist and anti-imperialist solidarity.

Chapter 5 turns finally to Lusaka, Zambia, where in 1976 US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger gave his first, and only, major foreign policy address on US-Africa policy. The fallout from Angolan independence and the Cuban intervention compelled Kissinger to make his only
state visit to Africa, a last-ditch attempt to repair some of the damage done to the US’ international reputation after the *New York Times* revealed the US’ covert action in Angola. While in Lusaka, itself one of the strongholds of African nationalism, Kissinger finally admitted what had been obvious to many for over a decade: Africans would be independent from all colonizations, and would continue to mount a challenge against the racialized regimes in South Africa and Rhodesia. In ultimately choosing to support Portugal over Angola, the Nixon and Ford administrations had found themselves on the proverbial ‘wrong side of history’. This final chapter argues that a key consequence of the internationalization of Angolan independence was the undermining of Soviet-American détente. Because the Ford administration had been unable to countenance an independent Cuban foreign policy, they believed the Soviet Union had orchestrated the Cuban intervention in order to circumvent détente’s unspoken rule against foreign interventions.

**Conclusion**

How did a “sleepy Portuguese colony in Africa” come to be identified with Czechoslovakia, that site most associated with ‘appeasement’ and ‘resolve’? As in the opening quotation by Mark Katz, when Angola did enter international history, it was as an illustration of the cold war run amok, held up as an example of the worst kind of superpower meddling in the domestic affairs of ‘unimportant’ states. These events – Cuban troops on the African mainland, South African troops beyond their own borders and American intelligence officers launching covert operations – are certainly important and fascinating elements, and studies which emphasize these aspects go a long way toward redressing the immense lacunae in international history where Africa and Africans should be, and indeed, were.68

In Angola, US foreign policy decision-makers were forced to acknowledge that revolutionary nations often had political agendas of their own, which could have significant ramifications on the international system at large.69 For the Nixon and Ford Administrations, the

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69 Two well-received recent works on the international history of the 1970s, Frederick Logevall and Andrew Preston’s *Nixon in the World: American Foreign Relations, 1969-1977* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press,
fact that African transnational non-state actors had threatened détente, weakened the western alliance, undermined strategic bipolarity, curtailed US freedom of action, and raised unsettling questions about American credibility and authority in the international system. The events surrounding Angolan independence suggested that power did not necessarily equal control.

Due to the overarching cold war competition, the Angolan national liberation movements each made mutually advantageous alliances (some with established great powers, others with a community of like-minded activists and NGOs), which in turn provided them with the material needed to continue to battle the Portuguese and each other. When external armies from opposing sides of the political spectrum intervened, this aspect of the internationalization of the conflict set the stage for a destructive proxy war in Angola. Since global prestige and equilibrium were at stake, it was imperative that neither cold war power be seen to ‘back down’ over Angola, irrespective of its limited strategic importance. Angola, like Czechoslovakia, became a site where the west had to demonstrate resolve in the face of communist ‘adventurism’. When the US Congress eliminated any further aid to the FNLA and UNITA in a constitutional amendment, and several NATO allies retreated in the face of public opinion, Angola also came to symbolize the other meaning of Czechoslovakia, appeasement. This was likely Chona’s meaning when he worried that Angola was becoming “Africa’s Czechoslovakia.”

Thus Angola was not “sleepy” at all, but rather had been active site of resistance to Portuguese imperialism and white minority rule. Yet scholars who attempt to engage with African experiences in an international history framework must be careful not to assume that internationalist and transnationalist currents always flowed from the outside in, thereby inadvertently replicating outdated notions of the African continent as a unified passive actor in the international system. It is doubtful that the Angolans who began the armed struggle for independence in the 1960s suspected that there would still be war in their land almost three decades later. It is also doubtful that they suspected that the dominant narrative of their war (or wars, depending on the perspective taken), would be one where their ideas had little place. Instead, Angola became a story alternately composed of petrodollars, cold war intrigue, ethnic conflict, and structural adjustment, rather than a story of resistance and revolution. As political

scientist Christopher Cramer noted, “[t]he history of war in Angola [was] a kind of palimpsest of violence and civilizations: layer upon layer of mingled local violence and international, imperialist violence, of violence and social change, the spent cartridges of technological innovation in violence.”

This dissertation does not advocate a return to facile binaries (outside/inside, foreign/domestic, African/non-African), but attempts to trace complicated political and cultural flows.

From an international history perspective then, a key question is to what extent did the Angolan national liberation leaderships view their domestic transformative process (i.e., national liberation and formal independence) as part of an international transformative process? Moreover, did the Angolan nationalist leaders perceive a global continuum of large-scale political change, and if so, where did African liberation and Angolan independence ‘fit’? Were they, as the self-appointed representatives of the state and its people, the inheritors of a tradition of anticolonial resistance, were they catalysts for further changes in the international system, or both? Finally, how far did national liberation extend beyond Angola’s borders and how much of it was driven by Angolans themselves? These are vitally important questions, particularly in an African case study, as so much of the literature on African engagements with the international simply reiterates tales of imposition from the ‘outside.’

A focus on Angola addresses a constellation of topics often neglected by historians of international relations: the end of Portuguese empire and Angolan nationalism, the links between revolution and national liberation, and decolonization and fragmentation in the international system. Angolan independence provides a critical case for examining the multiple ways in which competing and contending forces of change engaged with the wider international system. This dissertation contributes to the growing literature on the history of international relations, cold war Africa, and Angolan independence by attempting to restore the liberation movements as agents of change, and by investigating the longer term consequences of Angolan nationalism.

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70 Christopher Cramer, *Violence in Developing Countries: War, Memory, Progress*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007), 22.
Chapter 1: Léopoldville, 1965

“That twisting line is the moving edge of history...[t]o its north are the independent African nations...[t]o its south are eight countries or territories still controlled by white minorities but under siege by all the revolutionary ideas and influences of the contemporary world.”

Waldermar A. Neilsen, Political Scientist, 1962

“Looking back it is easy to trace the whole collapse of the Congo and the disaster which followed to the rashness of this decision [to grant independence] and to blame the shortsightedness of those who demanded immediate independence and those who gave it.”

Catherine Hoskins, Political Scientist, 1965

Introduction: “Quem é o inimigo? [Who is the enemy?]”

In many ways the story of the internationalization of Angolan independence began not in Lisbon or Luanda, but in the neighbouring African capital of Léopoldville, Republic of Congo (now Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo). It is easy to forget the significant effect that Congolese independence had on aspiring African revolutionaries, frightened colonial administrators, and wary international observers. The site of Léopoldville reflects several important aspects of the origins of the armed struggle for Angolan national liberation. Emerging Angolan revolutionaries were inspired by the rapid and dramatic pace of change in the Belgian Congo. The main figure associated with Congolese independence, the charismatic Patrice Émery Lumumba, was a prominent international figure and a personal friend of at least one of the Angolan national liberation leaders. In the short-lived period of euphoria between the formal transfer of power from Belgium on 30 June 1960 and Lumumba’s deposition and eventual

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73 “Quem é o inimigo” was the title of a 1977 short book/pamphlet by MPLA leader Agostinho Neto (full title: Quem é o inimigo...qual é o nosso objectivo?). It was also the original Portuguese title of a 1978 document reader edited by Aquino de Bragança and Immanuel Wallerstein, The African Liberation Reader, (London, UK: Zed Press, 1982).
murder on 17 January 1961, Léopoldville served as an important centre for, and example of, successful African decolonization.

Yet Léopoldville also represented the perils of independence. While the independences of Ghana (1957) and Guinea (1958) had been equally seminal, neither had attracted the same level of international attention as Congo in the early 1960s. Léopoldville came to signify the hazards of precipitous decolonization – the Congo Crises, as they became known, reinforced US fears of racial conflict and communist-led disorder in the Third World. The ensuing disorder gave Portugal powerful ideological and emotional ammunition for its claims that the African overseas provinces could not be independent without leading to chaos on a global scale. By November 1965, in the wake of Joseph-Désiré Mobutu’s coup and consolidation of power, the Angolan national liberation movement leaders had learned powerful lessons about the positives and negatives of international attention. Thus the site of Léopoldville represented the intersection of cold war and national liberation imperatives; these points of connection between the local, the regional, the national, and the international would come to characterize Angolan independence. Léopoldville demonstrated that the terms of independence were not negotiated simply between the former colonial power and the dependent territory, but played out in full view of the international community.

This chapter focuses on the intellectual milieu of Angolan independence between roughly 1961-1965. It first examines the origins of the Angolan liberation movements, locating Angolan nationalism within the wider currents of decolonization and black internationalism, then considers the launch of each of the three main movements, the FNLA, the MPLA, and UNITA. The chapter then moves to the metropole to briefly address the Portuguese perspective, examining the intellectual inspirations and justifications for continuing colonialism in all but name. Like the liberation movements, the Portuguese state also appealed to the wider international community for legitimacy and support.

The main purpose of this chapter is to shift the focus of the story of Angolan liberation from the exogenous, where Angola was ‘acted upon’ by the US, Cuba, or South Africa, or became a mere victim of the cold war, to an internal dynamic, where the Angolan nationalists had their own ideas about the shape of the new nation, and about naming and confronting the enemy. To do this, the role of the liberation movements must be taken into account. Liberation movement politics were a major determinant of the shape and development of Angolan
independence, from their intellectual foundations in the 1950s to the later high-profile externalization of the conflict by 1975. Thus any examination of Angolan independence requires a serious and substantive look at the liberation movements themselves, their goals and leadership, ideas and strategies. The liberation movements were the ideological, cultural and logistical interface between the international system and revolutionary Angola, and the vast majority of international and transnational transactions, whether intellectual or material, were mediated through liberation movement members or organs.

The internationalization of the Angolan independence struggle did not begin with the US-South Africa collusion or the Cuban military intervention in 1975. Rather, the Angolan liberation leaders themselves internationalized the process, both conceptually and strategically. The leaderships of the MPLA, FNLA and UNITA early on conceived of Angolan liberation as part of a transnational struggle, first in concert with the other lusophone territories, then as part of a pan-African battle to end white minority rule, and finally as part of a global anti-imperialist resistance movement. Thus when the Angolan liberation leaders asked “quem é o inimigo? [who is the enemy?]”, the response was not simply Portuguese colonialism, but rather international imperialism. The liberation leaders actively sought support from external sources, including contiguous African nations, sympathetic western and eastern governments, and non-governmental organizations. Like the more famous African National Congress in South Africa, Angolan revolutionaries recognized and utilized the “international dimension of armed struggle.”

“Angola, Kimpwanza, Amen”: the origins of the Angolan National Liberation Movements

Angolan independence did not emerge spontaneously in 1961, but was linked to much older and broader currents of anticolonialism, pan-Africanism, and black internationalism. One of the most comprehensive sources on the origins of the liberation movements is John Marcum’s first volume of The Angolan Revolution. Published in 1969 but still valuable, Marcum meticulously

reconstructed the early years of the movements from interviews and journalistic sources, noting that the origins of Angolan nationalism “derive from or were to some extent influenced by the strong flow of urban and intellectual protest that first developed in Luanda and then spread into its Kimbundu-speaking hinterland” in the late 1950s. In Angola, the ethnic situation was complex and highly stratified. Since the colonial period, black Angolans were ethnically and geographically split into Bakongo, Ovimbundu and Mbundu. The Mbundu traditionally occupied the area surrounding the capital city of Luanda and had a history of contact with the Portuguese dating back to the 15th century slave trade. The Bakongo homeland transversed political borders and extended into the oil-rich Cabinda enclave and Zaire. The Ovimbundu comprised the largest single ethnocultural group and were concentrated south of Luanda in the Angolan highlands. The Portuguese Department of Native Affairs divided its African subjects into one of two categories: assimilados (“assimilated ones”) or não-assimilados or idigenas. Akin to the French évolué, os assimilados were black lusophones often schooled in Europe. Within Angolan society, however, far more intricate divisions existed. The mixed-race mestiço population was generally economically enfranchised, with better educational opportunities, improved social mobility and, by the 1950s, an ever-increasing political consciousness. The centuries of racial stratification had a profound effect on the Angolan anti-colonial movements and the historical development of the liberation parties reflected the domestic social stratification.

The proverbial ‘angry young men’ who eventually formed the leaderships of many African national liberation movements were aware of the changing intellectual and political landscapes around them, even if, as in the case of the veritable police states of Portuguese Africa, they were unable to participate directly. As was the case among black students in Paris and

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77 Marcum, 13.
78 It should be noted here that ethno-linguistic characterizations – Ovimbundu, BaKongo (or Bakongo), Mbundu – are problematic in themselves. Often the ethnic typology was created for the ease of colonial administrators, rather than to reflect the fluid and complex actuality. However, by the period in question these designations had been appropriated by the national liberation movements themselves, and were widely invoked to mobilize the urban and rural populations. See Fernando Andresen Guimarães, The Origins of the Angolan Civil War: Foreign Intervention and Domestic Political Conflict War, (London, UK: MacMillan, 1998), 32.
80 Guimarães, 33.
82 Guimarães, 12.
London, there was a definitive link between cultural production and political consciousness. Young poets in lusophone Africa moved away from perfecting ‘European’ stylistic forms and began to focus on the stuff of ordinary life, thus confronting the harsh realities of colonization. Literary journals such as Paris’ *Présence Africaine* and Luanda’s *Mensagem* (*Message*) were key sites of expression and resistance, and several prominent African political intellectuals began their careers writing for these publications.\(^83\) Emerging revolutionaries from all over the Lusophone world met at the Centro de estudos africanos (Centre for African Studies, CEA), which began as a government-led meeting place and social club for African students. Eventually the CEA was raided and closed when government authorities realized it was being used as a meeting place for ‘subversive’ activities. Another key venue was the Clube marítimo (Maritime Club), a drinking club for African merchant sailors. Historian Partrick Chabal notes that the intellectuals were strongly influenced by their contact with the sailors who shared stories of discrimination and subjugation they had witnessed and experienced in the port cities of Portugal and across the empire.\(^84\) Indeed, a 1965 article from the Centro do estudos angolanos (Centre for Angolan Studies) in Algiers noted the significance of the 1950s cultural milieu for the development of a political consciousness, noting that “[e]xpositions of Black art were held; there were lectures on the achievements of African cultures in Angola; there were expositions of paintings denouncing colonial exploitation; clearly anti-colonial and anti-racist stories and poems were published; revolutionary Angolan artists and writers were born again – and were better.”\(^85\)

Early anticolonial resistance had focused on two long-standing strands of Angolan nationalism: racial discrimination and economic exploitation. What differed in the new resistance was the increased importance of Marxism-Leninism and a new attention to the wider international context. Whereas earlier anticolonial movements sought a *modus vivendi* and the gradual replacement of a Portuguese elite with a black or native Angolan elite, by the 1960s the

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emphasis was on revolution, not evolution.\textsuperscript{86} In 1961 an initial round of violent uprisings launched a struggle that forced Portugal to spend the next decade quelling unrest on the African continent.\textsuperscript{87} In this period the first of the two main liberation parties, the FNLA and the MPLA, began to shape the goals and terms of the anticolonial struggle.

As was the case with many vanguard parties, and because of their prominence, the liberation movements defined the character of Angolan national liberation: against the Portuguese Empire, against each other, and against a cold war international system that privileged the stability of the bipolar system above all. The MPLA, FNLA and later UNITA each claimed to represent Angola as a whole, and claimed to articulate the desires of millions of Angolans when they agitated against Portuguese colonialism, promoted their particular vision of a postcolonial Angolan state, and located an independent Angola in the wider family of nations. Yet as their mutual antagonism grew they accused each other of representing only a single element of society: for the MPLA, the educated \textit{mestiço/assimulado} classes centered around Luanda, and the Mbundu minority; for the FNLA, the Bakongo peoples near the Congolese border; and later, for UNITA, the Ovimbundu in the south. There were other competing visions of a post-Portuguese Angola, yet those voices were hushed in comparison to those of the MPLA, FNLA and eventually UNITA.\textsuperscript{88}

A brief look at the origins of the liberation movements suggests that these movements saw themselves and their struggle as cosmopolitan and internationalist, and this is reflected in the ways they described their movements and goals, to Angolans, to each other, and to the international community. Each movement was influenced not only by the exigencies of Angolan nationalism, but also by specific transnational and international currents and experiences of their founders. A look at their writings, while prone to rhetorical excesses, presents how these movements and their leaders wanted to be seen by their adherents, their rivals, and by interested foreign observers. Much like an US Presidential Inaugural address, such statements were designed to set the correct political tone. With a shared commitment to ending Portuguese colonialism, achieving juridical statehood, and to a broadly anti-imperialist transnational progressivism, FNLA leader Holden Roberto, MPLA leader Dr. Agostinho Neto, and UNITA

\textsuperscript{86} Guimarães, 38.
\textsuperscript{87} Marcum, 2.
\textsuperscript{88} Marcum lists at least forty-three Angolan movements, some of which were subsumed into the three dominant movements. Marcum, Appendix E, 343.
leader Jonas Savimbi each used language which located the Angolan national liberation struggle on a global continuum of change.

In the case of Angolan independence, the tendency has been to focus on the external forces and great power politics, and to discount or minimize the role played by the liberation movements, perhaps in part because it was not the military prowess of the liberation movements which immediately precipitated the change in official Portuguese attitudes, but changes within Portuguese society itself. In addition, the Angolan liberation movements lacked a definitive corpus of theory and praxis – there were few grand intellectual statements or formal revolutionary programs, few ‘What Is To Be Dones’ or ‘Little Red Books’. In fact, a supposed lack of ideological coherence and purity has caused several scholars to discount the intellectual aspect of African liberation movements in general, with the noted exception of Guinean theorist and liberation leader Amilcar Cabral. 89 Christopher Clapham, for example, leaves out the liberation theologies of African leaders almost entirely, claiming that their ideological stances were little more than “respectable rationales” for gaining and preserving their own political security:

In the case of African states, these [respectable rationales] most commonly consisted of domestic transformation goals, normally expressed in terms of ‘development’ and ‘nationhood’, and external transformation goals, normally expressed in terms of the ‘liberation’ either of African peoples from alien rule, or of African states from the domination of outside powers. This is [sic] turn led to a demand for ‘unity’ among African states and peoples. Studies which take as their starting point the formal goals of politicians therefore pay considerable attention to these essentially rhetorical appeals. 90

Yet there is another way to think about the liberation movements. Even if these “essentially rhetorical appeals” to international solidarity were simply clever devices designed to extract resources from wealthier benefactors or to gain legitimacy from the wider international community, they demonstrated a calculated and nuanced understanding of the postwar international system. Nationalist African leaders such as Zaire’s Mobutu Sese Sekou, Guinea-Conakry’s Ahmed Sékou Touré, Egypt’s Gamal Abdel Nasser, and Tanzania’s Julius Nyerere were all skilled practitioners of international relations. Similarly, Angolan revolutionaries were keen to locate their struggle in a broad continuum of positive historical change – those who tried

89 However, several prominent postcolonial African leaders were prolific authors and orators, including Ghana’s Kwame Nkrumah, Kenya’s Jomo Kenyatta, and Guinea-Conakry’s Ahmed Sékou Touré.
to impede this process were on the ‘wrong’ side of history. They carefully portrayed their movements as progressive, just, cosmopolitan and internationalist. Thus even in as nationalistic a project as independence and state formation, would-be African leaders supplemented their own ideology and initiatives with external support.

This is the territory of Jean-François Bayart’s ‘extraversion’. Elaborated in a 2000 article, and later extended to a full-length study, The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly, extraversion claimed that African leaders compensated for poor domestic conditions by manipulating their relations with outside actors.\(^91\) In the Angolan case, the national liberation movements actively sought and received practical and ideological education from external sources, and were for long periods of time forced to wage their liberation struggles from outside of the country. They cited internationalist currents even in the development of their liberation ethos. Examining these early aspects of internationalism helps demonstrate the multiple ways in which state and non-state actors engaged with the international system.

**The FNLA, its antecedents, and the Revolutionary Government of Angola in Exile**

As the first of the Angolan independence movements to gain international recognition, the FNLA helped set the tone of Angolan independence.\(^92\) The FNLA was initially inspired by two threads: the Bakongo dynasty’s push for self-determination and neighbouring Congo’s independence. The Bakongo were a widespread ethnic group who were dispersed throughout Angola and Congo-Léopoldville (Zaire). Bakongo nationalists pressured the Portuguese to grant sovereignty to what had been the historic Kongo Kingdom, led at the time by King Dom Pedro VII Afonso, a passive presence who was tolerated but not officially recognized by the Portuguese. This group eventually became known as the ‘Matadi group’, after the prominent African stationmaster of the Congolese port town of Matadi. Another strain of Bakongo nationalism was developing in the Belgian colonial capital of Léopoldville, and the centre of Bakongo nationalism shifted from the ports to the capital. According to Marcum, in 1952 leaders of both the Matadi and the

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\(^92\) Holden Roberto’s independence movement had at least four main iterations: the Union of Populations of Northern Angola (UPNA), the Union of Angolan Populations (UPA), the Revolutionary Government in Exile (GRAE), and finally the National Front for Angolan Liberation (FNLA). Since these versions often co-existed and the names were used interchangeably, Roberto’s movements will at times be referred to as UPA/GRAE or FNLA/GRAE. The FNLA became a political party in 1997.
Léopoldville groups contacted the American consulate in Léopoldville to ask for advice. The response, while sympathetic, did not hold out much hope. Frustrated by the lack of success, in July 1954 radical members of both groups formed the Union of Northern Peoples of Angola (União das Populações do Norte de Angola, UPNA), later renamed the Union of Angolan Peoples (União das Populações Angolanos, UPA). From this group emerged Holden Roberto, who came from a long line of Bakongo nationalists agitating for better treatment of black Angolans and an end to forced labour.

Though Angolan by birth, Roberto was raised in the Congo and possessed a keen awareness of the Congolese political scene, encountering Lumumba at the cercles des évolués in Stanleyville (Kisangani). In fact, Congolese nationalism played a crucial supportive role in the FNLA’s development. The UPA’s direction was changed after the All-Africa People’s Conference, held in newly-independent Ghana in December 1958. In a cloak and dagger tale worthy of any Hollywood script, with only a carte de séjour (Africans could not hold passports) and using an alias, Roberto bluffed his way into Accra, and there encountered such luminaries as George Padmore, Kwame Nkrumah, Tom Mboya, Kenneth Kaunda, Frantz Fanon and Sékou Touré. Greatly influenced by the currents of pan-Africanism, Roberto established links with other African nationalists. By this point his political goals had modified: the pamphlets Roberto circulated began to call for the liberation of all of Angola, not just the former Kongo dynastic seat.

As early as 1957 UPA literature located the Angolan struggle in the international system. Angolan independence was not simply about removing the Portuguese, but about ridding all Africa of colonial influence. Roberto looked first to the rest of Africa as inspiration for his movement. In fact, despite strong anticommunist leanings and ties to the US intelligence community from as early as 1955, the UPA (which became the FNLA/GRAE) adopted the language of international anti-imperial solidarity that was increasingly popular in African liberation circles.

A 1957 UPA bulletin argued first for the historicity of the Angolan nation.

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93 Marcum, 61.
94 Guimarães, 49.
95 Marcum, 67.
96 Though the nature of the relationship is unspecified, a March 1967 report wrote that “[c]landestine activity with regard to Angola has consisted of periodic support for Holden Roberto, President of the Government of the Republic of Angola in Exile (GRAE), also leader of the Angolan National Liberation Front (FNLA) and of the Angolan Peoples Union (UPA). CIA has had a relationship with Roberto since 1955. [1–1/2 lines of source text not declassified]” This puts the start of the CIA-Roberto relationship several years earlier than generally thought.
Despite the artificiality of the colonial boundaries, the authors – only known as the dissidents from ‘São Salvador do Congo’ – note that “colonization engenders a *de facto* nationalism [emphasis in original]….\textsuperscript{97} The authors did not make the fine academic distinctions between ‘nation’ and ‘nationalism’; the state of being colonized had inadvertently created an Angolan ‘nation’ out of many peoples (in distinction to the Portuguese). The mere fact of having created this Angolan ‘nation’ also created a political and cultural nationalism which was now seeking expression. Recent events on the African continent had demonstrated unequivocally that Africans were aware of the changing international system: “[t]he accession to independence of Liberia, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Ghana, and – recently – Guinée proves uncontestably [*sic*] that Africa has not remained indifferent to the deep-seated movement which tends toward anti-colonialization and anti-imperialism.”\textsuperscript{98} In a 1959 pamphlet entitled “*La Lutte pour l’Indépendence de l’Angola*”, the UPA called upon Angolan peasants, unemployed and forced labourers (“*paysans, chômeurs, travailleurs forcés*”) to prepare themselves for the struggle against “*le vampire colonial.*”\textsuperscript{99} It then spoke directly to Angolan women, encouraging them to fight like “[l]es femmes du Ghana, de la Guinée, du Cameroun, du Togo, du Congo et de la Somalie [qui] ont participé au combat héroïque contre le colonialisme.” In a complete about-face, the UPA now admonished the traditional chiefs, accusing them of being long-time servants of colonial interests and permitting the exploitation of the people, and warned “[a] partir d’aujourd’hui le peuple vous juge.” After some harsh words for the Portuguese, the UPA statement addressed African and international opinion and called upon “all international organizations and bodies so that they put pressure on Portugal to an end the system of exploitation and conscious policy of genocide in Angola.”\textsuperscript{100}

In 1960 with Congolese independence looming, Roberto’s movement opened an office in Léopoldville and began publishing a “torrent of mimeographed tracts in French, Portuguese, and the major vernacular languages of Angola.”\textsuperscript{101} As a result, increasingly nervous Belgian


\textsuperscript{100} UPA/FNLA, “*La Lutte pour l’Indépendence de l’Angola*”.

\textsuperscript{101} Marcum, 84.
authorities rounded up and deported numerous politically active Angolans. The deported émigrés flooded Angola proper and often established independent, underground revolutionary cells, gifting Angolan nationalism with a much-needed boost of politically active recruits. Importantly, though Roberto too went to Angola during this wave, he returned to Congo as soon as independence was granted in June 1960.

Roberto remained based in Congo, and founded the Revolutionary Government of Angola in Exile (**Govêrno revolucionário de Angola no exílio, GRAE**), electing to manage operations from Léopoldville. It was through the GRAE that Roberto established his international credentials as the face of Angolan nationalism and opposition to Portuguese domination. Primarily, the GRAE styled itself not as a political party, guerilla army, or national liberation movement, but as the rightful government of Angola in wrongful exile. Of course, independence movements were entirely illegal within the Portuguese Territories. However, Roberto’s decisions to avoid Angolan territory would have severe political repercussions later on. Second, the GRAE semantically signaled that Roberto’s vision of Angola’s future would be a revolutionary one, where the fabric of Angolan society would be drastically changed.

With his international presence, relatively high profile, frequent trips abroad, and connections with key figures in African independence, Roberto was already a political star long before the formation of the UPA/GRAE. A look at UPA/GRAE propaganda demonstrates that interspersed with the expected calls for national unity and claims to improve the overall standard of living, there were also appeals to the international community. The trajectory of the UPA/GRAE exemplified the tensions between the national and the international in the Angolan independence struggle. Roberto began as an ardent ethnic nationalist and tried to maintain his ‘nationalist-first’ credentials in an increasingly internationalized contest, in part to remain true to his intellectual heritage, and perhaps equally to distinguish himself from the Afro-Marxist MPLA. Roberto himself claimed to have read works by Kwame Nkrumah, first Nigerian President Nnamdi Azikiwe, and Jawaharlal Nehru, among others, but to have been most influenced by the works of his grandfather, also a prominent Bakongo nationalist.\(^\text{102}\)

By 1960 the UPA was more articulate and firm in its stated goals. Calling upon “the world to be its witness”, the UPA intensified its claims for formal independence\(^\text{103}\):

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\(^{102}\) Holden Roberto, “Interview (1960)”, Chilcote, Emerging Nationalism, 64.

Independence would bring the following to the country: Internally, the country would become its own master, that is Angola would become an autonomous state...; and in external affairs, Angola would appear on the international scene to participate in world government and in the building-up of the United States of Africa, thereby supporting the resolutions of the All African People’s Conference held at Accra and Tunis.\(^{104}\)

Soon the UPA began to publish literature under the auspices of the GRAE. In August 1960 Lumumba, now Prime Minister, permitted weekly UPA broadcasts over Radio Léopoldville.\(^{105}\) In early GRAE political writing “development of African unity” and “participation in international cooperation” were placed alongside national independence and agrarian reform.\(^{106}\) When the UPA became the FNLA on 27 March 1962, the new organization’s fifth principle was non-alignment and non-engagement, and full cooperation with “all countries ready to respect [Angolan] sovereignty and who followed the principles of racial equality and equality of nations.”\(^{107}\) In the GRAE Declaration of Principles, dated 3 April 1962, the FNLA promised to “establish all necessary contacts and strengthen already existing relations, not only with international agencies charged with safeguarding peace…”, but as well as with sympathetic African nations which realized “that the struggle for independence, which this courageous and determined people are undertaking, is the struggle of all the peoples of the African continent.”\(^{108}\) It continued:

And today, the Angola people’s armed struggle for independence no longer limits its field of battle to Angola; it had gone beyond national frontiers and is carried on throughout the continent wherever people’s rights to independence and liberty are discussed and championed. The struggle is carried on before the international organizations... It is also made clear to the conscience of the African and Asian governments that the struggle of the Angola people is the struggle of all the people of the African continent who are concerned with safeguarding the territorial integrity of the continent.\(^{109}\)

In 1964 the FNLA/GRAE was at the apex of its power and influence. Assisting Angolan independence was high on the agendas of both the Non-Aligned Movement and the recently-

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\(^{105}\) Marcum, 86.


\(^{107}\) This convention was also signed by Jonas Savimbi, who broke from the FNLA and formed UNITA four years later. UPA/FNLA, “Création du FNLA”.

\(^{108}\) This version of the GRAE Declaration of Principles was distributed in New York City. FNLA/GRAE, “GRAE Declaration of Principles (1962)”, Chilcote, *Emerging Nationalism*, 109.

founded Organization of African Unity’s (OAU) Liberation Committee (discussed in chapter 3), and Roberto was the issue’s chief spokesperson.\textsuperscript{110} Yet as he attracted more international attention, the language used in Roberto’s pronouncements changed. Speaking at the Second Non-Aligned Movement Conference in Cairo in October 1964, Roberto declared:

> It is equally in accord to denounce with force the maneuvers [sic] of the imperialists and colonists in South Arabia, in Southeast Asia, and in the Caribbean islands. ... In their withdrawal, the [Portuguese] colonialists, supported by the Apartheid camp, try to maintain, in the southern part of Africa, a bastion that I will call the Mason-Dixon line, where they concentrate all their means to maintain their dominance.\textsuperscript{111}

This indirect disparagement of the US was made more interesting by the fact that by this time Roberto had already been on the CIA payroll for at least two years, had had an undisclosed relationship with the CIA for almost a decade, and had formed a very questionable political alliance with Mobutu, who had seized power with the help of the CIA.\textsuperscript{112} Roberto too had adopted the language of Third World solidarity with its component of strident anti-Americanism. It is difficult to tell whether this shift was simply cynical politicking or was reflective of an evolving political consciousness. Given that Roberto’s close ties with Mobutu continued well into the next decade, it seems likely that Roberto was trying to maintain his position as the leading light of Angolan independence in the face of an emerging contest with the MPLA. What does seem clear, however, is that Roberto’s linguistic turn suggests a careful rhetorical calibration of the way the issue of Angola independence would be framed and an understanding of the changing tenor of the international system.

1964 also marked the beginning of Roberto’s political decline. His association with the US and Mobutu would prove politically costly. On 16 July 1964 Jonas Savimbi, GRAE Minister of Foreign Affairs, resigned.\textsuperscript{113} This dramatic gesture not only gave the rival MPLA a boost, but forever tarnished Roberto’s personal reputation. On 5 January 1965, John Chikasa, Chief Publicity Secretary of the UPA (FNLA) in Lusaka resigned, giving the following reasons:

a) The UPA administration in both Lusaka and Leopoldville is such that I see a failer [sic] to continued working under unstability [sic] vision. b) The American Empirialism

\textsuperscript{110} The role of the OAU in Angolan independence is discussed in chapter 3.

\textsuperscript{111} Holden Roberto, “Address to the Non-Aligned Conference, Cairo (1964)”, Chilcote, \textit{Emerging Nationalism}, 91.

\textsuperscript{112} Mobutu’s influence and the CIA’s covert action in Angola are discussed in chapter 5.

\textsuperscript{113} This dramatic turn of events was not lost on the MPLA. Exactly two months later MPLA cadres published a copy of Savimbi’s resignation statement in Brazzaville. See Jonas Savimbi, “Resignation Statement (1964)”, Chilcote, \textit{Emerging Nationalism}, 154.
[sic] in the Party’s advisory body [sic] hinders our political forward action. c) The UPA is bound by Anti-Liberation groups directly or indirectly to slow down the political struggle towards independence and Freedom of Angola.\textsuperscript{114}

Ten days later a statement from Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, forever changed the terrain of Angolan independence. In “Why We Quitted [sic] the U.P.A. and the G.R.A.E. of Mr. Holden Roberto; Roberto Detrays [sic] both the Revolution and the Masses”, Savimbi leveled a damaging series of accusations against Roberto, from tribalism to corruption. But the most serious charge was “flirtation with a power led by notorious agents of the imperialists.”\textsuperscript{115} Savimbi later recalled that “[t]he American government has always been interested in imposing Holden Roberto as the leader of the Angolan people.”\textsuperscript{116} Lumumba’s murder still cast a long shadow, thus Roberto would never recover from his association with the forces of treachery and imperialism, both within Africa and internationally.

Roberto’s political platform emphasized the national (land reform and education) and the international (non-alignment). The FNLA always claimed to be nationalists first, yet Roberto was above all an external figure, operating his government from abroad, and currying favour with Mobutu. The FNLA even used French as its primary language, thereby further alienating them from the lusophone or indigenous Angolan population.\textsuperscript{117} It can be argued that the FNLA’s primary battle was not to win over the Angolan population or defeat the MPLA, but to navigate the ideological gap between positioning itself as a nationalist party with limited external political and ideological entanglements and the need to be perceived as part of the evolving anti-imperialist Third World camp.

**Afro-Marxism and the MPLA**

The MPLA’s internationalist currents were even more pronounced, due in no small part to the Afro-Marxist orientation of its leadership. Several young Angolan intellectuals formed the


\textsuperscript{116} According to Chilcote, this statement, translated from the original French, was published by the MPLA bureau in Algiers. Jonas Savimbi, “Where is the Angolan Revolution? (1964)”, Chilcote, Emerging Nationalism, 155.

Angolan Communist Party (*Partida Communista de Angola, PCA*) in October 1955. By 1956 the PCA splintered and an offshoot, the Party of the Struggle of Africans of Angola (*Partido da Luta dos Africanos de Angola, PLUA*) formed the basis of the MPLA. Reports place the movement’s origins amongst the circles of educated *mestiço* exiles Mário Pinto de Andrade and Viriato da Cruz. MPLA intellectuals identified early with the idea of an urban proletariat, not only because of adoption of Marxist ideology, but because many of the MPLA elite were from *assimilado* or comparatively privileged *mestiço* backgrounds. Many were among the first contingent of Africans to study at Portuguese universities. As Marcum noted, “[t]he government housed most of them together in Lisbon and Coimbra at the *Casas dos estudantes do império*, where they were soon caught up in the climate of intellectual radicalism that dominated Portuguese student and anti-Salazar politics.”

Like the FNLA, MPLA headquarters were located outside of Angola. First based in Paris, in February 1960 the MPLA accepted Sékou Touré’s offer to establish a headquarters in Conakry. In October 1961 in an effort to challenge FNLA dominance of the northern zone of Angola, the MPLA joined them with an office in Léopoldville. The MPLA benefited from Andrade’s links to the French intelligentsia, left-wing student groups and Angolan students studying abroad. These groups continued Andrade’s practice of using propaganda to destabilize the Salazar regime and secure offers of support for a new Angola. However, Andrade was concerned that his *mestiço* origins and Marxism would alienate the party from its Angolan support base, though many of the early members of the MPLA were anti-Salazarist whites from the PCP. Thus in 1962 Dr. Agostinho Neto, a black Angolan and already an important nationalist figure, became the movement’s leader upon his release from prison. Neto was an *assimilado*, having trained in Portugal as a medical doctor. Neto’s personal popularity soon eclipsed that of Andrade, and by 1963 Neto was the main charismatic leader of the MPLA.

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119 Marcum, 37.

120 Marcum. 43.

121 Guimarães, 39.

122 Neto was first imprisoned by the Portuguese secret police, the *Policía Internacional e de Defesa do Estado* (International and State Defence Police, PIDE), in 1951. He was released in 1958, only to be arrested again in June 1960.
A look at the MPLA raises a more perplexing question about ideological internationalism: to what extent was the internationalism of the MPLA a consequence of its Marxism? Did MPLA leadership embrace internationalism because of the internationalist currents inherent in Marxist-Leninist thought, or did they too have a conception of Angolan liberation that was simultaneously nationalist and international? A definitive answer is unlikely. However, MPLA writers were extremely prolific, and many of the speeches, tracts, and propaganda material that survive, including those of leader Agostinho Neto, reflect both aspects. Before rising to prominence as a revolutionary, Neto was already a successful published poet. Much of his earlier work addressed the dismal and intimate conditions of ordinary life for black Angolans, and expressed hope that the ‘slavery’ of colonialism would soon end. In 1945’s “Departure for forced labour” a woman laments the departure of her love for a coffee plantation on São Tomé. As he is a forced labourer she does not know when he will be permitted to return, or if the brutal conditions will end his life (they do). In “Saturday in the musseques” (1948), Neto begins by clarifying for the reader that “Musseques are poor neighbourhoods of poor people”, Luanda’s slums. It then traces the varying sources of anxiety – extreme poverty, alcoholism, fear of authority – that characterized musseque life. Yet very quickly some of Neto’s poetry began to reference international events and the changes afoot on the African continent. 1951’s “Awakening consciousness” highlights the climate of increasing tension and uncertainty in Angolan towns with the refrain “Fear in the air!”, and states that “History is being told again.” The self-reflexive “A birthday” (1951) comments directly on injustices in the world and close to home:

In the world
Korea bloodstained at the hands of men
shootings in Greece and strikes in Italy
apartheid in Africa
and bustle in atomic factories for mass killing
for killing ever more men

They cudgelling us
and preaching terror.

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125 Neto, “Awakening consciousness”, Sacred Hope: Poems, 59
But in the world there’s building
in the world there’s building

And our son who studied Medicine
will also build!\textsuperscript{126}

While it is difficult to draw a straight line between Neto’s early work as a poet and the political tracts of the MPLA, it seems clear that Neto was attuned to international events and early on drew connections between Angola’s lot and global dynamics of power. It is also worth noting that Neto ascribes \textit{apartheid}, literally “the state of being apart” in Afrikaans, to Africa, and not just the South African state, signifying the commonality of racial oppression.

Fast forward a decade, however, and the ideological internationalism became even more explicit. Andrade and Cruz also wrote of the international dimension of national liberation. In 1961 Viriato da Cruz speculated on possible configurations of the ‘new’, decolonized African continent:

\begin{itemize}
\item In the fight against colonialism, African unity is the strongest weapon on our continent.
\item …Several views on the possible future development of Africa have been set forth:
\begin{itemize}
\item a) East African nations allied with non-Communist Asian nations, and West African nations with the Atlantic Community;
\item b) An Arab bloc in North African [sic] and a black federation south of the Sahara;
\item c) A close, firm alliance of Africa and Europe behind the protective shield of the United States;
\item d) Former metropolises [mother countries of colonies] forming blocs with their former colonies;
\item e) All Africa forming a federal bloc.\textsuperscript{127}
\end{itemize}
\end{itemize}

Cruz was also a noted poet, and his poem “Black Mother” wrote of the sorrows of the “Voices from the plantations in Virginia[,] from farms in the Carolinas[,] Alabama[,] Cuba[,] Brazil[,] Voices from all America, Voices from all Africa”, as well as referencing black American poet Langston Hughes, and Cuban poet Nicolas Guillen.\textsuperscript{128} Andrade especially was known for his prodigious written output and elegant style. In the formative years of the 1950s and 1960s

\textsuperscript{126} Neto, “A birthday”, Sacred Hope: Poems, 60-61.
\textsuperscript{128} Dickinson, 53-54.
Andrade was perhaps the most eloquent spokesperson for Angolan independence. Writing in 1963 Andrade made his point perfectly clear:

Today the people of the ‘Third World’ have become the protagonists in history. They have created a new balance in international relations and have provoked world-wide reactions. The entire world is convinced that any event concerning nations [sic] is fundamental for all mankind. Angola, yesterday unknown in international public opinion, a country that few persons can locate on a map, has made its definitive entrance onto the stage of history, at a time when armed combat has been initiated in that part of Africa.

On 18 April 1961 in Casablanca, Neto, influential Cape Verdean revolutionary and intellectual Amilcar Cabral and others formed the Conferência das Organizações Nacionalistas das Colónias Portuguesas (Conference of Nationalist Organizations of the Portuguese Colonies, CONCP). The CONCP broadly united the leftist Portuguese African movements, Mozambique’s Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO), the Movement for the Liberation of São Tomé and Príncipe (Movimento de Libertação de São Tomé e Príncipe/MLSTP), Cabral’s PAIGC, and the MPLA. The organization was a loose one, and each movement operated independently. However, the creation of the CONCP meant that the MPLA could also point to a multinational collective of like-minded Afro-socialist independence movements. Thus the MPLA was also able to claim to be in ideological affinity with the main liberation movements in the rest of the Portuguese territories, leaving the FNLA, and later UNITA, isolated. Despite the obvious hyperbole, when Neto claimed that there was a “special international fascist brigade directed against the Angolan people”, it had a kernel of truth as Portugal, the United States, South Africa

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129 Andrade became internationally famous in 1974 when he broke with Neto and eventually formed his own movement, the Revolta Activa (Active Revolt).
131 Chabal, 86.
and others did discuss ways to contain and manage Angolan independence.\textsuperscript{132} This fact influenced MPLA’s operating strategy, as Neto claimed:

\begin{quote}
This [CONCP] union is just and necessary, and the forms of our cooperation in the struggle must be perfected because our enemies also coordinate their activities. Nobody is ignorant of the support given by the NATO countries to help Portugal continue her unjust war….It is the United States of America, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Great Britain and certain other countries which sustain Portugal [emphasis in original].\textsuperscript{133}
\end{quote}

The Portuguese were but a small cog in an insidious imperial machine. Restive Angolans were part of the revolutionary vanguard which would undermine them, and the tide of public opinion favoured the MPLA.

The MPLA sponsored a variant of Afro-Marxism that drew from Angolan history and Marxist pedagogy. It was a surprisingly successful mixture which linked traditional Angolan stories of resistance with socialist orthodoxy. The first MPLA National Conference in 1962 identified four principles of foreign policy, including “militant diplomacy”, “[r]einforcement of our African alliances”, and “[i]nternationalization of the Angolan problem by the reduction of our enemy’s field [that is, uniting progressive states to oppose Portuguese policy]; effective contribution to the isolation of Portugal on the world scene by active participation in the organization of a diplomatic and economic boycott [all emphases in original].”\textsuperscript{134} A 1965 tract entitled “Historical Premises of Revolution” first explained the development of Portuguese colonialism in Marxist terms, noting that the colonists were directed by the “foreign bourgeoisie”, either Portuguese or from other countries.\textsuperscript{135} It then describes Angolan nationalism, drawing a straight line from the historical ruler N’Gola Kiluanje who fought the beginnings of the Portuguese empire in 1575 through to the 4 February 1961 raid on the Portuguese barracks in Luanda. Though largely ineffectual, the raid was elevated to a heroic act of class warfare, akin to the July 1953 attack on the Moncada barracks in Cuba, thus situating the MPLA soundly within

\textsuperscript{133} Neto, “Messages to Companions in the Struggle”, Road to Liberation, 7.
\textsuperscript{134} MPLA, “First National Conference of the MPLA (1962)”, Chilcote, Emerging Nationalism, 256.
the international socialist community. The tale ends with the “heroic Angolan people comporting themselves, as a revolutionary vanguard, beside the peoples of the world, in the final struggle against oppression.” The MPLA would term this heroic vision of the Angolan people “poder popular”, people’s power. Ending Portuguese colonialism, while essential, was not the end of the struggle, however. Complete independence also necessitated an end to the true evil, the “economic dominance of imperialism.” The linkages between Angola’s subject status and the destructive capacity of international capitalism became a familiar refrain in MPLA ideology, and the language of international solidarity became a touchstone of MPLA literature.

There are also examples of the MPLA specifically tailoring its message of global anti-imperialist solidarity to everyday Angolans, those whose support was necessary to win the ground war. A 1968 MPLA literacy manual entitled *A vitória é certa* [Victory is Certain] – the MPLA’s slogan – begins with the lesson “Angola é a nossa terra” [Angola is our land] as a convenient way to introduce the Portuguese vowels. By lesson 27, however, the newly literate read entire paragraphs with components of analogical reasoning, such as: “X is like imperialism. Imperialism always hides from the eyes of the people and appears in many different forms. Sometimes imperialism changes its form and appears as neo-colonialism….”

Neto’s status as a physician, an artist, and a revolutionary only augmented his image as the champion of African nationalism, African socialism, and transnational progressivism. A 1972 English-language edition of political poetry from Lusophone Africa entitled *When Bullets Begin to Flower: Poems of Resistance from Angola, Mozambique and Guiné*, introduced Neto’s writing in this way:

> It is not an accident that Agostinho Neto, perhaps Angola’s greatest living poet, is also president of the People’s Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). For there can be no national literature until there are citizens to hear it. … In such a situation a poet’s vision is likely to make him first and foremost a revolutionary; his poetry, when he can steal the time to write it, will be the expression of this revolution in which his life is spent.

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136 MPLA, “Premissas Históricas da Revolução”, 16-20. The history does mention Roberto’s UPA as one of a growing number of liberation organizations in Léopoldville at the time.
140 *A vitória é certa: manual de alfabetização*, 18.
Editor Margaret Dickerson’s introduction is an example of the potency and allure of the MPLA’s revolutionary (inter)nationalism. It also suggests that the idea of Angolan independence as an international issue had solidly entered the popular consciousness. As Dickerson noted,

Although the poets are writing primarily for their compatriots and comrades this need not lessen the impact that they have on other people. Their anger and aspirations are shared by everyone who challenges an unjust established order. The struggle they celebrate is not isolated. Though its immediate aspect is anti-colonial it is more than a struggle for independence.  

More than any other movement the MPLA successfully positioned itself as part of an international, progressive movement against injustice. It was a message that served the MPLA well, and helped establish Neto and the MPLA as the exemplars of revolutionary heroism.

**Ovimbundu ethnonationalism and UNITA**

Though not formalized until 1966, UNITA posed a very real challenge to the FNLA and MPLA. Ostensibly, the FNLA and MPLA represented the Kikongo and Kimbundu/Umbundu speaking peoples, respectively, and the MPLA also claimed the *mestiço, assimilado*, urban, educated, and progressive white populations. Yet Ovimbundu Angolans, despite being the largest ethno-linguistic group, were still politically underrepresented. In fact, as historian Fernando Guimarães asserted, outside of the major urban areas there was little political agitation at all.  

For complex socio-historical reasons the Ovimbundu of the south did not engage in anti-state activities to the same extent as the Bakongo, Kimbundu, and *assimilado* populations in the rest of the country. The south of Angola was vast, and mainly rural, and historically the Ovimbundu had slightly better relations with the Portuguese state, having served with the government forces in campaigns against other Africans in 1918. According to Linda Heywood, the Portuguese state exploited the ethno-linguistic solidarity and rurality of the Ovimbundu, further separating them from the northern populations and encouraging collaboration with the state. The administration

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142 Dickinson, 12.
143 Though there are separate linguistic formations – singular form *Ochimbundu*, language *Umbundu* – for clarity this chapter will retain the collective noun *Ovimbundu*.
144 Guimarães, 76.
campaigned to win Ovimbundu support, and contracted large numbers to serve with regular Portuguese forces when the rebellions first broke out.\footnote{In 1970 the Portuguese launched a military “Africanization” program and created the flechas (arrows), an all-black counterinsurgency force comprised primarily of Ovimbundu. Heywood, 135-136.}

Slowly the anticolonial agitation that was inflaming parts of the north began to affect the south. Ovimbundu workers at the ports and on the Benguela Railway were exposed to stories and media from independent Ghana and Guinea, and smuggled out tales of Portuguese violence. In 1960 one of the first activist groups, the Associação Africana do Sul de Angola (African Association of the South of Angola), began to agitate for more opportunities for African workers. The group was terminated by the Portuguese secret police, the International State Defence Police (Policia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado, PIDE), and its leader became an informant.\footnote{Heywood, 159.} Much of the initiative to begin anticolonial organizing in the south came from Ovimbundu students and religious leaders who were based abroad, such as Jonas Savimbi and Daniel Chipenda (who became a high-ranking member of the MPLA).

Perhaps it is this complex relationship that helps explain Savimbi, who was at once the most nationalist and the most internationalist of the nationalist leaders. An Ovimbundu from the south, Savimbi was influenced by a world in which the Ovimbundu were both praised and oppressed, a localized space that was more self-consciously ‘traditional’, yet still affected by the rise in anticolonial nationalism.\footnote{Heywood, 136, 157.} It was Savimbi who most often raised the issue of ethnolinguistic solidarity, linking Angolan independence to Ovimbundu leadership. Intelligent and charismatic, Savimbi quickly embraced the world of Angolan nationalism when he went to Portugal to finish his schooling, becoming the student representative for the General Union of Angolan students in Portugal, and met Neto in April 1959. However, PIDE were cracking down on student organizations and Savimbi fled to Switzerland, eventually graduating from the University of Lausanne with a political science degree in 1965. It was in Switzerland that Savimbi met Holden Roberto. In February 1961 Savimbi joined the UPA/FNLA. By 1962 Savimbi was the Secretary-General of the UPA/FNLA, and by May 1963 he was chair of the African Liberation Committee of the OAU.\footnote{Heywood, 163.} However, relations with Roberto deteriorated irrevocably with the establishment of the GRAE and Roberto’s close ties with Mobutu. Like Roberto and Neto, Savimbi was personally ambitious, and began to develop his own independent
contacts in Europe and Africa. A major point of contention was that neither the FNLA nor MPLA were based wholly within Angola. In July 1964 Savimbi took 186 soldiers and left the FNLA, accusing Roberto of delaying an eastern front in the guerrilla war and misusing funds. Historian Linda Heywood writes that Savimbi was offered the post of MPLA Secretary of Foreign Affairs, but turned down the position, electing to form his own movement, UNITA.149

Foreign observers were suspicious right from the start, but it was those same foreign observers that UNITA needed for recognition and financial assistance. In February 1965 Savimbi and eleven others visited the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in search of aid, also passing through North Vietnam and North Korea.150 Bureaus were established in Switzerland and Britain, and high-ranking officials Jorge Alcires Valentin and Jorge Sangumba visited the US, UK, and other African states. On 13 March 1966 UNITA held its first congress and soon set up a base within Angola in order to compete with its nationalist rivals. Savimbi regularly asserted that the average Angolan had no place in the political platforms of FNLA and MPLA. His carefully calculated portrayal of UNITA as rural and populist capitalized on ethnic tensions and feelings of anti-intellectualism, and Savimbi frequently called upon the MPLA and FNLA leaders to abandon their exile in Zaire and Guinea and join him on the ground for the liberation of Angola.151 Savimbi also claimed that his “brothers outside” were more concerned with destroying the upstart UNITA than with liberating the nation.152

Savimbi himself claimed to be equally influenced by the ‘traditional society’ of the Ovimbundu as well as Marxism and Marcus Garvey’s pan-Africanism.153 Yet Savimbi, like Roberto and Neto, cast UNITA’s struggle in international terms. The time was right in 1965 for true Angolan patriots to form a new movement largely because the international situation was in their favour. In Savimbi’s estimation:

…under objective conditions, there was when we began our struggle and there is still [in 1965], a very favourable international environment, the United States imperialism which is the watch-dog of world imperialism and colonialism as well as forms of exploitation, is on the run everywhere in Vietnam and other parts of Asia, in several countries in Africa which have not yet regained their independence, armed struggle has been placed on the agenda, and the mystic policy of non-violence has been buried forever, in these African countries which have already regained their independence, the struggle against neo-

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149 Heywood, 164.
150 Heywood, 165.
151 Marcum, 193.
152 Guimarães, 192.
153 Guimarães, 76.
colonialism has begun in earnest. In Latin America, revolutionary Cuba has se \[sic\] the whole Latin American continent ablaze with revolutionary enthusiasm. The socialist camp, the progressive forces in the United States, Europe and other places in a world wide anti-imperialism front, there is indeed a favourable international situation.\(^{154}\)

Despite this promising trajectory, however, UNITA did not find favour with the ‘progressive’ elements of the international community, the majority of whom supported the MPLA, while Mobutu and the US supported Roberto.\(^{155}\) UNITA’s only real ally was Egypt’s Nasser, who continued to support Savimbi until his death (Nasser’s successor, Anwar Sadat also supported Savimbi through the 1970s).\(^{156}\) Savimbi was distrusted for several reasons, including his Ovimbundu roots and emphasis on ethnicity, his purported Maoism (though Mao and Zhou Enlai did train the first eleven UNITA guerillas, including Savimbi himself, UNITA’s early China connection seems to have been exaggerated), his further fracturing of Angolan nationalism, and his personal ambition. From UNITA’s beginnings Savimbi had a formidable challenge – to craft a unique identity for his movement that would simultaneously lure foreign backers away from the FNLA and UNITA while claiming to be more nationalist, and thus a more authentic and legitimate representative of the Angolan people.

**Portuguese ideological internationalism: pluricontinentality and Lusotropicalism**

The Angolan nationalists and their anti-imperialist sympathizers were not the only parties to acknowledge and then manipulate the ‘international dimension’ of decolonization and independence. The Portuguese government also used internationalist language when defending their African presence. Two main intellectual strands, pluricontinentality and Lusotropicalism, were at their root ideologies that transcended the physical separation of countries, uniting geographically distinct territories under the political fiction of a unitary Portuguese state.

The Portuguese first made contact with Africa in 1443 and by the 1460s had established monopolistic trade organizations and settler colonies in the Cape Verde Islands.\(^{157}\) According to historian Malyn Newitt, between 1500-1800, rather than imposing Portuguese society on its African colonies, “[f]ar more striking was the degree to which the Portuguese themselves came

\(^{154}\) Savimbi, “Why We Quitted \[sic\] the U.P.A. and the G.R.A.E. of Mr. Holden Roberto”.

\(^{155}\) The US’ shift to supporting Savimbi is discussed in chapter 5.

\(^{156}\) Heywood, 166.

to accept African values, African institutions and African means of production."^{158} In fact, Newitt claims that by “1800 Portugal herself gained nothing from her empire and contributed almost nothing to it.”^{159} Why had the Portuguese been such ineffective colonizers? Newitt claims that nineteenth century observers had considered the Portuguese empire “decadent.” The consequences of this argument are worth noting in full:

The implications of this epithet [decadent] are many, but they include the idea that the effects of tropical climate, together with intermarriage with African women and the subsequent dilution of European culture, prevented the Portuguese from applying themselves with Anglo-Saxon vigour to the exploitation of the region’s resources, while they instead allowed their enterprises to die through inanition and lack of enterprise.^{160}

By the 1880s Portugal’s complacency regarding its colonies was shaken by the “Scramble for Africa”, the end of the transatlantic slave trade, and public revelations about the abysmal forced labour conditions on the plantations of São Tomé.^{161} Sensational journalistic exposés and pressure from anti-slavery groups, especially the British and Foreign Anti-slavery Society, pressed the Portuguese government to reform its policies, but these critiques were overshadowed by declaration of the First Portuguese Republic in 1910 and the First World War. The situation in the colonies remained bleak through the 1930s, and revolts were not uncommon. Newitt writes that the Portuguese sent pacification expeditions to all three mainland colonies almost every year from 1875 to 1924.^{162} In what appears to be at very least an understatement, Newitt notes that “[b]efore the 1930s, there is little doubt that working conditions for African labourers in the Portuguese colonies fell far short of what was proscribed by the law and what was regarded as acceptable by contemporary opinion.”^{163} The political weakness of the First Republic ended when the former Minister of Finance Dr. António de Oliveira Salazar consolidated his power between 1928-1932, formally becoming Prime Minister in July 1932. By 1933 Salazar had enacted a new constitution and an authoritarian, right-wing regime known as the *Estado Novo*. Despite the claims of a ‘new state’, Salazar’s Portugal was characterized by

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^{158} Newitt, 12.
^{159} Newitt, 13.
^{160} Newitt, 14.
^{161} Newitt, 39-41.
^{162} Newitt, 49.
^{163} The quotation continues somewhat curiously: “What is less well known is the way in which the African population reacted to labour for the Portuguese, and the extent to which they were affected by it.” There is ample evidence that the African populations reacted quite sharply to their use as forced labour for the Portuguese. Newitt, 115.
religious, cultural, and political conservatism, and an unflinchingly rigid attitude toward Portugal’s colonies.

Though Newitt and others have argued that commerce was the raison d’être for Portuguese colonialism, the language used to justify the practice to the international community always reflected the much nobler and loftier pursuit of civilization and Christianization. Yet after five centuries of the Portuguese empire in Africa, how could the Portuguese explain the apparent failure of the civilizing mission in its African colonies? The answer was to transform the very characteristics that had once branded the Portuguese as “decadent” into virtues. Lusotropicalism, as this ideological movement became known, was the intellectual invention of Gilberto Freyre, a prominent Brazilian sociologist. Freyre became famous in intellectual circles for his work on Brazilian plantation societies, including Casa grande e senzala [Big House and Slave, also rendered as The Masters and the Slaves] (1933) and Sobrados e mucambos [Mansions and Shanties] (1936). In the 1940s he turned to the particular idiosyncrasies of Brazil, beginning with the observation that Brazilian society was far more racially and culturally diverse than many of the countries in Western Europe or North America. Freyre was a product of a changing intellectual milieu which sought to define and elevate Brazilian culture. To do so he took a major criticism of Brazilian society, blurred racial lines and all their attendant societal ‘flaws’, and made it into a national strength. As Freyre searched for the explanation of Brazil’s uniqueness he found that the particular character of Portuguese colonialism set the tone for the multi-racial, harmonious Brazilian nation.¹⁶⁴

In 1940 Freyre explained the difference between the Portuguese explorers and their northern counterparts:

Seeing enemies in the sea, enemies in the Indians, enemies in the plants and animals of America, the Nordic, Puritan Christian who left Europe to come to America closed his

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¹⁶⁴ As historian Jerry Dávila noted in his recent work Hotel Trópico, Brazil served as a useful illustration of the merits of portugalidade, or the esoteric ideal of ‘Portugueseness’, which included multiracialism and cosmopolitanism. Brazilian political elites, though almost universally white and of European descent, considered themselves representatives of a multiracial, liminal zone between black Africans and white Portuguese. Though successive Brazilian governments supported Portuguese policy in Africa, these same elites also placed themselves on “the moral side of a ‘racial curtain’”, in the words of Brazilian foreign minister Afonso Arinos de Mello Franco in 1965. Hotel Trópico: Brazil and the Challenge of African Decolonization, 1950–1980, (Charlotte, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 4.
mind, soul and body to every different, strange, exotic element that might have compromised his European integrity or his Christian orthodoxy…

In contrast, “The Portuguese Christian in Brazil, on the other hand, soon made the Indians’ manioc his second, sometimes his only bread; the Indian or African his woman, and sometimes his wife [emphasis in original].” This line of thinking was expanded into what is arguably Freyre’s most famous work, *O Mundo que o português criou* [The World the Portuguese Created], where Freyre writes:

Portugal, Brazil, Portuguese Africa and India, Madeira, the Azores and Cape Verde today form a unity of sentiment and of culture…. That intimate unity, of sentiment, and external [unity], of culture in its most evident and concrete forms, is the consequence of processes and conditions of Portuguese colonization which in Asia as in Brazil, in the Atlantic islands and at a certain point in Africa, developed in men the same essential qualities of cordiality and affection, characteristics of the Portuguese people – the most Christian of the modern colonizers in their relations with people considered inferior …. Freyre was not the only one to see a racial wonderland in Portuguese Africa. In 1923, after visiting Lisbon for the Third Pan-African Congress, the prominent African-American intellectual W. E. B. DuBois felt that “[b]etween the Portuguese and the African and the near-African there is naturally no ‘racial’ antipathy…” The difficulty was that claims to racial harmony and integration had no basis in the actual lived experience of Africans in the Portuguese territories, whom Portugal had characterized as “intrinsically inferior.” Still, as historian Gerald Bender notes, the ideal of Lusotropicalism was deeply held, even among Portuguese who considered themselves anticolonial and critical of the Estado Novo’s politics. As Portugal came under increasing pressure from the international community, the political rhetoric shifted from the now discredited missão civilizadora to the racial progressiveness of Lusotropicalism. Even Salazar himself, never comfortable with notions of racial equality, adopted the language of Lusotropicalism. In 1963 in response to criticisms of maintaining white dominance in the territories, Salazar claimed that “our multiracialism [had] not yet been implemented widely

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168 Bender, 7.
169 Bender, 1.
enough in the distribution of responsibilities throughout the Portuguese provinces in Africa.”

That is, the multiracial project was underway, but unfinished. Those who argued for the end of the Portuguese presence in Africa were impeding the multiracial progress of Portuguese Africa. As historian of Brazil Jerry Dávila noted, Freyre had audaciously claimed that, “‘After Jesus Christ, no one had done more for the spirit of human brotherhood than the Portuguese’.” Lusotropicalism became the “central intellectual rationale for the preservation of Portugal’s colonial empire.”

In 1951 the Portuguese government instituted educational and legal reforms in an attempt to quiet anticolonial rumblings and lessen the appearance of racial discrimination and socio-economic stratification. Simultaneously, Portugal officially changed its geographical boundaries to include the ultramar territories of Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, São Tomé and Mozambique. Between 1940 and 1970 the white settler population in Angola increased from 30,000 to 350,000. The programme of massive immigration was designed to perpetuate the fiction of the African colonies as overseas provinces of the Portuguese metropole. Such manoeuvres eventually became known as pluricontinentality, the idea that the singular and sovereign Portuguese state existed simultaneously on three continents, Europe, Asia, and Africa. Pluricontinentality and Lusotropicalism were mutually reinforcing concepts which had a range of rhetorical and political uses. As Freyre emphasized, the bonds uniting the Lusofonia were more than mere crass politics. As one Estado Novo official put it, the Portuguese experience in Africa was “[a] work of sentiment and not of calculation, what we have done in Africa and what was implanted there in us cannot have been motivated by cold rationalism.” Since the African territories had never been a unified people or nation, by definition they could possess no nationalist sentiments. Whatever political agitation there was in the colonies was a mixture of anti-white racism, elite aspiration of various tribes, or perhaps communist interference, but it was not nationalist fervour. This intellectual somersault allowed Portuguese officials to claim, without any apparent irony, that “in no part of our provinces is there any but Portuguese

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171 Dávila, 18.
nationalism (emphasis in original)."\(^{175}\) Portugal was the only ‘nation’, and the territories were its extension. Thus those who advocated that Portugal abdicate its historic responsibility to "civilize" the Africa populations not only endangered the development and safety of the native population, but also betrayed the Portuguese heritage. Moreover, any loss of territory constituted a "veritable mutilation."\(^{176}\)

As historian Tom Gallagher pointed out, 1950s Portugal was so isolated that Coca-Cola, "the standard bearer of the American consumer society, was not allowed to enter the country, for moral or aesthetic reasons."\(^{177}\) Yet such descriptions belied the extent of opposition to Salazar’s rule, both within Portugal and in the colonies. By the late 1950s some anti-Salazarist progressive forces had situated their own struggles within the same wider anti-imperialist battles that also animated the Angolan nationalists. As activist and eventual Prime Minister Mário Soares later recalled,

The problem for the progressives was to know just how they could best combat Salazarism. By revolutionary means? But the advocates of revolution mostly took their cue from the [Portuguese] Communist party, and with Franco Spain on one side and the Atlantic transformed into a American lake on the other (this being the epoch of [US Secretary of State John] Foster Dulles and [Wisconsin Senator Joseph] McCarthy), the Communists told them to keep calm, that the hour for open attack upon imperialism was not yet….Fidel Castro, remember, was not to bring quasi-revolutionary orthodoxy back into the picture until 1959.\(^{178}\)

The colonial question was vital not only to Portugal’s economy and sense of national identity, but also had domestic resonance. Because of state repression, the democratic, non-communist opposition was largely unknown. As long as Portugal remained politically, socially, and economically isolated, the state’s repressive tactics easily controlled popular dissent. Moreover, how could Lisbon acquiesce to African demands for a free press, political liberties, and self-determination when much of these were denied to continental Portuguese? Yet by 1961, the international began to encroach upon Salazar’s ‘peaceable kingdom’. In what Soares called the “year of the big slide”, several events opened the Estado Novo to unprecedented international criticism, thus forcing Salazar to seek international allies, or, in Soares’ language, to

\(^{175}\) Castro Fernandes, 6.
\(^{176}\) Castro Fernandes, 9.
\(^{177}\) Tom Gallagher, Portugal: A Twentieth Century Interpretation, (Dover, NH: Manchester University Press, 1983), 100.
According to Soares, this transition began when Salazar finally opened Portugal to foreign capital in 1961, thus allowing foreign ownership of companies in Portugal and in the colonies. According to Soares, “...the main economic interests in the colonies...[were] concentrated in the hands of foreign enterprises or of Portuguese companies in which foreigners hold most of the shares.”\(^\text{179}\) This increasingly internationalized economic reality reflected the changing political order, where wealthy states participated more actively in the economic practices of other states, extending their economic reach through private capital. To quote political scientist Hendrik Spruyt, “[w]ith American hegemony dictating the terms of the postwar economic settlement, mercantilist imperialism had to give way.”\(^\text{181}\)

The effects of the twin shocks of 1961, the rise of anticolonial agitation in the African colonies and the Kennedy’s administration’s changed attitude toward Portuguese imperialism (addressed in chapter 2), cannot be overestimated. US support was absolutely critical for Portugal. The violence in Angola not only began a fifteen year long process of attracting attention to, and often condemnation of, Portugal’s colonial policies, but also galvanized domestic opposition. Support for the colonial wars was not unanimous, even among high-ranking officials. General Costa Gomes had concluded that Portugal could not keep up a protracted colonial war, and that there would be no military solution for the troubles.\(^\text{182}\) As Soares recalled,

> I have always thought that Salazarism lasted so long partly because of the way in which our democrats were cut off from the rest of the world....One thing that may be said for the colonial wars: from the moment they started they awoke a general curiosity about us which increased with the integration of Western Europe...\(^\text{183}\)

This curiosity would likely have been entirely unwelcome had it not afforded Salazar the occasion to frame the debate on Portuguese colonialism at the international level. Just as

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\(^{179}\) Among the crises of the year was an attempted coup d’état led by Defense Minister Botehlo Moniz, the hijacking of the cruise liner *Santa Maria* by dissident General Henrique Galvão, the Indian invasion of Goa, the mid-air hijacking of a TAP flight by anti-Salazar forces, and the beginning of the active revolts in Angola. Soares, 124, 194-195.

\(^{180}\) International parent or holding companies included Rallet and Company (France), Société Générale de Belgique, Krupp (Germany), De Beers (South Africa), the Guggenheim Group, Gulf Oil, and Bethlehem Steel (all US). Soares, 195.


\(^{182}\) Costa Gomes shared this view with several prominent Portuguese military officers, including Antonio de Spínola, former military Governor of Guinea-Bissau. In 1974 Spínola published *Portugal e o futuro* (Portugal and the Future), which is widely credited with helping to inspire the Armed Forces Movement. This is discussed further in chapter 4. Gallagher, 151-152.

\(^{183}\) Soares, 212.
proclamations of anti-imperialist solidarity became the currency of the Angolan liberation movements, the protection of Western civilization from international communism and from African ‘barbarism’ became a favoured trope of Portugal and its allies. Given this conceptualization, Portugal enlisted the help of powerful allies, the members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Salazar and his key officials launched a tireless propaganda campaign to convince world opinion that Portugal was in fact a good steward of its charges in Southern Africa.

If there was an international face of the Estado Novo, it was Portuguese Foreign Minister Franco Nogueira. At Salazar’s right-hand, Nogueira was responsible for translating the Lusitanian peculiarities of Salazarism and making them comprehensible, and palatable, to western audiences. In this task Nogueira was remarkably successful. A skilled diplomat and an intellectual, Nogueira not only kept up his relentless denunciations of anti-Portuguese sentiments in the UN, but also published several books on the topic, including the brashly-titled The United Nations and Portugal: A Study in Anti-Colonialism (1963), which enshrined the favored argument that Portugal possessed merely overseas and continental provinces, not colonies. Nogueira opened his treatise with a quotation from none other than George F. Kennan, reflecting on the difficulty of “making [the diplomat’s] usefulness widely comprehensible to the people he serves.” In Nogueira’s estimation, Portugal’s difficulties were as much caused by misinformed world opinion as by agitation in the colonies. Power, authority, influence, and legitimacy had always been determined and validated by the wider international system. To Nogueira the Berlin Conference represented “the first time on such large scale, an attempt at internationalizing the colonial phenomenon.” Similarly the League of Nations mandate system negotiated the careful balance between the national interest of individual territories and the wider interests of the international community. With the advent of the United Nations in 1945, however, the true arbiters of the international system, the ‘civilized’ western democracies, began to relinquish their authority. According to Nogueira, three features caused the UN to lose sight of the correct balance of political power. First, the “German phenomenon”: the need to liberate the countries

once under Nazi occupation “gave new impulse to the idea of self-determination.” This idea was then extended, with problematic consequences:

If, at the outset, self-determination was understood as the free choice of governments and institutions for people who had previously been independent and organized nations, very quickly the concept was amplified and its application claimed by peoples who had never been independent, had no national structure of any kind and were ignorant of the meaning of ‘nation’.

Second, the overall weakening of European influence with the rise of Japan, the United States and Russia meant that European nations had a more difficult time explaining their historical ‘responsibilities’ to other nations. Finally, there was the “under-current of emotions: resentment arising from age-old subjection, racial complexes in search of violent expression, a sense of economic inequality and demands for redistribution of raw material and markets.”

A 1967 book entitled The Third World, was especially notable, not for its content, but for a foreword to the American edition written by former Secretary of State Dean Acheson. Acheson, as his memoirs reported, was ‘present at the creation’ of the postwar world, and presided over Portuguese membership in NATO. Though he left office in 1953, his status as an éminence grise of American foreign relations meant that he was consulted on matters of foreign affairs by both the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations. It is clear from the foreword that Acheson held great respect for Nogueira as a policymaker and as a “diplomatist”, and shared Nogueira’s contempt for the Third World, explaining that,

Perhaps the best example of [Nogueira’s] approach to foreign affairs is found in his descriptions of that group of states – many can hardly be called nations – that are now so vociferous in the General Assembly of the United Nations and proclaim their independence from what they call the two ‘power blocs’ and all too often, their hostility to the nations of Western Europe and North America.

The problematic of African nationhood was a central issue in Angolan independence. As noted earlier, claims that Angolans had never belonged to a single nation (other than as subjects of the Portuguese) were one of Salazar’s strongest and most compelling arguments against Angolan independence. The problem in Angola was not only rebellious ‘natives’, but that the international community had fallen victim to the dangerous allure of ‘self-determination’, which

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Salazar defined as the mistaken “contention being that human societies completely fulfill themselves only when they become arbitrary mistresses of their own destinies.” Indeed, this incorrect understanding of nationality and statehood was endemic to the African continent as a whole. Three years after the “Year of Africa” Salazar argued that “[t]he independence of African nations has, in general, been based on two erroneous premises that will work to those nations’ detriment: anti-white racism and the alleged unity of the peoples of that continent.” How could Angolan ‘national liberation’ possibly be a legitimate political force when there was no ‘nation’ to speak of? The international community was at fault for encouraging and supporting Angolan pursuit of the chaotic fiction of national liberation at the expense of the Portuguese imperial project of racial cosmopolitanism and development, for supporting the disorder of national liberation over the stability of empire.

Still, African agitation could not be ignored, even if it could be rhetorically discounted. As Salazar noted, by 1962 it was clear that there were international forces at work in the Portuguese African independence movements:

Today, therefore, it is no longer possible to claim that what is happening in Angola is a revolt of a more or less nationalistic character. In point of fact, a war is being conducted by several states against Portugal in one of Portugal’s overseas territories... in such aggression, it is not only the Portuguese who are being attacked: one of the aggressor’s aims is to weaken the positions – and not only the strategic positions – of the entire western world.

Conclusion

The story of Angolan nationalism raises many crucial questions about the relationship between non-state actors and the international system. In the early stages of the Angolan armed struggle, two key questions were: first, to what extent did Angola form a ‘nation’ which should pursue self-determination and formal independence, and second, how should the international community respond to Angolan national liberation? The question of Angolan ‘nationhood’ in the pre-independence period is of vital importance, reflecting not only the ideologies and strategies of the liberation movements, but also the primary counter-argument of the Portuguese state – a people who do not comprise a ‘nation’ have no cause for ‘national liberation,’ and thus certainly should not have any standing in the international sphere. In the perspectives of the Angolan

national liberation movements and of the Portuguese government the international dimension was key – both sides looked to the wider international community to arbitrate the dispute and to determine what it meant to be a nation.

In 1963 when Salazar said “it would seem that the criterion for African development ought not to ignore the need for entrusting the responsibilities of administration to those best qualified to assume them, and for ensuring the active support of a political sovereignty whose interest is to foster the progress of all”, his message to the international community was very clear – further support of Angolan nationalism would lead to violence and disorder on the scale of the Congo.\footnote{Salazar, “The Civilized Man’s Burden”, 2-3.} The Congo became synonymous with the dangers of decolonization; for some it demonstrated how the international community could be lured into supporting ‘premature’ independence for Africans who were not ‘ready’ for self-determination. However, the Congo also suggested that by engaging the international community through appeals to anti-racism, Third World solidarity, and self-determination, Angolan nationalists could successfully bolster their cause.

Applied to any other continent such internationalism would seem unsurprising. In particular, the twentieth century manifestation of socio-political revolution takes internationalization as a given – revolution is a political commodity to be exported and imported. However, in the case of African international relations, scholars of all stripes succumb, to return to Bayart, to a “limbo of the intellect” – an inability, or unwillingness, to acknowledge African politics as politics.\footnote{Jean-François Bayart, “Africa in the World: A History of Extraversion”, \textit{African Affairs}, 99 (2000): 217.} Much of the historical and contemporary theory of politics, the “categories under which contemporary political thinking is organized”, was crafted without engaging the African continent or individual African states or societies.\footnote{Bayart, \textit{State}, 4-5.} As Bayart noted, “[t]he historicity of sub-Saharan societies was identified with that of the western world which made them dependent…as Africans simply prostrated themselves before the colonial power, the slate of the past was wiped clean.”\footnote{Bayart, \textit{State}, 3-4.} Not only did Bayart argue against the prevalent “dependence” model of African politics which saw Africa’s “tragedy” as the result the twin dislocations of slavery and colonialism, but he argued for agency in African international relations. Much like other Asian, African, and Latin American states – those which became the ‘Third World’ in Cold War
terminology – Angolan revolutionaries took their battle to the world to achieve their goals, and the worlds – ‘First’, ‘Second’, and ‘Third’ – responded.
Chapter 2: Washington, DC, 1969

“The greatest problem confronting Central Africa was the human problem. The Spirit of 1776 was running wild throughout the area. The various states and colonies want independence now, whether they are ready for it or not.”

Clarence B. Randall, Chairman of the Council on Foreign Economic Policy, May 1958

“The racial policies of the white regime states have become a major international issue in the post-colonial world and accordingly US foreign policy must take them into account.”

National Security Study Memorandum 39, April 1969

Introduction: “Ex Africa semper aliquid novi”

In 2013 the United States Bureau of African Affairs marked its fifty-fifth anniversary. Yet the political histories of the US engagement with African politics, what historian Thomas Noer has called “the invisible chapter” in American diplomacy, remain critically underexplored. This is a curious gap in the scholarship on US foreign relations history since the ‘Africa Problem’, or how to selectively engage an ethnically-diverse, politically-volatile continent without jeopardizing the traditional colonial relationships that were seen as necessary to preserve global stability, was a sticking point for every US administration from the first rumblings of African independence in the late 1950s. Subsequent administrations inherited the twin problems of domestic civil rights and African independence, and each one had to decide when to invoke the US’ own anticolonial tradition and support liberation movements, and when to behave as a status quo power and risk ceding Third World ‘hearts and minds’ (and strategic resources) to the Soviet Union. Perhaps

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nowhere was this choice more stark than with respect to the white minority and colonial regimes in southern Africa.

This chapter traces the history of the US engagement with postwar African decolonization, paying specific attention to Luso-American relations and the US posture towards Portugal’s African territories. Several scholars have charted the twists and turns of the peculiar Luso-American cold war relationship; almost all have focused their analyses mainly on how the US’ shifting security needs necessitated, shaped, and solidified this association. While this approach has helped address the gap in the scholarship on cold war Africa, it does so with a narrow focus, concentrating mainly on the bilateral relationship between two western nations, Portugal and the US, or, with increasing frequency, Cuba and the US. 5 This chapter builds upon these approaches, but links the Luso-American alliance to the wider shifting relationship between Europe and Africa. Limiting the story of American engagement with Angolan independence to a function of the US-Portuguese relationship artificially isolates Angolan independence from the wider African world. US relations with Portugal’s African territories, and Angola in particular, can also be understood in the context of the US attempts to understand and manage a changing international system.

Preoccupied by more pressing cold war theatres such as Europe and Southeast Asia, African affairs were not a top priority for US decision-makers through the 1950s-1970s. Yet African decolonization could not be ignored. The cultural affinities between Africans and the black diaspora compelled US policymakers to pay attention to the continent, and to reevaluate their racial policies at home. As new African states stabilized and increased in number they became more assertive actors on the international stage, and could place African affairs ever-higher on the political agenda. Soon the African continent boasted the largest number of sovereign states in the UN, and Africans became the second largest demographic bloc after Asians.6 African votes were needed to pass US-supported legislation in the UN General

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6 In 1968 there were thirty-nine independent African states represented at the UN General Assembly, not counting South Africa. In contrast, the “western nations” including South Africa, in the most generous calculation and excluding the Warsaw Pact counties, numbered twenty-three. United Nations, Member States of the United Nations. URL: http://www.un.org/en/members/index.shtml
Assembly. Moreover, African states were seen as especially susceptible to communist influence and Soviet subversion, and thus had to be monitored. The Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson administrations each pursued a multi-track policy with respect to African affairs during the cold war. One the one hand, the US offered mild rhetorical support for self-determination and international aid programs to stabilize so-called moderate African regimes. This was to alleviate very real concerns that, if left unchecked, political disorder in Africa might lead to a wholesale communist takeover of the continent, with disastrous implications for the future of liberal democracy and global stability. On the other hand, preserving historical relationships with European partners was considered essential to maintaining the western alliance and containing communism. This security dilemma was most pronounced in southern Africa, where US attempts to manage the changing relationship between Europe and Africa were complicated by the fact that while the majority of the African continent was largely successful in negotiating the transition to independence by 1960, southern Africa remained dominated by the particularly intransigent colonial and white minority regimes of Rhodesia, South Africa, and Portugal.

The Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson administrations each unsuccessfully attempted to pressure Portugal to reform its relationship with its territories, and to comply with international recommendations. This pattern of cautious engagement with Portugal continued until the Nixon administration, which distanced itself from attempts to reform the white minority regimes in 1969, a posture codified in the infamous National Security Study Memorandum 39 (NSSM 39), popularly known as the ‘Kissinger Study of Southern Africa’. While most scholars who have studied NSSM 39 focus on the implicit (and explicit) racism of the document, this chapter considers NSSM 39 from the ideological and intellectual perspective of the US concern with order and disorder in the international system. This chapter argues that reflected in NSSM 39 was not simply the racist and anti-African attitudes of its authors and intended audience, but also that the implicit privileging of longstanding racial hierarchies was intimately tied to the explicit preservation of geopolitical hierarchies. Nine years after Macmillan noted that the “wind of change” in Africa was inevitable, Kissinger’s State Department claimed that white minority rule was in no danger, and thus no serious recalibration of traditional US African policy was needed.

Despite very different leaderships and ideological predilections, succeeding generations of US administrations came to remarkably similar – and contradictory – conclusions about the changing relationship between Portugal, Angola, the US, and the wider international system.
Between 1950-1965 each administration acknowledged that dramatic changes in the geopolitical constitution of the African continent would increase the importance of Africa in the world. As the self-appointed leaders of the ‘free world’ and guardians of the international system, US officials had no choice but to carefully consider the potential consequences of decolonization. Yet US officials also believed that Africa could – and should – be kept free of cold war tensions, unlike Asia or Latin America. Second, US officials had conflicting information about the likelihood of Angolan independence. Was the end of the Portuguese empire inevitable, or were the liberation movements too ineffective to actually force any changes in the near future? Ultimately, US officials negotiated two sets of international relationships regarding Angolan independence. The Angola-Africa relationship was defined by active national liberation movements and Angola’s relationship to the rest of independent Africa. A focus on this relationship privileged US leadership of the decolonizing, ‘nonwhite’ worlds and situated Angolan independence in the wider arc of changing Third World affairs. The Angola-Portugal relationship was defined by Portuguese military strength and anticommunism. A focus on this relationship privileged the western alliance, and questioned the efficacy and legitimacy of African independence movements, suggesting that the Portuguese Territories would not be able to force Portugal to accept a transfer of power.

Thus policymakers in US cold war administrations did devote time and energy to determining how best to manage, and potentially profit from, the threats and opportunities provided by wide-scale political changes on the African continent. The wave of African independences introduced a new set of unnerving questions into postwar international relations, as well as into the US’ foreign policy calculations: would blacks now rule whites?; would a black power bloc now dominate multinational institutions?; what kind of relationship would independent Africa have with the black diaspora, and what would the consequences be for US domestic race relations?; would frustrated African nationalists turn to violence and ‘terrorist’ acts?; and, should westerners, especially the US, embrace or fear this radical departure from the status quo? Which relationship should guide US policy toward Angola: that of Angola to Africa, or Portugal to its territories?

**WWII, the Azores, and cementing Portugal as a NATO ally**
As several scholars have argued, including José Medeiros Ferreira and António José Telo, it was the combination of Iberian neutrality and the rise of cold war tensions that truly made Portugal an integral part of the emerging postwar international system. Though officially neutral during the Second World War, the authoritarian Salazar regime exported commodities to both the Allies and the Axis, and the Estoril coast was known as a haven for off-duty spies. However, it was the strategic location of the Azores islands that truly afforded Salazar his most important bargaining tool. Located in the North Atlantic, approximately 1500 km from Lisbon and 3900 km from New York City, the Azores were ideally located for Allied air refuelling needs. By 1942 the Lajes Air Base on the island of Terceira was fully operational. Invoking the 1386 Anglo-Portuguese Treaty of Windsor (the oldest diplomatic alliance still in force), in 1943 British Prime Minister Winston Churchill requested access to the Lages base. According to historian Kenneth Maxwell, while Salazar deliberated, the British were prepared to seize the Azores if Salazar remained uncooperative. Eventually the British brought the US into the negotiations and secured base rights for British and American air forces. Later, in December 1943, the US Army, Air Force, and Navy signed agreements over the wartime use of the Lages air base. According to the US Air Force, by the end of 1944 over 1900 American aircraft had passed through the base, the use of which shortened the flying time between the US and North Africa by thirty hours.

In 1946 control of the bases reverted to Portugal, but negotiations began almost immediately to extend US access in the postwar period. The creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949, which contained not only a collective security clause (Article 5), but also defined an armed attack as taking place “on the territory of any of the Parties in Europe or North America” (Article 6), solidified Portugal’s status as a western ally and as an empire.

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8 “During the war, the British, in order to combat German naval activity in the Atlantic, had been quite prepared to seize the Azores if Salazar had persisted in denying them bases on the islands, and this option was also discussed privately by U.S. policymakers. Indeed, an ultimatum was given to Salazar by the British.” Kenneth Maxwell, “The United States and the Portuguese Decolonization, 1974-1976”, Working Paper N°2, 2 October 2003, Instituto Português de Relações Internacionais [online], URL: [http://www.ipri.pt/artigos/artigo.php?ida=2](http://www.ipri.pt/artigos/artigo.php?ida=2).

with overseas holdings.\textsuperscript{10} With the Azores Military Bases agreement of 1951, Portugal’s position as a key pillar in the defence of the Western world was confirmed. The agreement gave the US Air Force construction and operational rights to the Lages bases, but shrewdly left proprietorship firmly in Portuguese hands, stating that “[a]ll constructions and materials incorporated in the soil will from the start be considered property of the Portuguese State without prejudice to the recognized right of the United States to use such constructions and materials in time of war or in time of peace to the extent and in the manner provided in this Agreement.”\textsuperscript{11} Most significantly, Article 9 of the Agreement extended the use of the Azores facilities to all NATO members in the event of war, where “the conditions for the utilization of the facilities by the members of the NATO will be established by agreement between the competent Portuguese and American authorities.”\textsuperscript{12}

It remains virtually uncontested in current academic scholarship that the issue of the Azores bases was the single largest determinant of Luso-American relations during the cold war. Certainly, the continual need to renegotiate the terms of the 1951 agreement, first in 1962, then again in 1971, permitted Salazar to extract concessions which, in Maxwell’s opinion, “committed the US to respect the territorial integrity of the Portuguese territories”, indelibly linking access to the Azores bases to acceptance of the Portuguese empire.\textsuperscript{13} The elevation of the Azores bases to a critical component in NATO’s strategic defence posture also linked the Portuguese empire to the defence of the West, a perspective which only grew in importance as the cold war escalated.

Yet the Azores issue also demonstrated Portugal’s singular weakness as it validated its overseas empire. Continental Portugal by itself was of questionable strategic importance. It was only by virtue of the Azores that Portugal could influence its Western allies. It was the shift in the preoccupation of western policy elites from antifascism to anticommunism which helped ensure that Portugal gained the dubious distinction of being the first European empire in Africa, and also the last. Portuguese obstinacy regarding the colonial question became a difficult


\textsuperscript{12} “Military Facilities in the Azores.”

\textsuperscript{13} Maxwell, 4.
problem for the US on the international stage. As Thomas Borstelmann noted in 2001’s *The Cold War and the Color Line*, as early as the Truman administration most careful observers realized that ultimate victory in the emerging contest between liberal-capitalist and communist ideologies required the US to “claim leadership of a mostly non-white world.”

The *Estado Novo* should have been an uncomfortable fit in an immediate postwar international system which actively encouraged the rise of a liberal, democratic Western Europe freed from Nazism and fascism, and in time, colonialism. When combined with the US’ own legacy of racial injustice, defending the Portuguese position as a matter of international security became increasingly complicated. The lingering racism of much of the western world significantly affected US attitudes. As Borstelmann highlighted, during the Truman administration, the “centrality of race in U.S. policy toward [Africa] was due partly to the European tendency to contrast ‘black’ Africa with ‘white’ Europe, which mirrored the bipolar racial thinking typical in the United States….”

Though frustration with Jim Crow was escalating at home, US policy elites were relieved that Africa seemed the one continent they did not have to worry about. The perceived stability of the African continent, predicated on the racialized belief in the civilizing and stabilizing presence of white European rule, meant that the Truman administration kept its attention firmly focused on communist uprisings in Europe and Asia. Secretary of State Dean Acheson warned US officials not to “tak[e] hold of the glowing principles [of racial equality and majority rule]” and neglect the more important considerations of traditional Euro-American alliances such as shared anticommunism, not to mention the cultural and racial affinities of western civilization and Christianity. By the second Eisenhower administration, however, Africa seemed far less docile, and US officials began to fear that the potent mixture of racial equality, radical nationalism, and international communism might envelop the continent.

“Both a prize and a battlefield”: Eisenhower and African independence

15 Maxwell, 3-4.
Ghanaian independence on 6 March 1957 was a watershed moment in the history of international relations, as Ghana had been the first black African country to achieve independence from colonial rule. If, as African-American civil rights activist Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. asserted, Ghanaian independence represented “a new order…coming into being and an old order…passing away”, what would this new order look like? From Washington, Vice President Richard M. Nixon was dispatched to the capital Accra to represent the US at the proceedings. It was there that Nixon first encountered King, who was in attendance along with a constellation of black American luminaries. Indeed, Nixon’s presence was especially noteworthy, since it implied that the United States might be changing its attitude toward Africa and African-Americans. It did not escape notice that Ghana’s independence coincided with the centennial of the infamous Dred Scott decision, which effectively excluded all blacks from US citizenship. Yet just a few months later in an oft-noted incident, on 10 October 1957 Eisenhower was placed in the awkward position of issuing a formal apology to the Ghanaian Finance Minister Komla Agbeli Gbdemah when he was refused service at a diner in Delaware due to his race. This was the world Eisenhower negotiated – where domestic civil rights collided with decolonization, nationalism, and a rapidly changing international system. It is in this context that emerging US attitudes towards Angola should be considered.

Many in the Eisenhower administration had little patience for the Third World in general, and even less for the African continent. Still, it was acknowledged that these new, nonwhite nations would be an unavoidable force in international relations. The 1955 Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung, Indonesia, in historian Jason Parker’s estimation, “posed a minor threat to the administration’s foreign policy goals, which Washington took seriously and successfully

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20 Despite the earlier independence of several North African states, including Sudan in 1956, Ghana’s independence is considered the first case in “black” or “Sub-Saharan” Africa. This curious distinction also points to the ways in which race, religion, and geography impose artificial conceptual, spatial, and geopolitical boundaries.  
21 Martin Luther King, Jr., “The Birth of a New Nation”, Sermon delivered at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, 7 April 1957, Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Global Freedom Struggle, Martin Luther King, Jr., Papers Project, Stanford University [online]. URL: http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/documentsentry/the_birth_of_a_new_nation/  
22 Nixon stayed on in Africa for three weeks, also visiting Morocco, Libya, Liberia, Uganda, Sudan, and Tunisia.  
averted” by refusing to attend. Despite an overriding concern with limiting Soviet influence and ending the conflict in Korea, it bears repeating that at least three of the Eisenhower administration’s foreign policy crises took place in Africa: the Suez Crisis in 1956, and the ongoing battles over Algerian independence (1954-1962) and Congolese independence (1960-1965).

By 1957 the relationship of Africa to Europe was changing dramatically. In the minds of US policymakers, the continent of colonized calm was being replaced by a continent of racialized upheaval, with potentially dire consequences for global stability. The difficulty was not only that the Eisenhower administration assumed that disorder on the African continent was the work of outside (read: communist) agitators, or that Southern Africa was becoming the main US supplier of key strategic minerals and uranium. It was also that African nationalists were undermining the longstanding linkage between racial hierarchy and global stability, first by challenging white supremacy, and second, by speeding toward independence too quickly. And yet, the US needed to appeal to emerging African nations to maintain a balance of forces in the international system. Perhaps Secretary-General of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs Louis Joxe said it best: “[i]n the world-wide political and strategic contest, Africa was both a prize and a battlefield.”

Nixon returned from his trip to Ghana convinced that the US needed to become more active in African affairs, and make the emerging African states a higher priority. Nixon returned from his trip to Ghana convinced that the US needed to become more active in African affairs, and make the emerging African states a higher priority. Nixon commented on the emerging African nations in his travel diary, noting that, “their course = [sic] at present free – against Commies – but could change.” Nixon advocated a more comprehensive Africa policy, including a review of aid programs, to better defend Africa against communist encroachment. In August 1957, after Nixon’s prodding and substantial disagreements among the participants, the National Security Council (NSC) produced its first

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24 See Jason Parker, “Cold War II: The Eisenhower Administration, the Bandung Conference, and the Periodization of the Postwar Era”, Diplomatic History 30:5 (November 2006), 871.
28 Meriwether, 183.
policy paper on sub-Saharan Africa, NSC 5791/1. The Eisenhower administration drew a distinction between African states which had already achieved independence, which would be courted and placed firmly in the western camp, and those which were still struggling to achieve independence, where the US would remain quiet on the subject.\footnote{Meriwether, 184.} According to historian James Meriwether, NSC 5791/1 was both a success and a failure. Nixon had succeeded in raising the profile of the African continent significantly enough to warrant an NSC study. However, in substance NSC 5791/1 merely codified the soft ‘middle path’ that reflected the administration’s ambivalence about racial politics and African independence.\footnote{Meriwether, 184.} The ‘middle path’ on African independence did not win the US friends on either side of the issue. African nationalists and their supporters were dismayed at the US’ lack of moral leadership, while the European powers, convinced that retaining their colonies was as essential for their postwar reconstruction efforts as for their national pride, considered the US a fair-weather friend.

The Eisenhower administration turned to fact-finding missions in Africa to help chart a path through decolonization, Jim Crow, and international relations. In one example, the State Department sent General Julius C. Holmes to Africa to assess the strength of African nationalism. Holmes had an impressive pedigree. After rising to the post of Executive Officer of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1942, Holmes parlayed his military career into a political one, serving as Edward Stettinius, Jr.’s Assistant Secretary of State between 1944-1945. Holmes served in the State Department in various capacities, and was twice Ambassador to Iran (in 1955 and again from 1961-1965). From 1956-1959, however, Holmes was Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for NATO Affairs. On 6 October 1957, Holmes left for a ten week African tour on behalf of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles. He returned to report on the waves of African independence movements, their consequences for the international system, and on how the US should respond.

In a February 1958 memo to Dulles, Holmes warned of what he called the “virus of self-government”:

The movement toward self-government and independence by Africans is a strong one and is accelerating. It is a real and powerful phenomenon that is not always well-reasoned but is gaining daily momentum. A few thoughtful African leaders are aware that there is too
much haste and too little preparation, but their moderating influence is slight, and they are themselves often captives of their own political actions, declarations, and ambitions.\textsuperscript{31}

Should these newly formed African independence movements be taken seriously, and if so, which ones? What should the US posture be towards these groups and their aspirations? A major contemporary critique was that Africans were simply not ready for self-governance, either due to racial or cultural feebleness, or a lack of sufficient exposure to and experience with western political models.\textsuperscript{32} Holmes also worried that Africans were “practically leaping from the Iron Age into the 20\textsuperscript{th} Century”, and that the nationalist movements were “being carried forward within the framework of Western European political systems and social and economic advances are based on concepts which Europeans have developed over centuries and which are suited to them and expressive of them.” Holmes had “grave doubt” that “these systems and concepts will turn out to be valid for Africa.”\textsuperscript{33} Still, Holmes felt it was the US’ duty to support African independence. Despite the “limited success” of modernization efforts and the potential for disorder, Holmes asserted that “[b]y and large the Nationalist movements are in the hands of moderates and it behoves us, as well as the colonial powers, to be sympathetic to their desire for independence and to gain their confidence in order to effectively counsel continued moderation and patience.”\textsuperscript{34} A supportive US posture would encourage the moderate elements, within Africa, and help mitigate the allure of communism or radical nationalism of the type displayed by Egyptian President Gamal Nasser during Suez. The Soviet Union already had missions in Libya, Ethiopia and Sudan, and was in the process of creating one in Ghana. The communists had also “penetrated” African trade unions and youth organizations, and African students were being “subvert[ted]” in Paris and London. A “considerable number” of the new class of African nationalist leaders had been “avowed Communists or fellow travellers, some Moscow trained”, but most had renounced these beliefs to focus on the business of nationalism.\textsuperscript{35} Still, Soviet influence, especially in the upcoming Afro-Asian Conference in Cairo, had to be combated with

\textsuperscript{31} Memorandum, From the Secretary of State’s Special Assistant (Holmes) to Secretary of State Dulles, “Report on Africa”, 6 February 1958, FRUS Volume XIV, Document 1: 2, 5. URL: http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?id=FRUS.FRUS195860v14


\textsuperscript{33} Holmes to Dulles, 6 February 1958, 2, 6.

\textsuperscript{34} Holmes to Dulles, 6 February 1958, 3.

\textsuperscript{35} Holmes to Dulles, 6 February 1958, 8.
western action, “for it [was] clear that if Africa is lost to the West, Europe will be so weakened and out-flanked as to make its defense impossible.”\footnote{Holmes to Dulles, 6 February 1958, 8-9.} Holmes noted:

It may be that eventually there will evolve political, social, and economic systems consistent with and expressive of the African personality which still preserve the essentials of democracy and individual liberty. But before such a happy result can be achieved, I foresee a very difficult and probably long period of uncertainty, bad management, retrogression and conflict which a strong chance of violence in some areas. There will be plenty of troubled waters for Communist fishing.\footnote{Holmes to Dulles, 6 February 1958, 3.}

Holmes was not hopeful for the pace and progress of African independence, noting that colonial resistance to self-rule was growing sharply in the Belgian Congo and the Portuguese territories, and suggesting that “these colonial powers [Belgium and Portugal], in the order named, [would] probably be the last to acknowledge the inevitability of acceding to these pressures.”\footnote{Holmes to Dulles, 6 February 1958, 2.} He was, of course, half right – within two years Congolese decolonization and the 1961 murder of Patrice Lumumba focused the world’s attention on the African continent. Yet Portugal remained obstinate. In Holmes’ assessment, the experience of Portuguese colonialism had done little for the colonized populations. As he noted, “[the Portuguese] have done little to improve the lot of Africans and forced labor is still openly practiced. The Portuguese show adeptness in the exercise of their rigid control, somehow producing the appearance of lack of severity.”\footnote{Holmes to Dulles, 6 February 1958, 6.} The Portuguese Territories would have to be carefully watched. The report ended on a troubling note – overall, events in Africa were moving too quickly: “Let us plan ahead, anticipate problems, and avoid the need to engage in expensive and inefficient rescue operations. I am sure that what Pliny wrote will be increasingly true over the next decades: ‘Ex Africa semper aliquid novi’.\footnote{Holmes to Dulles, 6 February 1958, 11.}

Two months later, an April 1958 report from the Operations Coordinating Board (OCB) reflected upon the limited progress of NSC 5719/1. First, there was “widespread suspicion of the U.S. on the part of the metropolitan powers having dependencies in the area.”\footnote{Report by the Operations Coordinating Board, “OCB Report on Africa South of the Sahara (NSC 5719/1)”, 23 April 1958, FRUS Volume XIV, Document 3:12. URL: \url{http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?id=FRUS.FRUS195860v14} The Portuguese were considered the “most bitter and outspoken about their resentment of what they regard as American anti-colonialism.” Second, the report noted “the susceptibility of the racial nationalist
and anti-colonial sentiments of indigenous peoples to political exploitation,” particularly by the
communists, who had “also been able to appear effectively in some areas as the champions of
oppressed colonies.” That Portugal was aggravated by American anti-colonialism was
somewhat ironic since the Eisenhower administration had actually done very little, either
practically or rhetorically, to support African independence. The most impressive gesture,
Nixon’s visit to Ghana, had yielded little visible result.

After another fact-finding mission in May 1958, Clarence B. Randall, steel magnate and
chairman of the Council on Foreign Economic Policy (1956-1961), returned from a trip to the
continent also deeply concerned about its future. According to Randall, “[t]he greatest problem
confronting Central Africa was the human problem. The Spirit of 1776 was running wild
throughout the area. The various states and colonies want independence now, whether they are
ready for it or not.” Randall echoed Holmes’ earlier assertions about Portuguese rule noting
that “[t]he Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique are very badly governed and
administered. The Portuguese authorities exploit the resources of these areas mercilessly, and put
very little back for future development. They believe that the best way to manage the natives is
to avoid educating them. Forced labor was very common.”

The problem became more acute as the African continent rose in the US’ strategic
calculations. In an August 1958 NSC meeting, General Issac D. White felt that the strategic
importance of Africa South of the Sahara “had increased since NSC 5791/1.” The Suez Crisis,
the rise of Nasserism, and the “deterioration of the Western position in the Near East generally”
made Africa more important. Randall was succinct: “The Metropoles do not want the United
States to provide any assistance to their African colonies. On the other hand, the newly
independent states insist on knowing where the US stands on the problem of colonialism. So we
are caught on the horns of the dilemma of NATO on the one hand and of a free, non-Communist
Africa on the other.”

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42 NSC 5719/1, 12.
44 Memorandum of Discussion, 8 May 1958.
46 Memorandum of Discussion, 7 August 1958, 16, 20.
Randall felt that the US was approaching a point where it would have to “take a firm stand” against colonialism. Despite Eisenhower’s well-documented discomfort with racial issues and decolonization, Everett reported that “[t]he President said that rather than slow down the independence movement, he would like to be on the side of the natives for once. [Under] Secretary [of State Christian] Herter thought that such a policy would raise delicate questions in our relations with our NATO partners, and Mr. Randall agreed.”

Everett continued:

The President felt we must believe in the right of colonial peoples to achieve independence as we had, but agreed that if we emphasized this right too strongly, we created a crisis in our relations with the mother countries.... The President asked why we could not foster education and religion, leaving the mother country to prepare the colony for independence. He felt we must, however, go along with the trend toward independence.

In a later memorandum, Eisenhower said he agreed that Southern Africa was strategically significant, but that even though “bases were of great value, we couldn’t win wars unless we won the people.” This new attitude toward winning over the African people received an institutional boost when on 20 August 1958 the State Department formally established the Bureau of African Affairs.

In late August 1958 the NSC also produced Memorandum 5818, “Statement of U.S. Policy Toward Africa South of the Sahara Prior to Calendar Year 1960.” NSC 5818 noted that the US’ chief concern should be that:

Africa South of the Sahara develop in an orderly manner toward self-government and independence in cooperation with the European powers now in control of large areas of the continent. We hope that this transition will take place in a manner which will preserve the essential ties which bind Europe and Africa – which are fundamentally complementary areas.

Policy recommendations included “extending political support to new states”, loans to the metropolitan powers for African projects, technical and economic assistance, working with the

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48 Memorandum of Discussion, 7 August 1958, 20.
49 Memorandum of Discussion, 7 August 1958, 21.
50 Congress had already authorized the new post of Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs on 18 July 1958 (P.L. 85-524 72 Stat. 363), and Joseph C. Satterthwaite was appointed to the post on 23 August. Editorial note. FRUS Volume XIV, p. 23.
51 Report, “Note by the Executive Secretary to the National Security Council on U.S. Policy Toward Africa South of the Sahara Prior to Calendar Year 1960 (NSC 5818)”, 26 August 1958, FRUS Volume XIV, Document 8: 25. URL: http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?id=FRUS.FRUS195860v14
UN and “supporting and encouraging constructive nationalism and reform movements in colonial areas of Africa, when convinced they are likely to become powerful and grow in influence; while publicly acknowledging steps taken by Western European powers toward indigenous self-government.” Politically “immature and unsophisticated,” the African could be susceptible to all sorts of nefarious influences. Africans would align themselves with whoever was presumed to be acting in their perceived interests, which were independence and equality with whites. Thus US policy “must be designed to convince the African that the United States wants to help him achieve his economic, political and cultural goals without insisting that he align himself in the East-West power struggle.” In the uncomfortable nexus between nationalism, colonialism, and racialism, the US would support slow, steady progress toward self-determination, encourage the Europeans to facilitate this process, and “avoid U.S. identification with those polices of the metropolitan powers which are stagnant or repressive, and emphasizing the soviet threat and US progress in its own domestic race relations”, combined with aid and trade.

Fears of African radicalism escalated through the end of the decade. In January 1959, US Representative at the UN Trustee Council Philip Mason Sears sent a note to US Ambassador to the UN Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr. Sears, fearful of Soviet gains in Africa, encouraged the US to also compete for “Nationalist goodwill”, and to increase contact with prominent African nationalist leaders. Sears also encouraged “more forthright statements” in the UN which would “unmistakeably throw U.S. moral support behind legitimate Nationalist aspirations.” Sears acknowledged that the US had “so many critically urgent problems in Europe and Asia that one hesitates to emphasize others.” Still, Sears believed “that a dangerous crisis in Africa [was] so close at hand that there [was] not time to lose any opportunity, however small, to build good will among those who will be leading independent Africa tomorrow.” Sears emphasized the need for a visible symbol of US support for the nationalists, suggesting several low-impact political initiatives such as increasing the number and frequency of contact between the State Department and African nationalist leaders to help the US “ride along with the Nationalist bandwagon

52 NSC 5818, 27.
53 NSC 5818, 27.
without actually climbing on board." In March 1959, Lodge wrote to Herter in mild alarm, claiming that,

[s]carcely a day goes by without my contacts at UN vividly impressing me with rapidly evolving revolution in Africa. Troubles in Algeria, French Congo, Belgian Congo, Nyasaland [Malawi] and Kenya are out in the open, with rumors of trouble in Angola and Mozambique… Under these circumstances it behooves the US to think of its own interests in the African continent and the catastrophe which we would confront if Soviet Communism established itself there strongly.  

On 19 January 1960, NSC 6001 argued that “[t]he primary importance of the area of South, Central and East Africa [was] its emerging political significance. There is a growing awareness in the world that Africa is an area which will have an increasingly important influence on the course of world events....” NSC 6001 reiterated the threat of communist subversion in Africa during the particularly delicate transitional era, and acknowledged the potential strategic role of the continent should the US lose access to the Middle East. African leaders were characterized as “seek[ing] the understanding and good will of the United States.” The NSC noted, “[a]bove all, they want to be accepted and treated as equals with dignity and respect.” While the pre-eminent goal was to “maintain the Free World orientation of the area and denial of the area to Communist domination”, the NSC advocated “support[ing] the principle of self-determination consistently and in such a way as to assure that evolution toward this objective will be orderly; making clear that self-government and independence impose important responsibilities which people concerned must be prepared to discharge.” The report also recommended “correct[ing] distorted African views of U.S. race relations, emphasizing, where appropriate, progress made by the United States in the race relations field”, and “encourag[ing], where practicable, a more liberal approach in areas where extremism is now the order of the day…”

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57 NSC 6001, 80.
58 NSC 6001, 80-82.
But if some of Africa was in chaos, the Portuguese territories were an even more confusing situation. The hesitant conclusions perfectly suited the Eisenhower administration’s ambivalence about Angolan independence: one the one hand, Angola was geographically part of Africa, thus African issues had to be taken into consideration when reviewing its status. Africa was moving inexorably towards independence, and there was no question that Angola was affected by this continent-wide nationalist surge. On the other hand, Portugal insisted that Angola was Portuguese territory, and the Eisenhower administration saw no reason to contest that claim. Thus Portuguese concerns would have to be managed when it came to the African territories. An October 1959 NIE reported that “Over the next several years, Portugal will probably be able to control whatever African unrest may develop in Angola and Mozambique [emphasis in original].” That did not negate the fact that “African pressure for political equality ha[d] now assumed major proportions through most of the area. In Angola and Mozambique, to be sure, the Portuguese have been able to stave off trouble by repressing political activity by either African or non-African residents and by some measures for cultural assimilation.”

The Portuguese territories were an enigma, and officials in the Eisenhower administration could not be certain that Portugal had successfully inoculated its territories against the “virus of self-government.” NSC 6001 claimed that the US should encourage Portugal to have more enlightened policies towards its African territories without outright approving of Portuguese policy; the US should not “publicly dispute the propositions that Angola and Mozambique are integral parts of Portugal.” Neither territory was considered of “direct strategic, political or economic importance to the United States”, but oil had recently been discovered in the Cabinda enclave and there were vital rail linkages that supported Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Congo, and South Africa. Yet NSC 6001 also reiterated the arguments of the 1959 NIE, arguing that while in the north of Angola (territory then under the nascent influence of Holden Roberto’s UPA/FNLA) “there [was] a distinct possibility that political agitation in the Belgian Congo will have an unsettling effect, despite Portuguese determination to put down any challenges to their authority.” In the rest of Angola “there appear[ed] to be little possibility of effective African political organization in the near future. Little is known about the actual and potential strength of

60 NSC 6001, 85.
61 NSC 6001, 85, 90.
the underground Angolan Liberation Movement [likely the UPA/FNLA], the only African political organization known to exist in the province."

From Eisenhower’s tentative engagements with African independence three key points emerged. First, despite the traditional characterizations of Eisenhower’s African policy as non-existent and of the continent’s “strategic superfluity,” there was concern at elite policy levels over the state of the continent and the potential for communist subversion therein. Second, the US had already demonstrated what would become a characteristic emphasis on order and moderation in the international system, and thus actively discouraged rapid or radical change in Africa. It was decided that Africa should be kept free of cold war tensions whenever possible, and that any communist encroachments should be resisted (although there were few details as to how this would be accomplished). Finally, the Eisenhower administration did not simply dismiss the threat of nationalism and revolution in the Portuguese Territories. The conclusion about Angolan nationalism seems to have been a kind of ‘static nationalism’ – a force which existed, but due to the constraints imposed by the Portuguese, might never explode as it had in other African countries. Though the Portuguese state might be able to contain Angolan nationalism, it existed nonetheless, bolstered by agitation in the rest on Africa, and especially in neighbouring Belgian Congo. What might become of Angolan nationalism was anybody’s guess.

The “Decade of Disappointment”: Kennedy and African independence

When John Fitzgerald Kennedy entered the White House in January 1961, he inherited an often contradictory legacy of advocating self-determination and containment, supporting both western allies and the Third World. As president, Kennedy’s language proclaimed that his administration would be a friend to emerging nations. From his Inaugural Address in January 1961, Kennedy made a point of courting the Third World. In a speech rife with rhetorical flourishes, few recall that after the rousing call to “pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship”, Kennedy spoke directly “to those new states whom we welcome to the ranks of the free”, pledging that

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62 NSC 6001, 90.
“one form of colonial control shall not have passed away merely to be replaced by a far more iron tyranny.” At least rhetorically, Kennedy set the US firmly on a course of international development and anticolonialism:

To those people in the huts and villages of half the globe struggling to break the bonds of mass misery, we pledge our best efforts to help them help themselves, for whatever period is required – not because the communists may be doing it, not because we seek their votes, but because it is right.

As racial politics within the United States intensified, Kennedy, even more than Eisenhower, had to acknowledge the potential impact that domestic race relations (now under the very bright spotlight of the African-American civil rights movement) could have on “the global U.S. strategy of fostering a cooperative community of free nations across the North-South dividing lines of race and wealth.” Between the crisis in the Congo and the deteriorating situation in the Portuguese Territories, the Kennedy administration struggled to create an Africa policy that would stem the tide of African radicalism without appearing to support continued colonial rule. As Special Assistant to the President Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. wrote, the impending choice between “Portugal and South Africa, on the one hand, and the rest of Africa, on the other” was considered in tandem with choice between civil rights workers and their Southern opposition.

Kennedy’s active courting of the Third World was unusual in US foreign relations history, and his brief interlude with a pro-African independence line has been well-documented. It was the young senator’s 1957 “Imperialism – the Enemy of Freedom” Congressional address on Algeria which helped cast Kennedy as a presidential candidate with a keen eye for foreign

66 Kennedy, Inaugural Address.
68 Borstelmann, The Cold War and the Color Line, 136-137.
affairs, and in May 1959 Kennedy even headed the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Africa. Unlike his predecessor, Kennedy had fewer delusions about keeping Africa free of further cold war tensions. Rather, his administration rapidly acknowledged that the Third World would be an important cold war battlefield. If the global political balance was to tip in the West’s favour, the US had to find some sort of accommodation with the emerging states. Though the US’ Third World lenses were firmly trained on the deepening conflicts in Southeast Asia and improving relations with Latin America via the Alliance for Progress, African independence did not escape the Kennedy administration’s attention. When Kennedy appointed long-time advocate for Third World affairs Chester Bowles as a foreign policy advisor, and later promoted him to Undersecretary of State in 1961, it was seen as a signal that the new administration would take Africa seriously.

In February 1961 Secretary of State Dean Rusk ordered a review of the Eisenhower administration’s final policy statement on Africa, NSC 6005/1, “Policy Toward West Africa” (24 March 1960). Rusk’s concern was that the Eisenhower strategy of waiting for the European powers to take the lead was being “interpreted in such a way as to limit unduly the flexibility and freedom of action required for an effective United States approach to African developments.”

In the era of ‘flexible response’ the Kennedy administration did not expect to have its hands tied in the Third World. A key issue was that the European allies appeared more focused on the challenges to their own empires than on the larger cold war. It was expected that the fading European colonial powers would assist in the process of bolstering anticommunism in the Third World by constructively managing the independence of their colonies. In this respect Kennedy faced similar challenges to Eisenhower, though Kennedy initially pursued a far more proactive policy, choosing to display leadership on African affairs. Unsurprisingly, Portugal proved to be a thorn in the Kennedy administration’s side. Kennedy demonstrated a policy shift by endorsing a 1961 UN General Assembly resolution calling on Portugal to lay the foundations for Angolan independence and by reducing aid payments to the Portuguese to $3 million from $25 million.

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72 Jackson, 58.
Washington also banned the commercial sale of arms to Portugal in an effort to limit its unintentional contributions to the African wars. The Portuguese government objected bitterly to this apparent change in direction. Portuguese obstinacy was legendary, prompting an April 1961 National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) to note frankly that:

The Salazar regime has adamantly refused even to consider self-government for the Portuguese territories, much less eventual independence, despite the growing African agitation. We see no prospect for a change in Portuguese policy which could avoid violence and repression in the colonies of Angola, Mozambique, and Portuguese Guinea. Nor do we believe that Portugal alone has the military and economic resources to bear the long and bloody struggle that its present policies seem to ensure.73

In a May 1961 memo to National Security Advisor (NSA) McGeorge Bundy, Deputy NSA Walt Rostow wrote that “… the major Western powers must concert their policies in Southeast Asia and Africa” since the Communists were “systematically exploiting [Western] differences in policy.” Rostow’s understanding of President Kennedy’s concerns is worth quoting at length:

In the President's view, what is basically required is a common Western strategy rooted in three objectives. First, where positions of potential political stability and strength exist, we should work with all the wisdom and resources we can muster to create islands of responsibility…. Second, we must work together to fend off Communist efforts to trap areas in Africa where the great revolutionary forces at work have given the Communists opportunity to expand their influence…. Third, we must work together to minimize dangers to the common interest arising from the painful process of disengagement from colonialism. Here Angola is much on our minds. (How much better off we all would be if we had begun three or four years ago to consult seriously together on the Congo and Angola.) …Frankly, the U.S. has quite enough commitments in the world, and there is no compulsion in the American Government to extend those commitments where our allies, much strengthened by their remarkable growth in the 1950's can deal with the situation.74

Kennedy created an Africa Task Force, comprised of Democratic senators Frank Moss (UT), Gale McGee (WY), and Frank Church (ID), who visited the continent in December 1960.75 Their final report from July 1961 called for the US to support African nationalism, noting that “the relative stability of the colonial period, based upon an imposed order, has suddenly given

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place to grave instability arising from the emergence of many weak and untested regimes.”

The Task Force was especially critical of Portugal because its intransigence exacerbated the radicalization of the Angolan resistance, with a potentially destabilizing effect on the rest of sub-Saharan Africa. The report lamented the “widespread impression that the United States supports Portuguese colonialism in Angola, Mozambique and Portuguese Guinea” and considered US “silence on issues affecting Portuguese Africa…a liability far out-weighing any short-term strategic considerations.”

Two days later, on 14 July 1961, in National Security Action Memorandum (NSAM) No. 60, titled “U.S. Actions in Relation to Portuguese Territories in Africa”, Bundy wrote to Rusk conveying Kennedy’s response. Kennedy requested a special envoy be sent to Portugal “to talk with Salazar and inform him the U.S. is convinced Portugal must without delay institute basic and far-reaching reforms for her African territories. The scope of these reforms should be such as to lead eventually to self-determination. Inform the UK and France in advance, and Spain when action is taken.”

Kennedy also advocated varying degrees of consultation with France, the UK, Spain, the Vatican, and Brazil to encourage them to intercede with Salazar. The president requested to be kept personally informed of developments with Portugal. Just over a month later Kennedy himself wrote to Rusk and McNamara in the wake of a British news report which claimed that bombs marked “Made in America” had been dropped on an Angolan village. Kennedy wondered how to impress upon the Portuguese not to use US ordinances without further compromising negotiations over the Azores bases.

However, as the 1960s wore on, official US policy wavered. Increasingly acrimonious UN debates (discussed in chapter 3) raised the issue of Portuguese colonialism on the international stage and incensed the African world. This placed the US in a difficult position. As discussed in chapter 1, the CIA had unspecified relations with Roberto since 1955. Yet the Portuguese considered all Angolan nationalists terrorists, irrespective of political inclination. With the Lages bases lease up for renewal in 1962, Salazar was very clear that any public

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76 Quoted in Rodrigues, “About-Face”, 2.
condemnation of Portugal would adversely affect Luso-American relations. As Kennedy said in May 1962, “the nature of things the two issues – Azores and Angola – cannot be separated because Portugal will not permit them to be separated.” In the wake of the Cuban Missile Crisis and with the impending final discussions on the Limited Test Ban Treaty looming, Kennedy could not afford the appearance of weakness in the western alliance. In the US, strategic interests and fear of disorder soon bested even the most progressive ideological interests.

In October 1963 the CIA’s Office of Current Intelligence (OCI) concluded that despite the ‘reverse course’ on Portugal that “the US did not lose any significant amount of its credit with African countries by virtue of the positions taken on the resolutions dealing with the Portuguese territories and South Africa at the US Security Council last summer.” The OCI memo concluded African leaders had displayed some anger and frustration with the US, feelings which were “immediately vented at the August conference of OAU foreign ministers in Dakar which adopted a resolution ‘deploring’ the stand taken by the US, UK, and France during the debates.” In spite of this, the CIA determined there had been no serious backlash from the Africans: “official and even press reactions in the overwhelming majority of individual African capitals, including those where radical regimes [were] in power, have not reflected, either at the time or since, heightened antagonism toward the US.” Several factors had spared the US from a serious crisis in its African affairs. The CIA felt the primary reason was that the Security Council resolutions had passed irrespective of the US vote, noting that “had our abstention on the Portuguese territories’ resolution – which evoked more unfavorable comment than did our contribution to the defeat of the proposed trade boycott against South Africa – helped to kill it, the political fall-out would surely have been appreciably heavier.” Also, Adlai Stevenson had mollified the crowd somewhat by announcing that the US had banned arms sales to South Africa. The CIA even speculated that the US had actually gained some traction in the African world, writing “if anything, our standing with the Africans has probably improved somewhat over this

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80 Memorandum From the Department of State Executive Secretary (Battle) to the Bureau of African Affairs and the Bureau of European Affairs, 4 May 1962, FRUS Volume XXI, Document 359: 559-560. URL: http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v21/d359


82 The US, the UK, and France all abstained. OCI No. 2375/63, 1-2.
Salazar’s government had recently announced that it would enter into negotiations with representatives from independent African states (though, it should be pointed out, not with representatives from the liberation movements), and the CIA suspected that Africans gave some credit for this positive development to Undersecretary of State George Ball, who had visited Lisbon in late August. Coupled with the US’ somewhat firmer line against South Africa, it seemed that the Africans were more interested in keeping the US on-side for further discussions rather than vilifying them for past performances. The only downside to this unexpected positive outcome was that the US was not ‘off the hook’, so to speak. It was clear that the Africans “expected still greater things from the U.S. as both questions [on the Portuguese Territories and South Africa] again move toward early consideration in the Security Council.”

Quietly, however, Kennedy administration officials still considered supporting the independence movements without antagonizing Lisbon. On 20 November 1963, Robert Kennedy wrote to Bundy encouraging him to get the NSC Standing Group to “discuss what should be the attitude and policy of the United States toward the individuals and organizations which are attempting to gain independence in Mozambique, South Africa, Angola and Rhodesia.” It was clear to Robert Kennedy that “from…discussion with the State Department…we really don’t have much of a policy at all or are just beginning to develop one. Also, as usual, there seems to be some strong differences of opinion.” As Kennedy noted, “It seems to me these areas are going to be extremely important in the future and that some serious thought ought to be given to what we are going to do.” Any further discussions on Angola were overtaken by events; two days after this memo President Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas.

During this same period the rebellions began in Angola. At the first outbreak of violence in Angola and Mozambique Portuguese officials went on the diplomatic offensive, retaining close contact with influential Americans who were sympathetic to their racial outlook and concerns over African disorder. Support for Portugal became an unlikely partisan issue, and the Portuguese Minister of Foreign Affairs Alberto Franco Nogueira paid close attention to the proceedings of the US Congress. The Portuguese government even hired the New York public relations firm Selvage & Lee to plant sympathetic copy in American magazines and newspapers

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83 OCI No. 2375/63, 5.
84 OCI No. 2375/63, 5.
to influence the State Department. In 1963 a Portuguese memorandum was pleased to report the comments of Congressman Bruce Alger (R-TX) on Mozambique, who announced that:

The United States, under the leadership of President Kennedy, to the dismay of the whole world, joined with the Communists in condemning Portugal and became part of the wolfpack determined the[sic] engage East Africa in the same bloodbath now so prevalent in the Congo. Now, at long last we are beginning to learn the facts on the other side. The East Africans do not consider themselves colonial subjects of Portugal. They are not in revolt against themselves. The whole plot is now developing and we find it is the Communist-oriented Africans outside East Africa who are creating the trouble and the issue.87

Similarly, Congressman Stanley Tupper (R-ME), wondered aloud how the US could place pressure on Portugal when the Congolese example proved the veracity of Portuguese claims:

[t]he principle [of self-determination for colonial peoples] can be distorted and carried to illogical extremes. For one thing, a colonial people must be prepared and able to govern themselves before they are proclaimed independent and thrown to the wolves of international power diplomacy. If they are not so prepared and capable, the result can only be chaos and the extreme likelihood of a Communist takeover of a nation which, if it had been properly prepared, probably would have been freely pro-Western. This is a lesson we should have learned from the unhappy Congo experience but which some of our foreign policy planners appear not the have learned...88

Tupper continued.

There is no evidence of Portuguese oppression or brutality toward the Angolan people. There is every evidence that the Angolan people are not yet ready for independence, any more than were the Congolese; that there is no real movement among the Angolan people themselves for independence now; and that Portugal is making sincere efforts to improve the lot of the Angolans and to prepare them for ultimate independence if they want it.89

In the end, the Kennedy Administration’s Angola policy was unimpressive. Early advocates of African independence, especially Robert Kennedy and Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs G. Mennen “Soapy” Williams, felt the US was squandering a vital

87 Letter to Minister of Foreign Affairs, 13 August 1963, Serviços do Arquivo Histórico-Diplomático-Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros (hereafter: AHD-MNE), Folder: Atitude do Congresso Americano, Camara dos representantes e senado relativamente a política ultramarina portuguesa [1961/68], PAA-IV/922/289 – Atitude dos varios países relativamentos a política ultramarina portuguesa, EUA.
88 Speech, Stanley Tupper to US House of Representatives, 4 October 1962, AHD-MNE Folder: Atitude do Congresso Americano, Camara dos representantes e senado relativamente a politica ultramarina portuguesa [1961/68], PAA-IV/922/289 – Atitude dos varios países relativamentos a politica e administraçã o ultramarina portuguesa, EUA.
89 Tupper to US House of Representatives, 4 October 1962.
opportunity to bring the African continent on-side.\textsuperscript{90} When a redistribution and limitation of African aid was announced for FY 1962, Williams sent a harsh note to Undersecretary of State Chester Bowles, noting,

The pronouncements of the President, in particular, have raised widespread expectations…. We simply cannot, at the beginning of the highly publicized Decade of Development, tell these badly underdeveloped countries that we are not interested in assisting them…. It is imperative that we do something to preserve for Africa President Kennedy's Decade of Development and prevent it from becoming a Decade of Disappointment.\textsuperscript{91}

\textbf{“The Shake-Down Years for African Independence”}\textsuperscript{92}: The Johnson Administration

The Johnson Administration is conspicuously missing from the narrative of US-Portuguese-Angolan relations. On 26 May 1966 Johnson addressed a gathering at a White House reception commemorating the third anniversary of the OAU, and seemed to acknowledge the universality of self-determination:

We have learned that these aspirations [the right to self-government, to build strong democratic institutions, and to improved well-being] are indivisible. If it takes self-determination to become a free nation, it also takes a climate of regular growth to remain one. And that means the wise development of human and natural resources…. Whether nations are 5 years old or 190 years old, the striving for these goals never really ends. No nation ever completes the task of combining freedom with responsibility, liberty with order – and applying these principles, day after day, to our new problems.\textsuperscript{93}

Johnson had a limited interest in African affairs, but Africa could not be ignored, linked as it was to the problems of racial equality and civil rights at home. Legislating racial equality would be

\textsuperscript{90} For a recent study on Williams see Thomas Noer, \textit{Soapy: A Biography of G. Mennen Williams} (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2006).

\textsuperscript{91} Memorandum, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs [G. Mennen Williams] to the Under Secretary of State [Chester Bowles], “Aid to Africa in FY 1962”, 29 September 1961, \textit{FRUS} Volume XXI, Document 201: 303-305. URL: \url{http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v21/d201}


one of the few successes of the ‘Great Society’, the program of wide-ranging social reform that was so close to Johnson’s heart. Much of the Johnson administration’s Africa policy was a now familiar mix of closer engagement with moderate African states and mild rhetorical support for self-determination. However, due to escalating racial tensions within the US and internationally, Africanists in the Johnson administration advocated a heightened attempt to improve America’s image among Africans through targeted aid and development projects.94

As Johnson found himself increasingly preoccupied with the military and political costs of Vietnam, most attempts to quietly pressure Portugal were abandoned in favour of support for the status quo. Yet the standard historical narrative, which suggests that the Kennedy administration represented a proverbial ‘lost chance’ for the US to exert constructive pressure on the Portuguese state, and that the issue of the Azores base was the sole determinant of the policy shift, is complicated by Johnson era initiatives, such as the Anderson Plan. As in the Kennedy administration, between 1963-1968 a battle was fought between those who advocated supporting African independence and change in the Portuguese Territories, and those who resolutely stood with the western ally. Cold war considerations, the institutional legacy of the Kennedy administration, and Johnson’s own commitment to domestic civil rights legislation helped shape the administration’s general Africa policy and its relationship with independence for the Portuguese territories.

Despite inheriting the presidency, virtually all of Kennedy’s staff, and Kennedy’s proposed anti-discrimination act, Johnson deserves substantial credit for championing the Civil Rights Act. The Act’s passage in July 1964 garnered Johnson a rare public relations boost in Africa. African leaders of all political inclinations seemed impressed that the President had used his personal authority to help delegitimize racial discrimination. A July 1964 memorandum from Carl T. Rowan, Director of the United States Information Agency (USIA), and prominent African-American, reported on the Cairo meeting of the OAU, and claimed that “African reaction to the passage of the civil rights bill has been highly favorable, although some evidence exists of an increasing impatience with what is regarded as the lagging eradication of racial

discrimination in the United States.”

Even Guinea-Conakry’s Sékou Touré, known for his biting criticisms of western imperialism, reacted favourably, calling the bill a “great victory” for African-Americans. The Nigerian press called the act a fitting tribute to the late President Kennedy. According to Rowan, at Cairo Nasser implied that the time was right for “[African states to] complete the siege around South Africa and Rhodesia where hateful discrimination is practised,” adding that ‘one of the promising signs in this connection is the adoption of the civil rights bill in the U.S.’.” Additionally, “Sudan’s Al-Telegraph said that the bill indicated U.S. ‘support for the world struggle against racial discrimination in South Africa’ and ‘the nearing victory of the national forces against the attempts of the white man in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia.’”

However, the relationship between domestic civil rights and African liberation remained troubled. The link between domestic and international postures on racism soon became a critical factor in the US’ Africa policy. While Rowan considered this linkage a “new theme” in the discourse, which received only “sparse play in African media reaction”, domestic constituents became increasingly critical of the US’ uneven Africa policy. Johnson bristled at the new interest of African-American political groups in Washington’s Africa policy. In December 1964 when President of the American Negro Leadership Conference Roy Wilkins requested a meeting with Johnson to discuss African affairs, Assistant Special Counsel to the President Lee C. White demurred, saying, “I told [Wilkins] that, quite candidly, I personally saw some problem in the President meeting with a group of American Negroes to secure from them their recommendations on what our African policy should be.” A month later Johnson concurred, telling Deputy NSA Robert “Blowtorch Bob” Komer that he did not want to encourage a “segregated foreign policy”, or a “special Negro pressure group (a la the Zionists) which might limit his freedom of maneuver.”

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96 Memorandum, From the Director of the United States Information Agency to President Johnson, 21 July 1964.

97 Memorandum, From the Director of the United States Information Agency to President Johnson, 21 July 1964.


99 Memorandum, Robert W. Komer of the National Security Council Staff to the President’s Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy), 6 January 1965, FRUS Volume XXIV, Document 192. URL: http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v24/d192
In terms of national security, the terrain was no less unsteady. In an undated (c. 1964) draft National Security Action Memorandum (NSAM), McGeorge Bundy advocated improving the US’ intelligence capabilities in Africa, providing direct economic and security aid to African internal security forces, and encouraging the Western European and Commonwealth countries to provide assistance to Africa, in coordination with the US when feasible.\(^{100}\) The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) considered establishing a “Pan-African Military School” which might “serve to enhance the concept of creating US positions of influence in Africa”, and might “spread Western philosophy and ideals, and would contribute to offsetting the training and political orientation offered by the Sino-Soviet bloc.”\(^{101}\)

An April 1964 memo from “Soapy” Williams listed the US’ goal as an “evolutionary” resolution to the stalemate. The policies of both sides had led to a “blind alley”, since the Government of Portugal remained unmoved by US and UN pressures or by the rebels.\(^{102}\) Worse, the lack of movement was radicalizing the liberation groups, making them more extremist, more “racist”, and more prone to communist subversion. Tensions between Africanists and Europeanists had continued into the Johnson administration. Bundy felt the US should not abandon an emerging state to the Chinese communists, who had startled the Johnson administration by sending Chinese premier Zhou Enlai on an African tour in 1964. In a May 1964 meeting on the subject, Bundy berated Portugal’s “stubborn adherence to an antique…policy”, in the face of “continent-wide African support” for independence. Attorney General Robert Kennedy concurred, feeling that the FNLA-GRAE should not be abandoned. Surprisingly, and counter to the majority of scholarship on the issue, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara felt the question of the Azores base problem “should not dictate our foreign policy and that keeping the USSR out of Africa was more important than holding Azores base rights.”\(^{103}\) On the other hand, new Undersecretary of State George Ball was adamant that

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continued support of Roberto was a foolhardy and unnecessarily dangerous policy. In his “emphatic dissent”, Ball pointed out that though he did not support Portuguese behaviour, supporting Roberto was against the US national interest and morally untenable. The US was being distracted and in danger of becoming “over-persuaded either by sympathy for the underdog or abstract libertarian principles.” Ball considered it “a destructive moral precedent for the American Government” to lie to Portugal and potentially side with eastern bloc governments in the undermining of a western ally.

An undated State Department draft paper (c. early 1965) detailed the CIA’s principle African operations in 1964. The CIA’s Africa Division (AF), like the State Department’s, was relatively new. Under the heading “Covert support for non violent activities of the Angolan Nationalist Movement”, the report stated the following purpose of CIA involvement: “To provide covert support to selected individuals and activities of the Angolan nationalist movement in order to develop checks to extremist/communist elements within the movement and to exercise some control over the movement’s programs and planning.” Though the “movement” is not identified, it is almost certainly Roberto’s FNLA-GRAE. The report highlighted a now familiar division in the State Department. While AF strongly supported an earlier proposal to deliver $20,000 of covert support to “moderate leaders” in Angola, the European division (EUR) was opposed. EUR carried the day, and the proposal was not approved. A July 1964 CIA intelligence assessment noted that although the Portuguese empire’s days were numbered, the liberation movements were in no danger of upsetting Portuguese domination anytime soon.

When prominent Portuguese businessman Alexandre Pinto Basto (administrator of the strategically key Benguela railroad) asked Selvage & Lee principal Kenneth T. Downs why the CIA was funding Roberto, Downs’ reply reflects the US’ calculation: “As I have written before, the principle line of Roberto apologists in certain areas of the State Department today is that he is

104 George Ball replaced Chester Bowles in December 1961, and remained the Undersecretary of State until September 1966. Bowles’ short tenure in the post was seen as a sign of the precipitous decline in importance of African affairs to the Kennedy administration.
105 Memorandum, Under Secretary of State (Ball) to Secretary of State Rusk, “Proposal Regarding Holden Roberto”, 17 March 1964, FRUS Volume XXIV, Document 417: 724-728. URL: http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v24/d417
a ‘moderate’. They argue that it would not be in Portuguese or Western interests if he were supplanted, because his successor might be an extremist (possibly even a Communist!). Downs continued, noting that a film clip showing Roberto with Communist leaders might finally “lead the Department of Justice at long last to look into the activities of organizations here who have supported him.”

In August 1964 another covert assistance proposal (dollar amount not declassified) reached as high as the 303 Committee, the predecessor of the 40 Committee, the executive-level oversight body for covert actions, before being stopped by the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) John McCone. It was assumed that minimal aid to the *League Générale des Travailleurs Angolais* (General League of Angolan Workers in Exile) and the *União Nacional dos Estudantes Angolanos* (National Union for Angolan Students), two FNLA-affiliated organizations, kept Roberto “reassured” despite his changing fortunes due to internal difficulties in the GRAE, the rise of the MPLA, and a lack of new CIA funds.

An April 1965 National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) concluded that “political and social turmoil is virtually certain during the period of this estimate in most of the states of sub-Saharan Africa.” The trend was towards “more vigorous manifestations of African nationalism, in a variety of forms.” The problem would likely be most acute in southern Africa, where the “liberation’ movements” had made little headway “despite considerable emotional support elsewhere in Africa.” Despite the likelihood of increased aid from other African nations and from the Soviet Union and China, “it [was] almost certain that white governments will command sufficient power and determination to contain ‘liberation’ movements at least for the period of this estimate.” Yet the NIE also warned of communist gains on the continent, and the increasing presence of the PRC. There was a “good chance that a few African states will collaborate closely with either Moscow or Peiping [sic], and become, at least temporarily, highly unfriendly to the West”, but it was difficult to predict the foreign polices of these new African states. Still, the NIE concluded that “even the militant radicals prize their freedom of movement, and we consider it unlikely that any African country will become a full-fledged Communist state, or will reject all ties with the West.” Finally, the NIE concluded that although US-African relations would remain

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109 "Review of 1964 Operations in the AF Area".
“ambivalent and difficult”, “no African raw materials or other resources [were] essential to US security.”

In June of 1965, Komer sent a memo to President Johnson entitled “Our African Affairs”. In it, Komer argued that the “‘liberation’ of the southern third of Africa, which the new African countries regard as their chief unfinished business”, would continue to preoccupy the African nations, and that “in Southern Rhodesia, the Portuguese colonies, Southwest Africa, and South Africa itself white minority governments are sitting repressively on volcanoes.” Komer advocated caution:

The more we can stay ahead of the game on southern African issues, instead of being dragged reluctantly toward the inevitable, the better we will get along with Africa….Ideally, we want evolution not revolution, which will minimize the likelihood of violence and of risk to our assets in the area….Our experience to date has been that most African states which have tasted the fruits of Communist support in the first flush of independence have tended to get a stomach ache (Morocco, Guinea, Mali and Kenya are cases in point). So I’m against rushing in too fast to bail out radical regimes in trouble. Let’s keep a foot in the door everywhere, and let’s be decently responsive where opportunity offers, but let these wayward countries come to us rather than courting them too eagerly.

At the same time, the US’ backsliding on independence for Portuguese Africa did not escape notice. In particular, Senator Frank Church became associated with Angolan independence, remaining loyal to the cause well into the 1970s when he became famous for investigating abuses of the intelligence services, many a result of the CIA’s covert operation in Angola, IAFEATURE. On 14 February 1965, Church published an article in the New York Times addressing the US’ difficulties in the Third World, explicitly linking the questionable position on the Portuguese Territories to the increasingly suspect policy of military intervention in Southeast Asia. Church, then a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, had begun to distance himself from his administration’s Vietnam policy. A self-identified “confirmed internationalist”, Church questioned the US’ transition from what seemed to be “an excess of isolationism” in the 1920s and 1930s, to the current situation of “an excess of interventionism” in

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111 NIE 60/70-65.
113 Komer to Johnson, 19 June 1965.
the 1960s. According to Church, the ideological desire to “immunize this world against further Communist infection through massive injections of American aid, and, wherever necessary, through direct American intervention” had over-extended the nation’s resources. Moreover, it threatened US prestige and influence in the Third World, where the “specter of Western imperialism [was] dreaded more than Communism.” Church cautioned that Africans and Asians did not necessarily share the western concept of a “free” world against a “Communist” world, and thus held a different conception of what constituted the greatest threat to peace, prosperity, and stability in the emerging nations. Church was puzzled by why the US had “plunged into these former colonial regions as through we had been designated on high to act as trustee in bankruptcy for the broken empires.” After a promising start in the early Kennedy administration, the US squandered any attempt at maintaining a positive influence on the African continent by refusing to champion African nationalism or “declare[ing] ourselves strongly in favor of the rightful independence for the Portuguese territories, the flaming issue in Africa today.” This had led to a confused situation where Americans were simultaneously faced with requests for extensive foreign aid and charged with neocolonialist exploitation. The result was a strategic miscalculation that would have dire consequences for US’ self-professed goals of a Third World free of communist subversion.

In response, Portuguese Ambassador to the US Vasco Vieira Garin personally wrote to Church to express his dismay at the article. Garin complained that Church had failed to acknowledge the stabilizing effect of the Portuguese presence in Angola, noting that:

We sincerely continue to believe that in a Continent mostly in turmoil, on account of communist inroads, racial feelings and tribal warfare, the preservation of the peaceful and progressive way of life and racial harmony which exist in our Provinces is not only a sacred duty towards the populations involved but a most important contribution to the general interests of the western world.  

Garin’s response typified the Estado Novo’s defense of their colonial administration. Portuguese officials sought to first convince the international community of the legality of their territorial claims. When pressed, however, they turned to arguments about the stabilizing, anticommunist effects of the Portuguese presence in Africa. Portuguese officials spoke a language they knew would be amenable to the US foreign policy establishment. Though Americans held a historical

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115 Letter, Vasco Vieira Garlin to Frank Church, 24 February 1965, AHD-MNE, Folder: Atitude do Congresso Americano, Camara dos representantes e senado relativamente a política ultramarina portuguesa [1961/68], PAA-IV/922/289 – Atitude dos varios países relativaments a política e administração ultramarina portuguesa, EUA.
discomfort with issues of imperialism and colonial rule, they could be persuaded by talk of regional security, hemispheric integrity, and anticommunism.

In the summer of 1965 the Johnson administration made its most concerted attempt at encouraging reform in the Portuguese Territories. The “Anderson Plan for Resolving the Portuguese African Question”, named after US Ambassador to Portugal George Anderson, Jr., proposed,

[t]hat the U.S. attempt to persuade the Portuguese Government to publicly accept the principle of self-determination for its African territories on the basis of a definite timetable. This action would be combined with a suspension of African nationalist anti-Portuguese activities during that period and carefully tailored political assurances and specified economic inducements being offered to the Portuguese Government in order to forestall the inevitable argument that any deadline would be bound to be telescoped drastically.\textsuperscript{116}

The Anderson Plan theorized that since Portugal was then in a position of strength, they could negotiate a political transfer of power in the Territories without losing face. After a negotiated transition period, a plebiscite would determine the new shape of the metropole-colony relationship, whether it was maintenance of the status quo, some form of autonomy within a Portuguese commonwealth, or full independence. In return, Portugal would receive stronger US support in the UN and access to US arms if needed. The US would also pressure neighbouring African states to accept the agreement and to refuse to “permit the use of their national territory as a training or operating base for any anti-Portuguese forces during the interim period preceding the plebiscite.”\textsuperscript{117}

Anderson presented the plan to Nogueira on 2 September 1965, in Lisbon.\textsuperscript{118} Anderson then relayed the plan to Garin, who replied with the characteristic claim that the “GOP [was] not against self-determination and, in fact, [was] practicing it in territories where all inhabitants have

\textsuperscript{116} Circular Airgram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Portugal (CA-2167), “Instructions to Lisbon to: (1) Reply to Foreign Minister’s Complaints of U.S. Policy; (2) Reaffirm U.S. Interest in Azores Base and Loran-C Negotiations; (3) Introduce New U.S. Proposal for a Peaceful Resolution of the Portuguese African Question”, 23 August 1965, FRUS Volume XXIV, Document 433: 754-758. URL: http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v24/d433

\textsuperscript{117} CA-2167, 23 August 1965.

\textsuperscript{118} Telegram From the Embassy in Portugal to the Department of State, 3 September 1965, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968, Volume XII, Western Europe (hereafter: FRUS Volume XII), Document 163: 331-332. URL: http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v12/d163


full rights of citizens.”

On 23 October 1965 Anderson met with Salazar directly. Though Salazar “listened attentively” and “assured me GOP has given, is giving, and will continue give serious consideration our proposal”, Salazar was “as convinced as ever GOP position in Africa was correct.” In Anderson’s recollection, Salazar noted that the “USG appear[ed] [to] accept as basic assumption invincibility of African nationalism, and said Portuguese experience indicates civilization and preparation for self government of native peoples take much longer than USG appears believe.” If Salazar did “appear [to] view future with some apprehension”, he saw this as “fault of great powers for having prematurely relinquished control.” As historian João Marques de Almeida has noted, in the Portuguese estimation the Anderson Plan exemplified the “deep ideological and political rift between the two countries.” While supporting Portugal as a NATO ally in Europe and in the global war on communism, the US “attacked Portuguese sovereignty in Africa because of divergent political values.”

Though the Anderson Plan was considered moderate and evolutionary by US officials, Portugal viewed any attempt to modify its territorial claims as an attack. Nogueira rejected the Anderson Plan outright in March 1966.

To return to Dean Acheson’s forward to Nogueira’s 1967 treatise The Third World (first discussed in chapter 1), like Randall, Holmes, and others, Acheson felt the Third World was “motivated by militant ambition to be translated at once into the state of developed communities without the painful stages of training, learning, work, and saving.” These states had the temerity to “hold the Western world responsible for their underdeveloped state and liable for reparations to be paid in foreign aid.” Perhaps most objectionable was the assertion that Third World states “invoke[d] Western principles against the west – democracy, individual liberty, peace, noninterference in the affairs of other – but practice none of them.” In his conclusion, Acheson had harsh words for the current “anti-Portuguese activists.” In a thinly-veiled attack on “Soapy” Williams and the Africa Bureau, Acheson recalled the difficult winter of 1961 when

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120 Telegram From the Embassy in Portugal to the Department of State, 23 October 1965, FRUS Volume XII, Document 167: 340-341. URL: [http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v12/d167](http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v12/d167)

121 Telegram From the Embassy in Portugal to the Department of State, 23 October 1965.


several resolutions condemning Portuguese colonialism were tabled at the UN. Citing the complete incompatibility of maintaining the US’ security interests while chastising Portugal in the Security Council, Acheson reminisced, “[a]t that time the bureau was under the direction of a man who contributed uniquely to confusion regarding our interests in Africa. Though he has gone, the confusion remains.”

In the end, it was the ‘Achesons’ rather than the ‘Soapys’ who dominated US policy towards Africa and to the Portuguese Territories. First, almost a decade of pressure – however nominal – on the Salazar government had yielded nothing. Second, assessments of the Angolan liberation groups, especially the FNLA, did not look promising. Intelligence estimates reinforced the idea that the southern African liberation movements were too fragmented and weak to exert effective pressure on the white minority governments. Near the end of Johnson’s tenure, a November 1967 NIE determined that the movements “[stood] little chance of significant progress through 1970, and probably for some considerable time thereafter.”

Though these movements enjoyed considerable affective support within Africa, they would still require substantive external support to overcome their “disabilities.” Even with a suspected increase of support from the Soviet Union, the PRC, and Cuba, the liberation movements lacked the capacity to make good use of the military and financial aid. Though the NIE noted that “many of these [movements] believe that the US and the other great powers should take action that would terminate white rule in Southern Africa”, it offered no further comment on how the US should proceed, noting only that this tension would “complicate US relations with African states and also US efforts to garner African support at the UN.”

Several changes in the international system had combined to make Africa appear to be a much calmer place. The establishment of the Organization of African Unity in May 1963 created a high-profile space to discuss African affairs, and also moved the bulk of the responsibility for managing African crises away from the UN General Assembly and Security Council (discussed in chapter 3). The UN’s Economic Commission for Africa, which oversaw the African Development bank, was credited with improving the continent’s economic growth. US participation in such initiatives had been crucial to their viability. The worst case scenarios of an

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127 NIE 70-1-67, 24 November 196.
angry black continent fuelled by communist propaganda and artillery had not materialized. If the age of African rebellion was passing, then an evolutionary solution to the problem of white minority regimes in southern Africa would suffice.

As early as October 1964, in a report on Zambia’s peaceful independence, Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs W. Averell Harriman noted with satisfaction that:

The wide publicity given to the few cases of violence in independent Africa has overshadowed much of the solid political and economic progress the continent is making. This imbalance makes it imperative that the United States Government base its understanding of the true situation in Africa on a firm foundation of fact. Not a single new African nation has succumbed to Communist domination, although incentives have been provided readily by Sino-Soviet nations. The Soviets and Chinese have been trying to cultivate several African nations as satellites, but African determination to preserve hard-won freedom and our policy and diplomacy – and those of our friends – have strengthened Africa’s awareness of the dangers to its independence of external subversion. We understand and support Africa’s desire to remain truly non-aligned and independent.\(^{128}\)

Rather than be the eager conduits of revolution, Harriman told Johnson that the majority of African leaders were dedicated “to the welfare of their people” and “eager to hasten the political and economic transformation of the continent.”\(^{129}\) Was it possible that after the tumult of the 1957-1967 period, what NSC staffer Edward Hamilton called the “shakedown years for African independence”, Africa was quieting down? As Hamilton told Rostow in 1967:

Stated in crudest form, [there was] a shift in political values from flamboyance, ideology and international adventurousness to inward-looking preoccupation with the harshly practical problems each country faces in its own backyard. Perhaps inevitably, Africa had her fling with the Nkrumahs and the glamour of the international stage.\(^{130}\)

\*\*The Whites are Here to Stay*: NSSM 39 and the beginning of the Nixon-Kissinger era\(^{131}\)


\(^{129}\) Harriman to Johnson, 28 October 1964.

\(^{130}\) Hamilton to Rostow, 8 September 1967.

At first glance, the Nixon administration seemed to include the African continent in its new global foreign relations strategy. In a 1969 address to the OAU Assembly, Nixon claimed that African issues “justly merit and receive the attention of the world.” Nixon praised the leaders of independent Africa, and admitted that the US had at times “not had a clear conception of its relationship with post-colonial Africa and its particular problems”, and accused his predecessors of supporting Africa with “lofty phrases” rather than “constructive dialogue.” Nixon pointed to Secretary of State William P. Rogers’ unprecedented upcoming trip to ‘black Africa’ as another positive step towards improving relations between the US and the continent. The US’ interests in Africa seemed simple and laudatory: to keep the continent free of great power rivalry, and to see “Africa realize its potential to become a healthy and prosperous region in the international community.” After all, it was Nixon who attended Ghanaian independence celebrations in 1957 – in some ways Nixon had gotten a head start on the question of African independence. Yet Nixon’s interest in Africa was virtually non-existent. In his carefully orchestrated global foreign policy, triangular diplomacy between the US, the Soviet Union, and the People’s Republic of China was paramount. The Third World was largely left to State Department staffers, and the African continent was the lowest priority. African affairs were not helped by Nixon’s inveterate racism. His infamous statement “Henry, let’s leave the niggers to [Secretary of State] Bill [Rogers] and we’ll take care of the rest of the world”, if true, neatly summarized the combination of ‘Nixinger’ grand strategy and a racialized conception of geopolitics that was surprisingly resilient given the demonstrable changes in the international system.

In 1968 Kissinger requested the Nixon administration’s first official policy study on Africa, National Security Study Memorandum 39. The National Security Study Memorandum series laid the foundations for Nixon’s foreign policies. Relevant Interdepartmental Committees

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133 Rogers began his trip in Rabat on 7 February 1970. His first stop in “black” Africa was Addis Ababa on 11 February. In all, Rogers visited Tunis, Nairobi, Lusaka, Kinshasa, Douala and Yaoundé, Lagos, Accra, and Monrovia. It was the first ever trip by a sitting Secretary of State to sub-Saharan Africa. http://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/travels/secretary/rogers-william-pierce

134 “U. S. Foreign Policy for the 1970's: A New Strategy for Peace.”

prepared the reports, usually comprising informed members of the CIA, the Department of Defence, and the State Department. Only policy options that Kissinger considered feasible were signed by him and passed on to Nixon. As Kissinger was inherently suspect of the bureaucratic decision-making process (in his mind bureaucracies were naturally prone to inertia and stagnation), this process allowed him to keep a tight rein on US foreign policy by carefully circumscribing the range of permissible options. After presidential perusal, the most viable options were noted and then briefly discussed. The amended package was returned to Kissinger, whose challenge then was to research and implement the chosen policy outcome. In December 1969 the NSC Interdepartmental Group for Africa responded with the “Study in Response to National Security Study Memorandum 39: Southern Africa” which contained a background briefing, statistical addenda, and set of policy options. The report covered the “black states” of Zambia, Malawi, Swaziland, Lesotho and Botswana and the “white minority” areas of Rhodesia, South Africa, the Portuguese Territories, and South-West Africa. Twelve years after the first independent black African state, the US was still deliberating between supporting black insurgents and forever alienating the white governments or allowing their inaction to be viewed as tacit acceptance of those regimes’ racist polices and human rights abuses.

NSSM 39 acknowledged that “racial repression by white minority regimes in southern Africa [had] international political ramifications extending beyond the region itself.” The NSC paper reiterated an argument that had been in circulation since the Eisenhower administration: many in the “non-white world” saw any relations with the white minority regimes as “at least tacit acceptance of racism.” The US was at a particular disadvantage, as its own racial problems led other countries “to see our relationships with southern Africa as reflections of domestic attitudes on race.” In a section entitled “Violent vs. Evolutionary Change”, the NSC paper contrasted two popular interpretations of socio-political change in southern Africa.

139 NSSM 39, 9 December 1969.
140 El-Khawas and Cohen, 81.
141 NSSM 39, 9 December 1969.
“Violent Change”, increased bloodshed would be inevitable unless changes were made, and there was “no prospect for peaceful change in the racial policies of the white regimes, embedded as they [were] in prejudice, religious doctrine and self-interest and bolstered by economic prosperity.” The result would be increased black “guerrilla and terrorist activity” in the region, with the Soviets and Chinese as beneficiaries. The section “Evolutionary Change” argued that change would come, but slowly. Ultimately, this was “the only avenue to change”, since there were “reasons to question the depth and permanence of black resolve”, and “military realities rule out a black victory at any stage.” The US should maintain its current relationships with the liberation movements (none were specified in the report, but the FNLA was undoubtedly among them), but also took the position “that force [was] not an appropriate means to bring about constructive change in southern Africa.”

In light of US interests and objectives, six policy options were outlined. As the most blatantly controversial of the minority regimes (indeed the wealthiest and most powerful), Rhodesia and South Africa were the flashpoints of the region and therefore required the most immediate attention. The policy options were drafted with an eye towards these two states, but carried important implications for US policy towards Angola as well. Initiatives taken in the ensuing months seemed to correspond with option two, closer engagement with the white minority regimes. As option two stated: “the whites are here to stay and the only way that constructive change can come about is through them. There is no hope for the blacks to gain the political rights they seek through violence, which can only lead to chaos and increased opportunities for the communists.”

The policy choice was nicknamed the “Tar Baby” after a

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142 They included: “(a) Movement towards normal relations with the white regimes to protect and enhance our economic, strategic and scientific interests (Option 1).
(b) Broader association with both black and white states in an effort to encourage moderation in the white states, to enlist cooperation of the black states in reducing tensions and the likelihood of increasing cross-border violence, and to encourage improved relations among states in area (Option 2).
(c) Increased identification with and support for the black states of the region, as a pre-condition to pursuit of our minimum necessary economic, strategic and scientific interests in the white states (Option 3).
(d) Limited association with the white states and closer association with the blacks in an effort to retain some economic, scientific and strategic interests in the white states while maintaining a posture on the racial issue which the blacks will accept, though opposing violent solutions to the problems of the region (Option 4).
(e) Dissociation from the white regimes with closer relations with the black states in an effort to enhance our standing on the racial issue in Africa and internationally (Option 5).
(f) Increased U.S. measures of coercion, short of armed force, bilaterally and on an international basis, to induce constructive change in white-regime race policies (Option 6).” NSSM 39, 9 December 1969.

character in the Brer Rabbit morality stories because it was thought to bind the US into close relations with the white minority regimes. However, this political hazard was downplayed, since in Kissinger’s understanding the black states were poor, militarily weak, and economically dependent on the minority regimes. Lack of military might compelled the black states to adopt a “non-racial” policy – read: the black states voiced their displeasure at the white regimes’ policies, but were unwilling to antagonise them for fear of reprisals. Global stability and anticommunism were paramount, and these could only be offered by the technologically advanced white regimes. All these factors were interpreted as proof of the structural and political superiority of the white states, which were “tough, determined, and increasingly self-confident.” The surest way to keep the cold war out of Africa was to promote regional stability, and in many states regional stability was predicated on white minority rule.

NSSM 39 privileged the Angola-Portugal relationship, as it assumed that the Portuguese state was strong enough to contain Angolan nationalism. Under option two the Nixon administration made increasingly friendly overtures to Portugal as it practised limited engagement with the white minority regimes. For the Portuguese this was a welcome departure from the Kennedy administration. In an October 1968 discussion, Nogueira was emphatic that Portuguese policy would “not be changed in the slightest degree” under the new leader, Marcelo Caetano, who replaced the incapacitated Salazar earlier that year (this transition is discussed in detail in chapter 4). Foreign observers who suspected that Portugal’s polices reflected Salazar’s personal politics were dead wrong: “Policies followed under Salazar were not personal ones but represented a considered national view of Portugal's interests. These national interests continued to be valid and the new government was united in its determination to continue as before. There would be no changes in overseas policy.” In fact, the Soviet invasion of

145 El-Khawas and Cohen, 118.
146 El-Khawas and Cohen, 105-6.
147 New Portuguese Prime Minister Marcello Caetano took office on 27 September 1968, after the stroke and subsequent incapacitation of Antonio Salazar.
Czechoslovakia and rising tensions over Berlin made Portugal “more convinced than ever that she [was] serving Western welfare by her posture in Africa.”¹⁴⁹ One month later, in November 1968, Rogers reassured Caetano that the US “was not leading a crusade on the African question and had no interest in the disappearance of the Portuguese presence from Africa.”¹⁵⁰ Rogers likened the Portuguese presence in Angola and Mozambique to the issue of Puerto Rico. When the Cubans had raised the issue in the UN General Assembly in 1967, a plebiscite on the island supported continued affiliation with the US, robbing Castro of an anti-US propaganda victory. The fact that there had been no such plebiscite in the Portuguese Territories was not mentioned.

In January 1970 the US Ambassador to Portugal Ridgway Knight reported that it was “our feeling that the experience of the past decade, during which relations between most of the black and white-ruled states of southern Africa have steadily worsened, casts serious doubt upon Caetano’s expectation that a ‘better time’ will come while the Portuguese continue present policies.” Knight continued,

> We realize that the future of this area is fraught with uncertainties and imponderables; nevertheless it seems most likely to us that the gulf between the black-ruled states and Portugal is likely to widen, in the absence of any attempt at reconciliation. Despite their internecine quarrels and Portuguese military superiority, the insurgent movements are active on more fronts and receive more Zambian and Tanzanian support now than at any time in the past….The Portuguese may be able to continue to contain the rebellions, but the protracted conflict will continue to drain Portuguese and African resources and will contribute to a prolonged state of insecurity and tension in southern Africa.¹⁵¹

In February 1970, in an uncharacteristic public engagement with African affairs, Nixon relayed to Congress a portion of an earlier address to the OAU Assembly. After lauding the independent African nations on their progress, Nixon noted what the CIA had confirmed five years earlier: “contrary to fears so often voiced at their birth, these nations did not succumb to Communist [sic] subversion. Africa is one of the world's most striking examples, in fact, of the failure of the appeal of Communism in the new nations.”¹⁵² At a May 1970 meeting in Oeiras,

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¹⁴⁹ Telegram From the Embassy in Portugal to the Department of State, 8 October, 1968.
Portugal, Rogers and Caetano discussed Portugal’s ‘progress’ in its African Territories. The memorandum of conversation reported that:

In answer to the Secretary’s question on how he saw the future in Angola and Mozambique, Prime Minister Caetano stated that there were now fifth and sixth generation Portuguese in those provinces. They were building a non-discriminatory society based on a mixed race. This required time. If independence could be granted to these provinces along the lines of the American colonies in 1776 or of Brazil in 1822 there would be no problem as far as he was concerned. However, the type of independence that would satisfy the United Nations was a danger to civilization and would lead to the implantation of communism in that area at great risk to Rhodesia and South Africa….153

Rogers responded that he “was pleased that Portugal had conveyed the feeling to the outside world that there was some liberalization in Portugal with the continued maintenance of stability.” The current administration was “not as concerned about the extent of communist penetration as some other nations seemed to be, since the danger compared to prior periods seemed to have lessened. [The US] did see a major problem in the years ahead of confrontation between blacks and whites and this caused concern.” Thus it was important that Portugal try to moderate its behaviour, since “just as [the US] intended to be very understanding of [Portuguese] problems and the steps taken, [Rogers] hoped the Portuguese would be understanding of the problems we faced in the United States, the United Nations, and with other countries.” Regarding Africa, Rogers implied that the major fault line of instability was not communism, but racial conflict. Rogers praised Portugal’s “social objective” of a multiracial society like that in Brazil (the lusotropical fantasy discussed in chapter 1), and was convinced that “Africa and particularly southern Africa needed the white man not only as a technician but also as a settler. Collaboration between whites and natives was essential to the progress of that region.”154

At the same time, Joseph-Désiré Mobutu (aka, Mobutu Sese Seko) had emerged as a strong US ally and a valuable alternative source of information on Angolan nationalism, complicating US policy toward Angola. Despite his rigid anticommunism, Mobutu was no fan of Portugal, and had personal and political ties to Holden Roberto. While Portugal pressured the US

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to publicly support its Africa policies, Mobutu pressured the US to ensure that the FNLA emerged victorious from Angola’s independence struggle. In a meeting in Washington on 4 August 1970, Mobutu informed Assistant Secretary for African Affairs David Newsom that there was “no question that Angola would eventually become independent.”\footnote{Memorandum of Conversation, “Meeting with Congo (K) President Mobutu: Portugal and Angola (Part 3 of 5),” 4 August 1970, FRUS Volume XXVIII, Document 91: 210-211. URL: \url{http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v28/d91}} The issue was who would lead when independence finally happened. Mobutu naturally supported the FNLA, while the majority of African states supported the MPLA, a situation which in the long run “could lead to grave difficulties.” Newsom responded that he understood the situation and that the US worked with Roberto “as much as [US] relations with Portugal permit.” Mobutu urged the US to use its influence to “persuade Lisbon to negotiate with Roberto”, and to use US investments in oil and diamond companies in Angola as leverage.

A September 1970 State Department report discussed Angola’s importance. Strategically, since the closing of the Suez Canal and the prohibition against South African ports, the US Navy refuelled at the ports of Luanda and Moçamedes. US investment in Angola was “miniscule”, consisting almost entirely of Gulf Oil’s $150 million offshore fields in the Cabinda enclave.\footnote{Paper Prepared in the Department of State, “Angola: Guidelines for Policy”, FRUS Volume XXVIII, September 1970, Document 93: 213-217. URL: \url{http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v28/d93}} The US bought approximately one-half of Angola’s coffee production, received $54.2 million of Angola’s exports in 1969, and sold Angola $32.9 million worth of goods. Prospects for increased trade or investment were good, but Angola’s real importance was “within the context of our concern with the over-all southern African problem.” Angola remained a “point of friction” between Portugal and the black African governments, and “both sides are dissatisfied with our essentially middle-of-the-road policy and this manifests itself both in bilateral relations and in the U.N.” Some form of “internationally acceptable solution to the Angolan problem would thus serve our interests by removing an impediment to the realization of more vital U.S. foreign aims, whether in Africa, in Europe, or in other areas of the world.” But again, no solutions were offered.

In an August 1971 meeting, Nixon, Vice President Spiro Agnew, and Rogers discussed the Portuguese Territories. Agnew was convinced that “The new Prime Minister, Caetano, [was] working very hard to liberalize the conditions there. He feels that they’re making substantial progress … not only in Angola and Mozambique, but he feels that he’s getting great assistance
from Malawi, which is a little country that’s very helpful in an intermediate position.”

Again, the “big problem” was Angola. Rogers felt “the danger in Africa comes through between the blacks and the whites. I think eventually we’ll have, probably, warfare in southern part of Africa. …I think the Russians are trying to stir up as much trouble as they can, but they don’t look at Africa as of strategic importance.” More than their predecessors, Nixon, Rogers, and Kissinger supported Portugal’s claims to its African territories. In December 1971 an Executive order transferred $436 million in credits to the Portuguese government.

**Conclusion**

Thus in a historical relationship filled with paradoxes, another one emerged. At a time when the US was concerned with the overall disintegration of the international order, in part due to the ramifications of upheaval on the African content, the US foreign policy elite seemed likely to take the issue of African liberation and independence for the Portuguese territories seriously. This is despite the fact that even the merest suggestion of a positive overture towards African nationalists threatened US relations with the European metropoles, especially Salazar’s Portugal. When the prevailing attitudes shifted to the contention that Africa was “settling down”, the US placed a greater emphasis on its relationship with its western allies and retreated from even the most nominal support for self-determination in Southern Africa. It was clear that nationalist movements did exist in Angola, however they were weak and the Portuguese were strong. Whatever nationalist surge there was would likely be stifled by the Portuguese police state. But the nationalist movements could not be discounted altogether, since the “spirit of 1776” was running through the continent. Between 1945-1974, US policy toward Angola was almost completely reactive, based on scant evidence from Angola itself. “American policymakers”, in the words of political scientist Steven Metz, “not only waited until it was entirely clear exactly which side change was on, but very nearly waited until the winds of change had blown the roof from the house.”

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157 Conversation Among President Nixon, Vice President Agnew, and Secretary of State Rogers, FRUS Volume XXVIII, 5 August 1971, Document 96: 223-224. URL: [http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v28/d96](http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v28/d96)


Chapter 3: Oslo, 1973

“Believing that the process of liberation is irresistible and irreversible and that, in order to avoid serious crises, an end must be put to colonialism and all practices of segregation and discrimination associated therewith...”

UN Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, New York, December 1960

“The struggle of the people of southern Africa for freedom and independence is a legitimate struggle, and the international community has a duty to provide moral and material assistance to the liberation movements recognized by the Organization of African Unity.”

UN-OAU Conference on Southern Africa, Oslo, April 1973

Introduction: Angolan independence “from the bush to the conference table”

From the beginning of the Angolan independence movement the FNLA and MPLA (and later UNITA) challenged each other to be the main representative of the Angolan people. Until 1974, however, the main goal was to rid Angola of the primary enemy, Portuguese colonialism, and its associated imperialist connections. Yet Angolan nationalism did not exist in a vacuum. As in chapter 2, which traced the American engagement with African affairs and Angolan nationalism from the end of the Second World War until the end of the Nixon administration, this chapter reflects on the relationship between Angolan liberation and the wider international campaign for decolonization and the end of white minority rule on the African continent. As argued in chapter 1, Angolan nationalists conceptualized their struggle in internationalist terms, and situated their respective battles for independence within the wider international system. The FNLA/GRAE, the MPLA, and UNITA, despite differing ideological affinities, each located their own nationalist struggle as part of a wider pan-African, anticolonial, antiracist, and anti-imperialist struggle to end white minority rule in southern Africa. To achieve the goal of national liberation required the

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Angolan nationalists to bring international attention, pressure, and support to their struggle for independence.

This chapter demonstrates the intersection of formal and informal internationalism in the case of Angolan independence. It links the formal diplomatic record, such as United Nations (UN) and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) deliberations and resolutions, with the more personal and anecdotal recollections of independent pro-independence activists. This process of using international diplomacy to achieve the goals of revolutionary nationalism can be considered formal internationalization. At the same time as the formal internationalization of Angolan national liberation was increasing through the UN and OAU, informal liberation support movements sprung up around the globe, as religious groups, civil rights organizations, and student radicals turned their attention towards Angola. Between 1968-1973, Africa-focused activist groups proliferated in North America, Europe, Australia and New Zealand. Though most focused on anti-apartheid initiatives, Angola was also an important cause. Like “Vietnam” and “apartheid”, “Angola” was becoming synonymous with injustice on an international scale. Large or small, well-organized or ad-hoc, these groups used their social and political capital to raise awareness and funds for various African liberation movements. To explore this issue, this chapter will consider the specific example of the American Committee on Africa (ACOA), a vocal and active advocacy group that was particularly influential in the quest to achieve political independence for the Portuguese Territories. ACOA operated within the US, supporting other Africa-focused non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and sending their assessments to the US government, and internationally, often collaborating with the UN and the OAU. This process of appealing to NGOs and other affective groups to achieve the goals of revolutionary nationalism can be considered informal internationalization. By tracing the rise of the question of Angolan independence first in the UN, then in the OAU, and finally in the advocacy work of ACOA, a picture emerges of how Angolan independence moved from “the bush to the conference table,”

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4 Even a loose assessment of the numbers and distributions of African activist groups would be nearly impossible. Two excellent resources are the University of Michigan’s African Activist Archive (URL: http://africanactivist.msu.edu/index.php) and Aluka.org, both of which chronicle and record the recollections of those associated with African liberation struggles. Doubtless there were also African activist organizations in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, and China as well, though they may have differed quite substantially in organization, ideology, and mandate.
and how Angolan independence became an international issue before the Cuban, US, or South African military interventions of the 1970s. At first glance, Angola and Angolan nationalism did not appear to figure prominently in the early story of African decolonization. The Portuguese Territories were virtual police states, where all avenues for dissent were strictly controlled by Lisbon. Unlike black activism from the English and French Caribbean, other African colonies, and African-Americans, there were few Lusophone Africans in the pantheon of early black nationalist, pan-African, or anticolonial thought. Moreover, the fate of the Portuguese Territories was not highest on the African or international political agenda. After Ghanaian independence in 1957 the dominant African stories of the 1950s and 1960s were the ones characterized by violence and disorder – the transformation of South Africa into an apartheid state, the so-called Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya, and the crises that accompanied Congolese and Algerian independence. Yet as African independence became a subject of intense debate in international forums, Angolan nationalists benefited from the heightened international attention to other examples of African decolonization. These cases shaped the early years of Angolan nationalism. Thus the Angolan nationalists were the inheritors of institutional and intellectual consequences of debates around self-determination, human rights, national sovereignty and pan-Africanism.

“Irresistible and irreversible”: self-determination and anti-colonialism in the UN and OAU

In general, most post-1945 independence struggles, especially the anticolonial variant, were at some level the intellectual inheritors of two immediate postwar political projects: first, the reconstitution of the international system under the auspices of the United Nations organization; and second, the commitment within that system to the codification and institutionalization of a universal human rights regime. In 1948 the Universal Declaration of Human Rights enshrined the principles of racial equality, non-discrimination, the equation of “personhood” with citizenship, and the equality of persons before the law. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights transformed formerly domestic issues, such as racial discrimination, into international issues, a legal shift which had profound consequences for the postwar independence movements.

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5 Tekle, 57.
6 A noted exception is the famed Guinean liberation leader and intellectual Amilcar Cabral.
7 Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, 14 December 1960.
The UN system traced its intellectual roots directly to the Atlantic Charter, signed by British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in August 1941. Prior to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the US entry into the Second World War, Roosevelt – mindful of Woodrow Wilson’s attempts to secure broad acceptance for his Fourteen Points in 1918 – made the tenets of the Atlantic Charter a key plank of the US’ reinvigorated internationalism. Of the Atlantic Charter’s eight points, two had direct influence on post-1945 decolonization movements in the UN system. Points Two and Three proclaimed that the US and UK would “desire to see no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned” and would “respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of Government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them.”

The eight principle parts of the Atlantic Charter inspired the January 1942 Declaration by United Nations, which was signed by twenty-six nations in the Allied war effort. In turn, the Declaration by United Nations laid the foundation for the UN Charter, signed at San Francisco on 26 June 1945.

Due to the particular nature of the fascist challenge during the Second World War, the interrelated questions of racism, self-determination, and decolonization began to dominate the new UN almost immediately. Somewhat akin to the dynamic of the League of Nations mandate system after the First World War, one of the first tasks of the UN General Assembly was to redistribute the remnants of the German, Italian, and Japanese wartime empires as Trust Territories. After this was completed the General Assembly turned to the issue of other dependent territories. The UN took the broad stance that all dependent peoples should be given the opportunity to determine for themselves their future political status, whether it be full independence or some other type of negotiated self-government.

Several articles in the UN Charter were directly relevant to the case of postwar national liberation movements. Aside from the sections which disavowed discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, sex, or

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8 Declaration of Principles issued by the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (“Atlantic Charter”), 14 August 1941. URL: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_16912.htm.
9 Ironically, the signatories included the colonial empires of France, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands (signed in exile), and the British dominion of South Africa. “Declaration by United Nations (Subscribing to the Principles of the Atlantic Charter)”, 1 January 1942. URL: http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/policy/1942/420101a.html.
10 The UN continues to advocate for self-determination for the world’s inhabited areas. Since 1990 there have been three International Decades for the Eradication of Colonialism (1990-2000, 2001-2010, and 2011-2020). At writing, according to the UN there are currently sixteen Non-Self Governing Territories, including Western Sahara, eight territories under UK administration (including the Falkland Islands/Malvinas and Gibraltar), the US Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and three Pacific islands. http://www.un.org/en/decolonization/nonselfgovterritories.shtml.
national origin, Chapter IX on International Economic and Social Co-operation, specifically highlighted the principle of self-determination and equal rights for all peoples (Article 55), and noted that all member states “pledge[d] themselves to take joint and separate action” to help achieve these goals (Article 56). Chapter XI consisted of the Declaration on Non-Self-Governing Territories (NSGT) (Articles 73 and 74), which defined NSGT as “territories whose peoples have not yet attained a full measure of self-government.” Alongside various admonitions to “accept as a sacred trust” the obligation to promote the well-being of their charges, Chapter XI also charged the governing State to “develop self-government” and “assist [the non-self-governed] in the progressive development of their free political institutions, according to the particular circumstances of each territory and its peoples and their varying stages of advancement.” Chapter XII (articles 75-85) established the International Trusteeship System, and gave the UN authority to promote the political, economic, social, and educational advancement of the inhabitants of the trust territories, and their progressive development towards self-government or independence as may be appropriate to the particular circumstances of each territory and its peoples and the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned, and as may be provided by the terms of each trusteeship agreement.

In 1946, eight UN member states (Australia, Belgium, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States) collectively listed seventy-two NSGT under their administration. Notably, Portugal was not among this list, as it did not become a UN member state until 1955, in part due its neutrality in the Second World War.

The UN’s attitude toward self-determination was controversial from the start. Opposition to the idea seemed to coalesce around five main issues, which reflected both western racism and new anxieties about the changing state of international relations. First, there was neither a firm definition of what constituted self-determination, nor to which groups or under which circumstances self-determination should apply. A second consideration, intimately related to the first, was who should determine which groups were ‘ready’ for self-determination, and by which

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14 UN, Background, Chapter XI of the UN Charter. URL: http://www.un.org/en/events/nonselfgoverning/background.shtml
criteria would these decisions be made? Third, some were convinced that Third World self-determination was little but a Soviet ploy to foster discontent in the west. Others worried that the increasing numbers of sovereign states would do little but complicate the already difficult world of diplomacy and cause political stalemates in the UN. Finally, there was the question of bloc voting and proportional representation – how would international relations change if suddenly the votes of tiny states counted as much as those of the great powers? These tensions were reflected in the academic writing of the time. In 1953, prominent New York University law professor Clyde Eagleton wrote an influential editorial in the American Journal of International Law, noting that “that the term ‘self-determination,’ long a theoretical subject, ha[d] become one of practical importance and immediate urgency, badly in need of legal definition.”

Eagleton’s language reflected the hypocrisy and disdain with which many western political elites viewed the aspirations of the nonwhite, colonized world. Eagleton dismissed self-determination language as “noble utterances on behalf of high-sounding principles which would not be translated into responsible action by any of the states whose delegates make the speeches. These utterances take no account of reason, or justice, or practicality; they simply bespeak desires.” For Eagleton, little good could come of the current “rising tide of nationalism”, which encouraged all manner of ill-defined groups to seek independence for which they were unprepared. As Eagleton noted, “one group after another, encouraged by such wild talk, w[ould] claim their independence at the hands of the United Nations.”

By actively encouraging self-determination, the UN had become the arbiter of independence, and with this new role came the responsibility to champion independence wisely. In a telling statement, Eagleton reflected on “the good old days,” when “a people got their independence by fighting for it, as did the United States of America, or by having a powerful friend, as did Panama.” Unwittingly, Eagleton had foreshadowed an important development in the saga of decolonization, when national liberation movements grew tired of formal appeals to multinational institutions and took up arms instead.

In a 1960 article by political scientist Elliot Goodman, self-determination was seen largely through a cold war prism. In Goodman’s estimation, the Soviet Union had high-jacked an essentially western political idea for its own purposes: “The idea of national self-determination,

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16 Eagleton, 88-89.
17 Eagleton, 90-91.
fathered by political theorists like [Italian nationalist Giuseppe] Mazzini and [Woodrow] Wilson, is, of course, Western in origin. But in an age of nation-building in the Afro-Asian world, skillful Soviet use of this concept presents Western diplomacy with a formidable and continuing challenge in the East.”19 For Goodman, since the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Soviet Union had strategically altered the meaning of self-determination until it became erroneously synonymous with decolonization. As Goodman noted, “[i]n the minds of many Westerners, the question of establishing the right of self-determination was one issue and its application to non-self-governing and colonial areas was another.”20 Even more problematic, the Soviet Union hypocritically refused to acknowledge its own colonizing impulses in Eastern Europe. It had become “abundantly clear that the venerable complex of ideas associated with national self-determination had been fashioned into a blunt political weapon by a Soviet-Afro-Asian entente.”21 As questions of self-determination became conflated with cold war thinking, an artificial line was drawn between advocates of widespread self-determination and supporters of the status quo, between east and west.

In 1960-61, the Fifteenth Session of the UN General Assembly coincided with the “Year of Africa”, when sixteen African states became independent. On 14 December 1960 the General Assembly ratified the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (GA Res 1514 [XV]). The resolution is noted for affirming the universal right to self-determination, and recommending that “immediate steps” should be taken in all Trust Territories and NSGT to “transfer all powers to people of those territories.”22 The UN Special Committee on Decolonization (known as the “Special Committee”) was created to oversee compliance with and progress toward the worldwide implementation of the Declaration on Colonial peoples.23 Initially comprised of seventeen member states, the Special Committee was expanded to twenty-four states in 1963. Now states not only could not impede or resist decolonization, they were also charged with actively facilitating the process. With the Declaration on the Granting of

20 Goodman, 93.
21 Goodman, 93.
23 The Committee’s full name was the Special Committee on the Situation with Regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.
Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, the UN committed itself not just to the principles of non-discrimination, but to the promotion of formal decolonization as a social and political imperative, on par with protecting and promoting human rights. From 1960 onwards, states that refused to transfer sovereignty to their dependent territories would be in direct violation of a UN Resolution and in defiance of the broad will of the international community. In a demonstration of their new power, the resolution was sponsored by forty-three African and Asian countries, and passed eighty-nine votes to zero. The nine abstentions were, perhaps unsurprisingly, all states with complicated internal racial dynamics or lingering colonial questions of their own: Australia, Belgium, the Dominican Republic, France, Spain, the Union of South Africa, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Portugal. In the heated climate of the 1960s, not even the staunchest racists and colonialists would dare veto the resolution.

The Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples represents the apotheosis of the ‘decolonization moment’ in the UN. First, the passage of the resolution was testament to the rising power of the newly-independent Third World states of Africa, Asia, and the Arab world. Second, the Declaration represented the introduction of the language of liberation into the formal international arena. The Declaration emphatically claimed that “the process of liberation [was] irresistible and irreversible,” using the affective term liberation rather than a more formal-legal alternative, such as independence.\textsuperscript{24} UN resolutions began to reflect the language used by Third World independence movements and their adherents; the goal was not merely a pedestrian formal transfer of power, but was elevated to the moral imperative of liberation. Third, decolonization’s adherents began to aggressively link decolonization to international peace and security. Impeding or limiting the process of decolonization was not only a moral failing, but endangered the peace and security of the international system by provoking racial antagonisms, which led to national and international discord. Such behaviour also demonstrated contempt for the will of the international community and for international law.

By 1963, the UN had broadened its attempts to promote and enforce decolonization, and had shifted from legislating the relationship between colonizer and colonized, to attempting to regulate racial politics. It was clear from global events such as the Sharpeville massacre (March 1960) and the murder of Medgar Evers (June 1963), that the promised racial equality codified in

\textsuperscript{24} UN Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.
the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights had not materialized. In fact, racial tensions, particularly between blacks and whites, seemed to be at an all-time high. The influx of African and Caribbean states, many with largely black populations, raised the issue of systemic racial inequality in the UN, emphasizing the link between racism and colonialism. On 20 November 1963 the General Assembly adopted the UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (GA Res 1904 [XVIII]), which proclaimed racial discrimination “an obstacle to friendly and peaceful relations among nations and as a fact capable of disturbing peace and security among peoples” (Article 1).\(^{25}\) The Declaration was formalized on 21 December 1965 as the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (GA Res 2106 [XX]). One year later, in December 1966, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocol to the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (GA Res 2200 [XXI]), again reaffirmed that “All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development (Article 1)” and insisted that “The State Parties to the present Covenant, including those having responsibility for the administration of Non-Self-Governing and Trust Territories, shall promote the realization of the right of self-determination, and shall respect that right, in conformity with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.”\(^{26}\) Thus, though the UN initially reflected the established order of the international system with a mandate to manage relations between sovereign states, the UN soon found itself attempting to manage relations between states and individuals, between states and marginalized groups, and between states and non-state actors, including established states and the national liberation movements who challenged them.

Despite western fears, African states did not always constitute a monolithic voting bloc in the UN General Assembly. In a 1964 article political scientist John Spencer noted that the ‘moderate’ states of the Casablanca and Monrovia groups (discussed later in this chapter) often voted with France. Moreover, in the Afro-Asian caucus, Spencer determined that “the pervasive


influence within this caucus [was] unquestionably Asian.”

Yet questions of decolonization could prompt “heated, emphatic, and vigorous show[s] of strength,” especially in cases “related directly to African territory, as in the case of Portuguese Angola.” Later that year, emerging Africanist scholar Ali A. Mazrui presented the “African perspective” on the UN and self-determination. When it came to definitions of self-determination,

[elaborate answers could] be given under international law, under theories of international relations, under jurisprudence, and under general political philosophy. But from the point of view of African countries the empirical answer [was] perhaps the simplest….The very process of attaining independence might, in their case, be reduced to a single catch phrase – ‘from foreign rule to foreign relations.’ In other words, an African colony was said to have attained independence when it had moved from the status of being under foreign rule to the status of conducting foreign relations with full authority.

For Mazrui, African nationalism “contain[ed] two fundamental elements. One concern[ed] the relations of Africans with the outside world; the other pertain[ed] to the relations of Africans with each other.” The creation of the UN, with its international and universal covenants, confirmed that self-determination and independence were based upon the ability to participate in international affairs. There was no true independence removed from the international system; for once dependent territories “[t]he self-centered principle of self-determination ha[d] matured into a cult of participation in world affairs.” Thus the UN could not be merely another meetinghouse for the great powers, but “should be concerned with moderating the immense capacity for independent initiative which power gives to the powerful. And in this task of moderation, a distortion of the vote in the UN to favor the smaller countries might be precisely what is needed.”

In a series a parallel developments, the multiple currents and campaigns for African independence were themselves crystallizing into another multinational institution, the Organization of African Unity, a regional and multinational organization created to manage African affairs. The postwar era saw the rise of multinational organizations with a regional or

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28 Spencer, 376.
continental focus, such as the Arab League (1945), the Organization of American States (1948), the Council of Europe (1949), the South East Asia Treaty Organization and the Central Treaty Organization (both 1955). African leaders were also inspired and influenced by currents in the international system. The struggle for African unity, both as an ideological construct and as political force, was also influential. Perhaps paradoxically, the pan-Africanist movement originated not on the African continent, but in the African diaspora of North America and the Caribbean, and to lesser extent Western Europe, and can be traced to the early 1900s. It was in the west that early black intellectuals such as Henry Sylvester-Williams, Edward Wilmot Blyden, W. E. B. Dubois, Booker T. Washington, and Marcus Garvey, began to argue for an end to the anti-black racism which had characterized the previous four centuries, the uniqueness of the “black personality,” black nationalism and repatriation of diaspora blacks to Africa (in some cases), and the removal of white rule from the African continent.33

The First Pan-African Congress was convened in London in July 1900 by Sylvester-Williams. Thirty-seven delegates, including a thirty-two year old Du Bois, met at Westminster Hall. It was there that Du Bois, soon made famous by his 1903 work The Souls of Black Folk, first made his legendary statement that the problem of the twentieth century would be the problem of the “color line.” Du Bois revived the Pan-African Congresses after World War I in Paris in 1919, designed to coincide with the deliberations for the Treaty of Versailles in the spirit of the Fourteen Points. As one scholar noted, “Holding their convention at Versailles sent a clear message to the dominant European imperial powers that Africans were paying attention to what the world powers were saying about international governance and self-determination,” despite the fact that Wilson’s rhetoric on self-determination did not extend to Africa.34 Subsequent meetings followed in London (1921, 1923), New York City (1927), and Manchester (1945). The Manchester Congress, organized by Ghanaian independence leader Kwame Nkrumah and Trinidadian activist George Padmore, is often cited as the foundational moment for African liberation as it was the first of these conferences to be dominated by Africans themselves.35

33 This broad association does not mean that these intellectuals agreed on all points. Du Bois supported neither Washington’s Tuskegee Institute movement, nor Garvey’s United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). Du Bois was a prominent member National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and became editor of its newsletter Crisis in November 1910.
35 Tekle, 50.
so-called “Spirit of Manchester” called for and continental unity and continental struggle against colonialism.\textsuperscript{36} Between 1958-1963, a series of conferences were convened on the African continent itself. At Ghana’s independence celebrations in March 1957 Nkrumah announced plans to host a series of conferences for African leaders to coordinate responses on shared issues.\textsuperscript{37} True to his word, Nkrumah hosted the First Conference of Independent Africa States (CIAS) in Accra from 15-22 April 1958. In December 1958, also in Accra, the first All-African People’s Conference (AAPC) convened with over 300 delegates from twenty-eight Africa countries and colonies. Among the key issues debated at the AAPC was the legitimacy of the use of violence in anticolonial struggles. At the time, Algerian independence was the critical issue of the day. With torture and terrorist tactics used by both the French \textit{Légion étrangère} and the \textit{Front de Libération Nationale}, the AAPC decided that violence was an acceptable tool to dislodge colonial oppressors.

Over three days in late May 1963 African leaders and representatives of liberation movements met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Summit Conference of Independent African States’ (also called the First Conference of Independent African States and Governments) first order of business was the drafting of the Charter of the Organization of African Unity.\textsuperscript{38} Sixty-three years after the first Pan-African conference a regional organization of independent African states was a reality. The OAU would not be the precursor to the continental federation that some had desired (including Nkrumah and Egyptian President Gamal Nasser). However, its creation did represent a brief political triumph over some very substantive ideological divisions between African states. In the late 1950s a schism had developed between the so-called Monrovia and Casablanca groups of independent African states. The Monrovia group, consisting largely of the former French colonies, Nigeria, and Liberia, favoured a more conservative approach towards African liberation and retaining close ties with the former metropolitan powers. The Casablanca


\textsuperscript{37} The conference was attended by all eight independent African states, except the Republic of South Africa: Ethiopia, Liberia, Sudan, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, the United Arab Republic (a short-lived union between Egypt and Syria, 1958-1961), and Ghana. See Michael O. Anda, \textit{International Relations in Contemporary Africa}, (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2000), 87.

\textsuperscript{38} Verbatim records of meetings ended with the seventh ordinary session of the Council of Ministers in November 1966. From then on records were summaries provided by the General Secretariat and assisted by freelance writers. In February 1969 this system was again changed to appointed rapporteurs. See C. O. C. Amate, \textit{Inside the OAU: Pan-Africanism in Practice}, (London: Macmillan, 1986), xii.
group, dominated by the ‘radical’ states of Egypt, Ghana, Algeria, and Guinea-Conakry, argued for a more aggressive approach to African independence and cutting ties with the European powers. These ideological differences were only reconciled with the formation of the OAU.

Despite its regional remit, the OAU signalled to the international community that independent African states now intended to be international actors. It was clear from the OAU Charter that the new organization would adhere to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and listed international cooperation as a key principle.\(^{39}\) Though decolonization was not the sole rationale of the OAU, a commitment to “defend [African] sovereignty, [African] territorial integrity and independence”, and to “eradicate all forms of colonialism from Africa” was enshrined in the OAU Charter. Article III listed the formal principles of the OAU, which are worth reproducing in full:

1. The sovereign equality of all Member States;
2. Non-interference in the internal affairs of States;
3. Respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each State and for its inalienable right to independent existence;
4. Peaceful settlement of disputes by negotiation, mediation, conciliation or arbitration;
5. Unreserved condemnation, in all its forms, of political-assassination as well as of subversive activities on the part of neighbouring States or any other States;
6. Absolute dedication to the total emancipation of the African territories which are still dependent;
7. Affirmation of a policy of non-alignment with regard to all blocs.\(^{40}\)

For the OAU, decolonization was second only to writing the Charter itself, and decolonization required influencing the international community. Resolution CIAS/Plen. 2/Rev. 2 on decolonization was the first resolution adopted by the OAU, where the signatories agreed unanimously to concentrate on helping African states rid themselves of “foreign domination.”\(^{41}\) The resolution also called on African states to intervene “with the great powers so that they cease without exception to lend direct or indirect support or assistance to all the colonist governments which might use such assistance to suppress African liberation movements…the allies of colonial powers...must choose between their friendship for African peoples and their support of powers that suppress Africa.”\(^{42}\) One of the first extra-African acts of the OAU was to send a

\(^{40}\) The OAU Charter remained the organization’s foundational document until the Sirte Declaration of 1999, which dissolved the OAU and created its replacement, the African Union (AU).
\(^{41}\) Amate, 213-214.
\(^{42}\) Amate, 213-214.
delegation to the UN Security Council to comment on the Report of the United Nations Committee of Twenty Four on the situation in the African territories under Portuguese domination.  

Many of the OAU’s first agenda items focused specifically on decolonization, the ideological link between colonialism and apartheid, and cooperation between African states and the UN. Agenda Item I faulted the recalcitrant colonial powers for menacing the peace of the continent by refusing to accept the UN Declaration on Colonial Peoples. Item I also called for a comprehensive trade boycott of Portugal and South Africa by prohibiting the import of goods, closing the ports, and barring Portuguese and South African planes from African airspace. The agenda then specifically advocated pressuring the Great Powers on Portugal:

INTERVENING EXPRESSLY with the Great Powers so that they cease, without exception, to lend direct or indirect support or assistance to all those colonialist governments which might use such assistance to suppress national liberation movements, particularly the Portuguese Government which is conducting a real war of genocide in Africa….  

Perhaps most significantly, these first resolutions also established the Co-ordinating Committee on Decolonization, known as the Liberation Committee, and established a voluntary Special Fund to transfer assistance to African liberation movements. The Liberation Committee would become the most visible face of the OAU, and played a key role in the history of Angolan independence. One of the first tasks of the Liberation Committee was to determine exactly what constituted a liberation struggle, and in turn, which groups should be granted OAU recognition and resources. The Liberation Committee would define a “struggle” as “any action, be it constitutional, psychological, political or military, carried out inside or outside a country with the aim of liberating it from foreign domination.” To achieve recognition as the legitimate representative, a movement had to claim control over a “liberated” area in the Portuguese

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43 This mission was comprised of the Foreign Ministers of Liberia, Tunisia, Madagascar, and Sierra Leone. Amate, 213-214.
45 Resolutions Adopted by the First Conference of Independent African Heads of State and Government.
46 Amate, 284.
Territories, and be active fighting the Portuguese.\textsuperscript{47} As historian of the OAU C. O. C. Amate noted, official recognition by the Liberation Committee was the “‘open sesame’ to the treasuries and armouries of several donor-countries”, and also granted the movements “free access to the conference rooms of the OAU and the UN, where they were treated as honoured guests with all expenses paid for their representatives.”\textsuperscript{48} The Liberation Committee alone retained the right of recognition of African liberation movements, and it would fall to the Liberation Committee to provide the political and logistical support for movements recognized by the OAU. This was particularly relevant in the Angolan case since only recognized groups could count on the full support of two major international organizations, the OAU and the UN. Thus the OAU was a legitimizing force for the liberation movements, given that the UN only recognized movements supported by the OAU. The FNLA and later the MPLA were the beneficiaries of this stamp of international authority and legitimacy, and UNITA was at a disadvantage.

**Territories “of the colonial type”: Portuguese intransigence and Angolan nationalism in the UN and the OAU**\textsuperscript{49}

Angolan nationalists were quick to use the forums of the UN and OAU to pursue the goal of independence. Historian Wellington Nyangoni reports that in 1952 over 500 Angolans addressed a petition to the UN charging the Government of Portugal with mistreatment of its colonial subjects, and requesting that the UN take the lead in ending Portuguese colonialism. This request was left in limbo until Portugal joined the UN in 1955. As per the protocol for new Member states, on 24 February 1956 UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld formally asked the sixteen new Member states, including Portugal, if they administered any NSGT which would be covered under Chapter XI of the UN Charter. In what would become a recurring trope, the Government of Portugal simply replied that Portugal possessed only metropolitan and overseas

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{48} Amate, 283.
\item \textsuperscript{49} United Nations General Assembly, “Principles which should guide Members in determining whether or not an obligation exists to transit the information called for under Article 73e of the UN Charter (General Assembly resolution 1451 [XV], )” URL: \url{http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/153/15/IMG/NR015315.pdf?OpenElement}, and “Transmission of Information Under Article 73e of the UN Charter (General Assembly resolution 1452 [XV])”, both 948th plenary meeting, 15 December 1960. URL: \url{http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/15/ares15.htm}
\end{itemize}
Inspired by the similar French claim to Algeria, this Portuguese legal sleight-of-hand continued until 1960, when the UN General Assembly formally declared that the Portuguese Territories were NSGT under international law, and were thus subject to the provisions and obligations of Chapter XI.

The Portuguese Government would devote considerable resources to circumventing the provisions of Article 73. In December 1959 GA Res 1467 (XIV) created a Special Committee of Six on the Transfer of Information under Article 73. One result of the work of the Special Committee was a much greater focus on issues of decolonization and transitions to independence. Two further resolutions, GA Res 1541 (XV) and GA Res 1542 (XV), both 15 December 1960, dealt specifically with the issue of Article 73 and the duty to report of NSGT. Principle II of Resolution 1541 reaffirmed the applicability of Article 73e to “territories which were then known to be of the colonial type” when the Charter was drafted and ratified, in an attempt to rebut the arguments of France and Portugal, both of whom claimed to have overseas provinces, not colonies. The subsequent resolution, GA Res 1542 (XV), specifically pointed to the Government of Portugal, noting that it had not transmitted any information on its territories and “has not expressed any intention of doing so.” Moreover, the information gleaned from other sources gave “cause for concern.”

In February 1961 MPLA cadres launched an unsuccessful raid against the Portuguese barracks in Luanda. This action touched off a spontaneous series of violent clashes between Angolan nationalists and Portuguese armed forces. As reports of harsh Portuguese reprisals, including massacres of suspected “rebels,” filtered into the UN system, the deteriorating situation in Angola prompted GA Res 1603 (XV), which created a Sub-Committee on the Situation in Angola on 20 April 1961. The Sub-Committee’s Members (Bolivia; Dahomey, now Benin; Federation of Malaya, now Malaysia; Finland; and Sudan) were charged with investigating reports of atrocities, and recommending ways to monitor Angola’s independence struggles.

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51 “Principles which should guide Members in determining whether or not an obligation exists to transit the information called for under Article 73e of the UN Charter (General Assembly resolution 1451 [XV])” and “Transmission of Information Under Article 73e of the UN Charter (General Assembly resolution 1452 [XV]).”
52 The official list of Non-Self-Governing Territories (NSGT) under Portuguese administration was: “the Cape Verde Archipelago; Guinea, called Portuguese Guinea; São Tomé and Príncipe, and their dependencies; São João Batista de Ajudá; Angola, including the enclave of Cabinda; Mozambique; Goa and dependencies, called the State of India; Macau and dependencies; Timor and dependencies”.
53 “Transmission of information under Article 73e of the Charter.”
again, the wording of the resolution elevated colonial violence in Angola to a threat to global stability, stating that “the failure to act speedily, effectively and in time for ameliorating the disabilities of the African peoples of Angola is likely to endanger international peace and security.”

While most of the debates on Portugal and its Territories took place in the General Assembly, between 1961-1976 there were nine UN Security Council Resolutions concerning Angola, the Portuguese empire, or South African interference in contiguous states. While emerging states held the majority in the General Assembly, they did not hold court in the Security Council, which was dominated by the five permanent members with veto powers. On 20 February 1961, Liberia requested a Security Council meeting to investigate Portuguese atrocities in its African territories and to introduce a resolution condemning Portuguese colonialism. As quoted in Nyangoni, “many delegations believed that the situation in Angola could be construed as a threat to international peace (and therefore warrant Security Council consideration under Article 34 of the [UN] Charter) since the Portuguese authorities’ contravention of the declaration on ending colonialism was causing tension between African States and Portugal.”

Several meetings took place from 10-15 March 1961; however the resolution was rejected five to zero, with six abstentions. Throughout June 1961 there was another series of Security Council debates on Angola. The Security Council invited representatives from Portugal, India, Ghana, Congo (Léopoldville), Congo (Brazzaville), Nigeria, Mali, Ethiopia and Morocco to “participate, without vote” on the discussion of alleged Portuguese atrocities in the

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55 France, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, the United States and the Republic of China (ROC). The ROC was replaced by the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in 1971.
56 The members of the UN Security Council in 1961 were: Ecuador, Chile, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Turkey, United Arab Emirates, and Liberia, plus the five permanent members: France, the United Kingdom, the US, the Soviet Union, and the Republic of China (Taiwan).
58 Nyangoni, 97.
territories. The resulting resolution, S/4835, again directly condemned Portuguese action as threat to international security, stating:

*Deeply deploring* the large-scale killings and the severely repressive measure in Angola, *Taking note* of the grave concerns and strong reactions to such occurrences throughout the continent of Africa and in other parts of the world,

*Convinced* that the continuance of the situation in Angola is an actual and potential cause of international friction and is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace…

In July 1963 the Security Council adopted resolution 180 (S/5380) which reaffirmed the Council’s commitment to the 1960 resolution on decolonization, “deprecate[d] the attitude of the Portuguese Government, its repeated violations of the principle of the Charter and its continued refusal to implement the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council”, and declared that the situation in the Portuguese territories was “seriously disturbing peace and security in Africa.”

A supplemental resolution, 183, was adopted in December 1963 when attempts to bring the Portuguese Government and representatives from the liberation movements together failed. Resolution 218, from 23 November 1965, reaffirmed the Security Council’s demands for the opening of “negotiations, on the basis of the right to self-determination, with the authorized representatives of the people within and outside the Territories”, and requested “all States to refrain forthwith from offering the Portuguese Government any assistance which would enable it to continue its repression of the people in the Territories under its administration.” This rather firmly worded resolution was adopted seven votes to none, with France, the Netherlands, the UK, and the US abstaining.

On 18 August 1970 the Special Committee on Decolonization issued a resolution again insisting that Portugal “apply without further delay to the peoples of the territories under their domination the principle of self-determination and independence”, and that the Government of

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60 UN Security Council S/4835.
Portugal “cease forthwith” its “repressive activities” in its African territories. The resolution passed fourteen to two, with two abstentions (Italy and Norway). The two “nay” votes came from the US and the UK. Later, on 23 October 1970, the UN General Assembly approved a Declaration on Colonialism and Apartheid, which effectively recognized not only the legitimacy of the liberation movements, but tacitly approved the use of force by these organizations. The resolution noted that,

In spite of the United Nations’ achievements in decolonization, many territories, notably South West Africa (Namibia), Southern Rhodesia, Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea Bissau, continue to be denied self-determination in a deliberate and deplorable defiance of the United Nations and world opinion by certain recalcitrant States and by the illegal regime in Southern Rhodesia; we recognize the legitimacy of the struggle of colonial peoples for freedom by all appropriate means at their disposal.

Finally, in 1972 the Security Council adopted two key resolutions, 312 (S/RES/312), which called upon Portugal “to recognize immediately the right of the peoples of the Territories under its administration to self-determination and independence”, and 322 (S/RES/322), which finally followed the lead of the General Assembly, by explicitly acknowledging the liberation movements recognized by the OAU as the “legitimate representatives of the peoples of those Territories.”

Unsurprisingly, Angolan independence was a major concern of the OAU’s Liberation Committee, and the tensions between the Angolan movements and their respective allies threatened to derail the Liberation Committee’s best efforts to agitate for Angola liberation. Though the OAU had resolutely declared itself a neutral bloc in the cold war, and many member states were participants in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), African leaders were mindful of escalating racial and cold war tensions and the constant potential of a nuclear contest. Moreover, the assertive actions of the African liberation movements further raised tensions in an already

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anxious world. The first session of the Liberation Committee met in June 1963 and deliberated on sixteen territories which were still under “foreign domination.” Present at this meeting were delegations from thirteen political parties and movements from eleven of these territories, including the FNLA and the MPLA. The problem of multiple representatives from each territory was apparent from the inception of the Liberation Committee, but nowhere was this issue more acute than in Angola. Thus one of the first sub-committees of the OAU was created to mediate between the FNLA and the MPLA. On the basis of a “goodwill mission” to Congo-Léopoldville and Congo-Brazzaville, the sub-committee of Algeria, Congo, Guinea, Nigeria, and Uganda recommended recognizing the FNLA/GRAE, with the caveat that the MPLA should join the FNLA. However, at the Assembly of Heads of State meeting in July 1964 Roberto rejected incorporating the MPLA, instead calling for its dissolution, permitting former MPLA members to join as individuals only. When the OAU protested, Roberto threatened to leave, claiming that the FNLA had pre-dated the OAU and would carry on without official support. To mollify Roberto, the FNLA/GRAE was granted sole recognition.

Still, the OAU was not happy with Roberto’s hostility, and the MPLA continued to appeal for recognition. In response, OAU Chairman Gamal Nasser appointed a three-person conciliation committee to “the task of using all means to create one front against Portuguese colonialism.” Roberto defied the OAU and boycotted the first two meetings, refusing to share recognition with the MPLA. In 1965 the Liberation Committee responded by withholding funds from the FNLA/GRAE due to Roberto’s intransigence and the appearance of an internal dispute, which eventually resulted in the creation of UNITA in 1966. Hamstrung by the lack of funds, in 1966 the FNLA/GRAE finally sent a delegation to the conciliation committee. The MPLA and FNLA/GRAE signed a cease-fire agreement on 15 October 1966 and agreed to work together to rid Angola of the Portuguese. Upon the successful ejection of the Portuguese, they agreed to participate in an OAU-led effort to create a joint government. In response the Liberation Committee granted each movement, MPLA and FNLA, £7500 in February and an additional £4000 in August 1966.

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67 Those territories included: Angola and Cabinda, Mozambique, Portuguese Guinea and Cape Verde Islands, Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia, South West Africa, South Africa, Swaziland, Basutoland, Bechuanaland, Comoro Islands, Rio de Oro, Fernando Po, Spanish Guinea, Dijibouti, and Réunion. Amate, 283.
68 Amate, 242.
69 The members of the Conciliation Committee were Egypt, Ghana, and Congo. Amate, 243.
70 Amate, 244.
There were two main difficulties with the OAU’s insistence upon the FNLA/GRAE-MPLA cooperation. First, the Angolan movements would actively defy the OAU’s calls for their unification; second, debates in the Liberation Committee were interrupted by the competing political interests and ideological leanings of other independent states. The ceasefire was short-lived. On a fact-finding mission to the liberated areas in autumn 1966, the Liberation Committee was disheartened to find the MPLA and FNLA still fighting each other. In July 1967 UNITA was added to the mix, when Savimbi requested recognition for his movement. He was rejected. The initial decision to grant official recognition to Roberto’s FNLA/GRÁE in 1964 troubled the OAU for the next decade.

By July 1968 the OAU had become exasperated with the feuding of the Angolan liberation movements. The Liberation Committee wrote directly to Roberto inquiring about the apparent ineffectiveness of the FNLA. Shortly thereafter, at the OAU conference in Algiers, the Liberation Committee recommended increased military support to the MPLA and withdrew official recognition from the GRÁE, Roberto’s self-designated government in exile, after Neto convincingly made a presentation highlighting the MPLA’s successes. Official de-recognition was a blow to Roberto’s prestige and his international profile, and might have starved Roberto’s movement of necessary funds and resources until it was no longer able to continue to fight. However, the OAU continued to recognize Roberto’s political wing, the FNLA. Thus the FNLA continued to fight due to powerful regional allies like Mobutu and continued US support. As Amate noted, each time the issue of delisting the FNLA came to a vote, it failed to receive a simple majority in the more powerful Council of Ministers and Assembly of Heads of State.

By 1969 the internecine conflict increasingly drew in other international actors. In February 1969 the Liberation Committee reported that each of the movements received external aid, creating “some evidence of Sino-Soviet rivalries; GRÁE claims that it receives Chinese arms but says nothing about receiving American supplies; China has praised UNITA; and the USSR has supplied aid to MPLA, the movement officially recognised by the OAU.”

1969 also saw the OAU issue one of its most important and controversial declarations. The Lusaka Manifesto

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71 Amate, 245.
72 Amate, 246.
73 Amate, 218.
74 Tekle, 55.
75 Amate, 247.
represented the OAU’s attempt to strike a balance between the liberation movements and the more conservative established African states. As the Manifesto makes clear, the problem was not simply that the regimes of Caetano, B. J. Vorster, and Ian Smith were racist and illegitimate, but that their actions in their respective territories threatened global peace and security, writing,

When the purpose and the basis of States’ international policies are misunderstood, there is introduced into the world a new and unnecessary disharmony, disagreements, conflicts of interest, or different assessments of human priorities, which provoke an excess of tension in the world, and disastrously divide mankind, at a time when united action is necessary to control modern technology and put it to the service of man.77

The Lusaka Manifesto was a polarizing document. On the one hand, it defined liberation in now familiar terms: political independence and the end of white minority rule. The Manifesto condemned the subjugation of Angola, Mozambique, and the rest of southern Africa, insisted that “the people in the territories still under colonial rule shall be free to determine for themselves their own institutions of self-government”, and that the individuals in Southern Africa “shall be freed from an environment posed [sic] by the propaganda of racialism, and given an opportunity to be men - not white men, brown men, yellow men, or black men.”78 The Lusaka Manifesto pointed out that the behaviours of colonial and white minority regimes in Africa actually diminished the concept of human rights on a global scale, stating “for if the principle of human equality and all that flows from it, is either universal or it does not exist.”79 Yet it also was careful to modulate any acceptance of the use of force, noting that “if peaceful progress to emancipation were possible, or if changed circumstances were to make it possible in the future, we would urge our brothers in the resistance movements to use peaceful methods of struggle even at the cost of some compromise on the timing of change.”80

The Lusaka Manifesto extended the vaunted principle of non-racialism to the OAU itself, asserting that “the liberation

77 Not to be confused with the Lusaka Accord, signed between FRELIMO and Portugal on 7 September 1974, the Lusaka Declaration of the Commonwealth on Racism and Racial Prejudice, signed on 7 August 1979, or the Lusaka Protocol, which attempted to end the Angolan Civil War by creating a formal process of national reconciliation, signed on 31 October 1994. The sheer number of international meetings that took place in the Zambian capital points to the centrality of Kaunda’s Lusaka during the decades of liberation. Organization of African Unity, “Manifesto on Southern Africa (Lusaka Manifesto)”, Fifth Summit Conference of East and Central African States, 16 April 1969. URL: http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=4836#fifth and Lusaka Manifesto, ACR 1969-1970, C 41-C 44
of Africa – for which we are struggling – does not mean a reverse racialism.”81 For the frontline states, the ultimate goal was the liberation of southern Africa; force was only to be used as a last resort. As prominent Tanzanian activist Walter Bgoya recalled, the Lusaka Manifesto “put forward the position that the heads of state would dissuade the liberation movements from continuing the armed struggle if the Portuguese and South African regimes accepted the principles of independence and majority rule and agreed to start the process of negotiations to that end.”82 This position infuriated the nationalist movements, who objected to the decision being taken on their behalf without their input. As Bgoya noted, “the decision on the means by which to pursue the struggle was a sovereign decision that only they and no one else could take.”83

At the OAU meeting of the Council of Ministers in August 1970, the OAU again issued a condemnation of the “Atlantic Alliance” of NATO powers for its continued support of the Portuguese state, and urged the liberation movements to “remain in permanent contact with the struggling forces in the interior.”84 Frustrated by the lack of progress, both with the Angolan liberation movements and with the state of southern Africa as a whole, in 1971 the OAU toughened its stance towards both issues, and supplanted the controversial Lusaka Manifesto with the Mogadishu Declaration, which accepted the use of force for the liberation movements. Bgoya, who drafted the Mogadishu Declaration, recalled that “that since the Portuguese colonialists and the apartheid regime had not responded positively, frustrating the hopes of the OAU, there was no alternative but to continue to support the armed struggle.”85

“Who Speaks for Africa?”: The American Committee on Africa and Angolan Independence86

The OAU and UN were not the only organizations which focused on Angolan independence. The postwar rise in multinational institutions was paralleled by a rise in nongovernmental

83 Bgoya.
85 Bgoya.
organizations. Organizations such as the American Committee on Africa (ACOA) soon became important actors in Angola’s independence struggle. ACOA was founded in 1953 in New York City, with the express purpose of supporting antiracist and anticolonial liberation movements in Africa.\textsuperscript{87} ACOA in particular established early links with the liberation movements, and with the UN and OAU, dedicated itself to ‘speaking’ for Africa on the international stage. While Africans could, and did, speak for themselves internationally, ‘progressive’ organizations had access to resources and western populations that far exceeded what most liberation movements could muster. Examining ACOA’s activities provides a useful counterpoint to the formal diplomatic record, making them an especially illuminating case study of the intersection of formal and informal internationalization.

For most of the organization’s history its Executive Director was George M. Houser, an American Methodist minister who spent a year abroad in Jiang Jieshi’s China in 1935, attended his first picket line in support of A. Philip Randolph’s Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, and was arrested and imprisoned for resisting the Selective Service Act in 1940.\textsuperscript{88} In 1942 Houser founded the Congress for Racial Equality (CORE), a prominent antiracist organization that was heavily active in the African-American civil rights movement.\textsuperscript{89} In 1952 Houser became aware of apartheid South Africa, and the “Campaign to Defy Unjust Laws” sponsored by the African National Congress (ANC), and his focus turned to African affairs. According to Houser, this new


\textsuperscript{88} Houser, \textit{No One Can Stop the Rain}, preface, 6-7. The title of Houser’s memoir comes from this 1960 poem by MPLA leader Agostinho Neto:

\begin{quote}
Here in prison
rag contained in my breast
I patiently wait
for the clouds to gather
blown by the winds of history.
\end{quote}

No one
can stop the rain.

\textsuperscript{89} Houser, \textit{No One Can Stop the Rain}, 8.
interest came from a Christian/liberation theological understanding of racialism and colonialism in Africa. In his own words,

My own introduction to African affairs came at a time when there were only four independent states and the anti-colonial struggle was the focus. This was an exciting and relatively uncomplicated time. My initial interest and concern was not primarily academic. I trained for the Christian ministry. My concern was for the application of the Christian gospel to the great issues of the day – peace, and the confronting of racial and economic injustice.\(^9^0\)

From that point on Houser and ACOA became tireless advocates of antiracism and anticolonialism in Africa. In particular, ACOA become known for attending African conferences and debates, and subsequently issuing comprehensive bulletins which kept Americans informed on African affairs. ACOA first devoted itself to monitoring UN debates on African and decolonization, and to exposing hypocrisies and non-compliance with Article 73.

It was in Angola in 1954 that Houser first experienced the reach of the *Estado Novo*, as Lisbon sought to carefully control the public image of its colonies. In one story, a missionary from South Dakota wrote home about the terrible forced labour conditions in Luanda. The story was published in the town’s local newspapers; when that came to the attention of the Portuguese authorities the missionary was expelled from Angola. In Houser’s own experience, because he had already made a reputation for himself as an agitator, his passport was confiscated upon arrival in Luanda, and in Lobito he was followed by plainclothes policemen.\(^9^1\) One of the first people Houser met in Angola was Manuel Barros Neaca, UPNA activist and Holden Roberto’s uncle. After Roberto slipped into Accra to attend the All African People’s Conference (AAPC) in 1958, Roberto wrote to Houser directly for assistance to help him get to New York City to gain access to the UN General Assembly. It was apparently Houser’s idea to attach Roberto to another country’s UN delegation (Ghana or Guinea) to escape suspicion.\(^9^2\) When Roberto finally arrived in the US in December 1959, he frequently used ACOA offices as a base, even mimeographing his statement to the UN on ACOA machinery.\(^9^3\) Inadvertently, Houser had found himself at the beginnings of Angolan nationalism.

\(^9^1\) Houser, *No One Can Stop the Rain*, 44, 48.
\(^9^2\) Houser, *No One Can Stop the Rain*, 79.
\(^9^3\) Houser, *No One Can Stop the Rain*, 80.
One of ACOA’s earliest reports in December 1956 had already noted that Portugal was actively attempting to circumvent its duties under Article 73. During the eleventh session of the UN General Assembly, 12 November 1956 to 8 March 1957, ACOA observers counted twelve “major questions” regarding Africa. While this was impressive, the General Assembly was soon preoccupied with Hungary and Suez and “other questions, especially the complicated and difficult ones, were swept under the diplomatic rug…. In particular, the long-standing questions involving South Africa, South West Africa, and the Ethiopian-Somali border were asked to solve themselves without disturbing the delegates more pressing considerations.”

In response, in 1957 ACOA issued its own summary report to the UN, “The Status of Portugal’s African Territories.” Much of ACOA’s report detailed the harsh and unequal conditions imposed by the Portuguese in Angola and Mozambique, highlighting the entrenched forced labour system and the legal, economic, educational, and political discrepancies between “civilized” Portuguese, who possessed the full range of civic rights, and the African “indigenas.” A substantial section of ACOA’s report, however, discussed the international relations aspects of Portuguese intransigence. At its root the argument over the status of the Portuguese Territories hinged on the legal challenge of Article 73. When Portugal declared to the UN that it had no NSGT in 1955, it ignited a minor firestorm in the General Assembly. Seventeen countries introduced a draft resolution to examine the issue of transmission of information. However, the resolution was defeated on a procedural motion, despite being passed forty-one votes to thirty (with ten abstentions).

As ACOA noted,

Underlying the debate on the resolution which failed was the recurring question of the competence of the Assembly to deal with ‘internal’ matters. The Portuguese delegate implied that the admission of states by the UN ‘implied that the United Nations accepted them as they were, recognizing their constitution and basic structure’ and that it could not ask for changes.

94 George M. Houser [Executive Director] and A. C. Thompson [Representative to UN], “Africa-UN Bulletin”, No. 1, 7 December 1956, AAA. URL: http://kora.matrix.msu.edu/files/50/304/32-130-ACE-84-al.sff.document.acoa000081.pdf
97 “The Status of the Portuguese Territories”, 2.
As early as 1957 ACOA exposed the fact that Portugal and its allies, mainly the US, were hiding behind international relations, evading the “responsibility of the United Nations to the colonial peoples of the world” by “taking refuge in technical formulae which avoid the substantive issues.”98 The report noted,

However the formal legal relationship of Angola and Mozambique to Portugal may be denominated, these territories in fact are non-self-governing, and such fact is confirmed by constitutional provisions as well as by administrative practices in those areas. The absolute Portuguese control of the political, economic, and social life of the inhabitants, which exists by virtue of law, renders them non-self-governing from both moral and legal viewpoints. Therefore Portugal should be required to report on such territories to the United Nations and otherwise to comply with the provisions of Article 73 of the Charter in connection with them.99

Given the dismal state of the Territories, the legal fiction of self-government in Angola and Mozambique was a “travesty.”100

In January 1958 an ACOA bulletin reported that the US had once again opposed a resolution compelling Portugal to report on its NSGT “with all its power and prestige.”101 The US delegate was the actress Irene Dunne, whom Eisenhower had appointed as one of five alternate delegates to the UN General Assembly.102 Dunne condemned the resolution as “unnecessary, misleading, and unproductive.” According to the Bulletin,

[Dunne] pointed out that Portugal was not alone in denying the application of Chapter XI to areas which other members might consider non-self-governing; she referred specifically to India, a co-sponsor of the resolution, which, she noted, refused to report on certain island possessions, Dunne reiterated the American position that the question of what is a non-self-governing territory is ultimately a matter of internal concern.103

Still, the resolution passed. However, the addition of Brazil to the seven member non-administering powers on the Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories was seen as another setback, as Brazil consistently supported Portugal. The Bulletin also noted that by 1958 Portugal was already “generally considered not only the worst offender against the

100 “The Status of the Portuguese Territories”, 8.
102 Dunne reportedly found her time at the UN “much more exciting than acting, because you were taking part in real and important dramas.” See Bob Thomas, “Actress Found U.N. Exciting Diplomat Irene Dunne Reports”, 24 February 1958, The Irene Dunne Site [online]. URL: http://www.irenedunnesite.com/press/1958-actress-found-u-n-exciting/
Charter provisions relating to dependencies but, also the spearhead of most of the opposition against any effective UN control over all colonial areas.”

In the autumn of 1958 ACOA prepared a background paper on the issue of NSGT for an upcoming UN General Assembly discussion. The report detailed the evolution of the subject, and detailed the difficult lives of African peoples under Portuguese domination, which ran directly counter to Portuguese propaganda about equality under the law for all citizens, and its “non-racial” society. ACOA’s reporting gained the organization influential friends in Africa, and by December 1958 ACOA members were given “fraternal-delegate” status at the first AAPC in Accra. Houser reflected on the different presences of the superpowers: representatives from the Soviet Union and China attended, and according to Houser each kept a low profile (with the exception of when PRC sensibilities were offended by the accidental hoisting of the Nationalist Chinese flag). In contrast, at first no official message came from the US. A day later, prodded by African-American Congressman Charles Diggs, Nixon sent what was described as a decidedly “lukewarm” message, which was not even read to the assembled crowd.

ACOA was also conspicuous within the US. In an undated (c. mid-1959) annual report entitled “Who Speaks for Africa?: A Report on the Activities of the American Committee on Africa”, ACOA defined its role as providing “specific channel for Americans to express their sympathy with legitimate African aspirations for greater freedoms.” Reflecting Houser’s initial commitment to the civil rights movement, ACOA was also active in linking African independence to domestic African-American politics. Among ACOA’s activities included sponsoring an Africa Freedom Day event at Carnegie Hall on 15 April 1959, which counted over 3000 participants, including Kenyan activist Tom Mboya, Governor of Michigan G. Mennen Williams (who shortly joined the Kennedy administration as the second, and most active, Undersecretary of State for African Affairs), A. Philip Randolph, Harry Belafonte, “and

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106 Houser, No One Can Stop the Rain, 69, 71-72.
107 ACOA counted several prominent members, including Eleanor Roosevelt; “Mrs. Chester Bowles”; Congressmen Charles C. Diggs (D-MI) and Adam Clayton Powell (D-NY), both prominent black Representatives; award-winning librettist and producer Oscar Hammerstein II; Democratic Senators Hubert H. Humphrey, Eugene McCarthy, Edward Muskie, and Wayne Morse; Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr; Sidney Poitier, Jackie Robinson, Dr. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Dr. Immanuel Wallerstein, and Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. ACOA, “Who Speaks for Africa?”
108 “Who Speaks for Africa?”
Ambassadors from most of the African Independent States [were] also on the program.\textsuperscript{109} The same report listed international initiatives such as raising nearly $50,000 in 1958 for the South Africa Defense Fund (for the legal defenses of ninety-one charged with treason), and sending $2000 to Legal Aid in Kenya. In that same year ACOA joined with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored Peoples (NAACP) and the National Urban League to host a dinner for Nkrumah at New York’s Waldorf-Astoria Hotel.

In May 1959 ACOA Vice-Chairman Peter Weiss testified before the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, pointing out that extending Export-Import or aid credits to the Union of South Africa, the Portuguese Colonies of Angola and Mozambique, or the Central African Federation raised “grave questions of political wisdom and moral rightness.”\textsuperscript{110} Weiss testified that,

Any amounts appropriated to, spent in, or loaned to countries which pursue an open policy of racial discrimination are bound to create ill feeling toward the United States among their disenfranchised nonwhite populations, as well as in other African countries. It may not be inappropriate to establish legislative safeguards against the expenditure of mutual security funds in such areas.\textsuperscript{111}

In April 1960, during John F. Kennedy’s campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination, ACOA was invited to speak before the Advance Platform Hearings of Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia. In a heartfelt address, Weiss argued that with the increasing interconnectedness of the international system – which Weiss eloquently described as being “likened to one of Rube Goldberg’s fantastic creations, each part linked to each other part in devious, yet irresistible ways” – Africa should not be excluded from the US’ foreign policy calculations, nor subjected to its own special set of rules.\textsuperscript{112} Weiss contended that traditional US policies towards Africa “canceled each other out.”\textsuperscript{113} Anti-communist rhetoric on human rights,

\textsuperscript{109} “Who Speaks for Africa?”
\textsuperscript{110} Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, Eighty-Sixth Congress, First Session on S. 1451 To further American the Mutual Security Act of 1954, as amended, and for other purposes, Part 2, “Statement by Mr. Peter Weiss, Vice Chairman of the Executive Board, American Committee on Africa, New York, N.Y.”, May 15, 18, 20, 21, and 25, 1959, AAA. URL: http://kora.matrix.msu.edu/files/50/304/32-130-D88-84-al.sff.document.acoa001024.pdf
\textsuperscript{111} Statement by Mr. Peter Weiss, 15 May 1959.
\textsuperscript{113} Advance Platform Hearings of the Democratic National Committee, 28 April 1960.
equality, and the democratic tradition was undermined by public statements such as the one Weiss used to illustrate his point:

‘It is the policy of our government to support the attainment of freedom by all peoples who, by their acts, show themselves worthy of it and ready for it’. The words are not those of Cecil Rhodes, author of the slogan ‘equality for all civilized men’, but of Dean Acheson, spoken in his capacity as Secretary of State in 1949.\footnote{Advance Platform Hearings of the Democratic National Committee, 28 April 1960.}

As Weiss saw it, if the US “kept [its] diplomatic ears closer to the ground”, and recognized the “power of popular forces throughout the world, like those represented by the African freedom movement”, the US would less frequently find itself in the distasteful position of sacrificing “moral principles to strategic expedients.”\footnote{Advance Platform Hearings of the Democratic National Committee, 28 April 1960.} In fact, by recognizing African independence movements and supporting self-determination, “the moral choice and the strategic choice would more frequently coincide.”\footnote{Advance Platform Hearings of the Democratic National Committee, 28 April 1960.} It cannot be definitively determined if Weiss’ perspective was influential. However, the 1960 Democratic Party Platform did specifically address the “non-Communist” Third World. Invoking “the Jeffersonian tradition,” it reported, “we recognize and welcome the irresistible momentum of the world revolution of rising expectations for a better life. We shall identify American policy with the values and objectives of this revolution.”\footnote{Democratic Party Platforms, “Democratic Party Platform of 1960”, 11 July 1960. Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project [online]. URL: \url{http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29602}} The platform welcomed “the emerging new nations of Africa to the world community. Here again we shall strive to write a new chapter of fruitful cooperation.”\footnote{“Democratic Party Platform of 1960”, 11 July 1960.}

Weiss had urged the DNC platform committee to create an African policy based on the assumption that “all Africa will be free two Presidential elections hence”, and his forecast was largely correct – by the end of 1968 there \textit{would} be forty-one independent African states, not counting South Africa.\footnote{Advance Platform Hearings of the Democratic National Committee, 28 April 1960.} However, there remained the persistent problem of southern Africa.

Unsurprisingly, ACOA began to focus more of its attention the stubborn cases of Rhodesia, South Africa, and the Portuguese Territories. In particular, ACOA took a firm stance on Angola. ACOA published a statement by Holden Roberto on organization letterhead in March 1961, where Roberto asserted that, “it must be recognized that there is no possibility, psychological or moral, for colonial powers to continue their domination of Africans, confronted as they are with
the unanimous will of the democratically-minded people who are becoming the majority in this world of ours.”

Not incidentally, Roberto also took the opportunity to bolster the UPA’s (the forerunner of the FNLA/GRAE) international profile, writing that,

The Union of the Populations of Angola, of which I have the honor to be the spokesman, counts 40,000 registered members and more than a half million sympathizers. It is the most popular and best organised party in Angola. Its newspaper, the Voice of the Angolan Nation, appears every two weeks; it is published in four languages: the two most widely spoken African languages of Angola, French and Portuguese.

On 12 July 1961 ACOA published a report of a Reverend Malcolm McVeigh, who had returned from Angola a mere eleven days earlier. McVeigh too reported on the dismal living conditions in Angola. According to McVeigh, “the Portuguese believe that the great majority (they used to say all) of the Africans consider themselves Portuguese, are content under Portuguese rule and loyal to the Government. In their view, the Africans don’t want independence…. The Portuguese believe that they are the only ones who know how to colonize properly [emphasis in original].” But the Portuguese tendency to dismiss all political activity as “an expression of external, foreign, Communist influence” was erroneous [emphasis in original]. Rather, the MPLA and UPA were “expressions of the same nationalistic phenomenon which has led to the establishment of independent countries all over Africa in recent years.” If, as many charged, “there [were] signs in the Angolan liberation movements today of leanings toward the East, these are probably caused by the lack of hope that the West was interested in African freedom.”

Arguably ACOA’s most significant contribution in 1961 was their participation in the third AAPC in Cairo. Houser attended the first and second conferences, in Accra in December 1958, and in Tunis in January 1960, and had noticed several substantial changes.

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121 “Statement of Mr. Holden Roberto”, 1.
123 “The Present Situation in Angola”, 3.
124 “The Present Situation in Angola”, 3.
recalled some years later, “something new was happening and Lumumba’s death helped trigger it.” Houser noted, “large banners were suspended across major Cairo boulevards during the Conference with slogans such as ‘Unify Congo as One Country’, ‘Death to Lumumba’s Murderers’, ‘Colonialists and Imperialists Hands Off Africa’, ‘Down with Verwoerd’s Government’, ‘Freedom to Kenyatta’, etc.” More substantially, however, Houser detected a new acceptance of the idea of the use of force in Africa’s liberation struggles. In contrast to the first two AAPC conferences, “non-violence was hardly mentioned at all.” Rather, “it was assumed that violence would be necessary in order to gain freedom for the Portuguese areas of Africa, for the Union of South Africa and South West Africa.”

Another substantial change was the new sense of hostility toward the United States, caused in significant part by US support for Portugal in the UN. As Houser reported,

One of the most marked differences between the Accra or Tunis conference and Cairo was that at this third conference, a point of attack was made by many delegates directly upon the United States. The United States was looked upon as the leader of the neo-colonialist powers. Some of the delegates said that Portuguese control would not be able to maintain itself without firm United States backing. The recent vote of the United States in the Security Council against Portugal on the Angola question was looked upon as a tactic to fool the Africans.

Houser noted that while goodwill messages from Nikita Khrushchev, Zhou Enlai, and Jawaharlal Nehru were read to the Conference, a corresponding message from US Assistant Secretary of State G. Mennen Williams was not, nor was it copied and distributed to the participants. Once again the US’ goodwill message was virtually ignored. Though Houser did not believe that Africa had turned irrevocably toward the communist world, he did caution that the dominant political position was one of “anti-Western neutralism.” Houser also reported that only the MPLA participated in the AAPC. The UPA/FNLA, already enmeshed in Congolese politics,

126 Houser, No One Can Stop the Rain, 144.
127 Houser also wrote, “In addition, large photographs of Patrice Lumumba, Jomo Kenyatta, Roland Felix Moumie (President of the Union of the Populations of the Camerouns who was poisoned in late 1960) and John Kale (representative for about three years in Cairo of the Uganda National Congress who died in a plane crash in 1960) added to the symbolism of the Conference. Pictures of these four African leaders, three of whom had died or had been killed since the last All African People’s Conference, were prominently displayed in many of the numerous halls or centers where conference business was carried on.” “Draft Report on the Third All-African People’s Conference Held in Cairo”, 1.
feared that “if it attended the conference in Cairo, action would be taken against it by the
Joseph Kasavubu regime in Leopoldville.”

ACOA’s relatively high profile had already gained the organization some prominent
adversaries, particularly in the Portuguese-American community. In one incident in November
1961, Boston lawyer Martin T. Camacho, head of the newly-formed Portuguese American
Committee on Foreign Affairs, insisted that Congress investigate ACOA (erroneously listed as
“ACA”) for “supporting of communist goals” by advocating for independence for the Portuguese
Territories. Most damning in Camacho’s mind was that ACOA was supporting Holden
Roberto, who many Portuguese considered the chief terrorist, responsible for “atrocities
exceeding any ever done by the Mau Mau in Kenya,” and a Marxist. Camacho argued that
ACOA had been a factor in influencing US policy to “sid[e] with the Soviet Union against
Portugal,” and thus Presidential assistants and ACOA members Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. and
Eleanor Roosevelt should resign. Camacho reportedly sent letters to several ACOA members
detailing his organization’s accusations, as well as including a letter supposedly from Roberto
himself. Camacho also asked the Department of Justice to force ACOA to register as a foreign
agent. Camacho’s very public accusation caused Houser to issue a response to ACOA members.
Upon investigation it was discovered that Camacho was an employee of the PR firm Selvage &
Lee, which had been hired by the Portuguese government to “‘disseminat[e] and publiciz[e] the
accomplishments of Portugal in its overseas provinces and the distribution through all available
media of facts to combat false and misleading information regarding current strife in
Angola’.” The letter from Roberto was deemed a forgery. In a bit of poetic justice, once it was
revealed that Camacho was in the employ of the Portuguese government, he was compelled to
register as a foreign agent.

134 Camacho’s full testimony before the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations is available at Activities of
Nondiplomatic Representatives of Foreign Principals in the United States, Committee on Foreign Relations, US
Senate, 88th Congress, First Session, Part 8, 12 April and 6 May 1963, Aluka.org. URL:
http://www.aluka.org/action/showMetadata?doi=10.5555/AL_SFF.DOCUMENT.ascg001. In response, see
“Statement made by George M. Houser, Executive Director of the ACOA on the charges made by the Portuguese
American Committee on Foreign Affairs”, 17 November 1961, Aluka.org. URL:
http://www.aluka.org/action/showMetadata?doi=10.5555/AL_SFF.DOCUMENT.acoa001030. Camacho is equally
135 Camacho likely drew his list of prominent ACOA members from a similar list to the Annual report.
136 Statement made by George M. Houser on the charges made by the Portuguese American Committee on Foreign
Affairs, 17 November 1961.
137 Houser, No One Can Stop the Rain, 160.
By 1963 ACOA had already been agitating for African independence for a nearly decade, devoting considerable time to meeting liberation leaders in Africa, participating in international workshops, and to influencing US policymakers on African affairs. In December 1965 ACOA sponsored a high-profile address from Martin Luther King, Jr. at the South Africa Benefit at Hunter College, New York City. In June 1967, ACOA member and Fulbright Scholar Richard E. Thomas prepared a report for the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, DC. According to a cover note, Thomas spent 1964 in southern Africa, and noted that “Southern Africa policy [was] now under review in the State Department. Such a process occurs every two or three years, through minor revisions may occur at any time. There is no doubt that the many tactical suggestions put forward by ACOA will be considered….”

Like the UN and the OAU, by 1967 ACOA was forced to contend with the increasingly public animosity between the Angolan liberation movements, and its detrimental effects on the Angolan independence. And, like the UN and the OAU, ACOA shifted its support away from the FNLA/GRAE and towards the MPLA. In Houser’s words, “as contending and competing movements arose, whom should we support?” Like others, and following the lead of the OAU, initially ACOA supported Roberto’s FNLA/GRAE. Yet, as Houser put it, “[o]nly gradually it became clear that the rise of the MPLA and an unfriendly competition between these movements with ethnic, racial, and ideological differences confronted me with some difficult choices.” Houser and the ACOA recognized “the primacy of the MPLA” at the end of the 1960s, after becoming disillusioned with Roberto’s Bakongo “tribalism.”

**Internationalist efforts at work: Kitwe, 1967 and Oslo, 1973**

The culmination of the deliberations by the UN, the OAU, and interested non-governmental organizations was a series of multilateral conferences on the situation in southern Africa. Two

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138 Address of Dr. Martin Luther King on December 10, 1965, to the South Africa Benefit of the American Committee on Africa at Hunter College, New York City, AAA. URL: [http://kora.matrix.msu.edu/files/50/304/32-130-1121-84-GMH%20ACOA%2068MLK.pdf](http://kora.matrix.msu.edu/files/50/304/32-130-1121-84-GMH%20ACOA%2068MLK.pdf)


142 Regarding Savimbi and UNITA, Houser’s commented, “Savimbi’s role in the liberation struggle was underplayed and did not confront those of us outside with dilemmas at that point”. Houser, “Africa’s Liberation Struggle”, 24.
meetings in particular, the Kitwe Seminar and the Oslo Conference, demonstrated the growing attention to African affairs and Angolan nationalism in the United Nations and in the international system, and the intersection of formal and informal internationalism. These meetings, part of a series on decolonization and antiracism in southern Africa, were sponsored by the UN, legitimized by the OAU, and attended by representatives from the liberation movements and non-governmental organizations alike. At Kitwe and Oslo, multinational organizations and non-state actors collaborated to challenge the authority of sovereign nation-states (in this case Portugal and its allies), whom they accused of defying the will of the broader international community. In 1967 the Kitwe Seminar helped solidify the notion that disorder in southern Africa was a threat to international peace and security, and cemented the link between the racially discriminatory regimes of Portugal, South Africa, and Rhodesia. Six years later, the Oslo Conference called upon the international community to actively support the African liberation movements, and legitimized these movements as the true representatives of their respective peoples. This shift reflected popular disillusionment with the United Nations system, which, due to the overweening influence of the ‘great powers’ had failed to establish the conditions for independence in southern Africa. Both meetings were held under the auspices of the UN yet the recommendations were non-binding. Examining these deliberations provides yet another perspective on the debates surrounding African independence and Angolan nationalism.


144 Invitations were issued to fifty-five member states to send delegates to the Kitwe seminar. Participants in the seminar on Apartheid included: Algeria, Costa Rica, Ghana, Guinea, Haiti, Hungary, Malaysia, Nepal, Nigeria, Philippines, and Somalia. Members of the colonialism seminar included: Afghanistan, Australia, Bulgaria, Chile, Ethiopia, Poland, India, Iran, Iraq, Italy, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Mali, Poland, Sierra Leone, Syria, Tunisia, USSR, United Kingdom, United States, Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela and Yugoslavia. Also included were participants from Botswana, Brazil, Burma, Canada, Congo (Brazzaville), Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Japan, Kuwait, Mauritania, Mexico, Pakistan, Romania, Sweden, Turkey, the United Arab Republic, Zaire, and the
Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda’s opening statement referenced the UN’s shortcomings to date, but noted that it was considered “a vital instrument for the preservation of peace and security in this world.” Kaunda praised the wave of decolonization in the 1950s and early 1960s, but noted that “[t]oday, however, this movement for the extension of freedom and independence, the whole process of decolonization, has come to a grinding halt.” Apartheid, once a “domestic imperative for Whites,” had become a “political force to counter the movement for the decolonization of unliberated lands.”

In Kaunda’s estimation, white minority rule was stiffening its resolve and internationalizing. Kaunda argued that “apartheid has found allies in the colonial policies of Portugal, in Angola and Mozambique, and Britain’s failure to deal effectively with the Rhodesian rebellion has added more strength to the distant régimes in Rhodesia, Angola and Mozambique.” This “Lisbon-Pretoria-Salisbury axis” was engaged in a massive “psychological warfare” campaign in the western world, designed to achieve support for its policies. A major difficulty was that differences among the UN membership regarding southern Africa had “thrown into disarray the forces of liberation,” further emboldening the “Lisbon-Pretoria-Salisbury axis” to defy the UN. As the conference progressed, it became clear that the majority of perspectives and the African liberation movements considered the white minority regimes not as individual offenders, but as “an alliance of oppressive forces” with a “common ideology, identical economic goals and similar political, economic and military structures.” Portugal, which officially claimed an ideology of ‘non-racialism’, became identified with South Africa, which officially claimed a policy of white supremacy.

The question thus became what was the best way to undermine and isolate this militarized “Lisbon-Salisbury-Pretoria” axis, which was becoming increasingly hostile and aggressive in its countermeasures. Regarding Portuguese military capabilities, the delegates host nation, Zambia. The International Labour Organization (ILO), UNESCO, UNHCR, the Arab League, the Organization of American states (OAS), and the OAU were invited to send observers, as were African liberation movements recognized by the OAU (including the ANC, FRELIMO, SWAPO, ZANU, and Roberto’s GRAE). There was also a representative from ACOA, and from the Student Non-Violent Co-ordinating Committee (SNCC), perhaps the most prominent student activist group in the United States. United Nations General Assembly, “The Policies of Apartheid of the Government of the Republic of South Africa”, “Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the International Seminar on Apartheid, Racial Discrimination and Colonialism in Southern Africa”, Twenty-Second Session, A/6818, 29 September 1967 (hereafter: Kitwe).

Kitwe, 4.
Kitwe, 4.
Kitwe, 17.
received statistics stating that Portugal had 47,000 men under arms in 1964, but by 1967 had 120,000 soldiers serving in the colonies alone (25,000-40,000 in Angola, 40,000-60,000 in Mozambique, and approximately 25,000 in “so-called Portuguese Guinea.”) The report also claimed that “[a]ll the arms used against the African liberation movements could be shown to be [of] Western origin,” and that France, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), and the US continued to supply Lisbon and Pretoria with arms. The FRG was accused of having large investments in Angola, supplying arms to Portugal, and helping South Africa develop “modern arms, poison gases, and nuclear research.” As if to demonstrate the extent of the participants’ collective hostility, the FRG was also accused of exporting the discredited ideology of Nazism, “which found a natural home in South Africa.” The US representative disavowed any “evidence” of American complicity in this trade, noting first that the US enforced its arms embargo which specified that arms could not be sent to Portugal for use in the territories. The US was free to support metropolitan Portugal as a NATO ally. Moreover, any American arms found in southern Africa “had been proved to be of old World War II vintage, cheaply and readily available from many countries through second-hand arms dealers.”

Although there was no concrete evidence of a military alliance, most Kitwe seminar participants seemed convinced that there was substantial military cooperation between Portugal, South Africa, and Rhodesia, citing existing agreements on “tariffs and trade; transport and communications; recruitment of labour; and the development of hydro-electric power” as the first steps toward developing a “southern Africa common market.” This economic integration would foreshadow a more formal political integration, which would necessitate a strong collective military component to ensure that “the minority Governments retained power and the extended their domination from the Cape to Katanga.”

This particular characterization of the international system proved to be influential and resilient. British independent scholar and activist Colin Legum, at Kitwe as an observer, made the point most clearly. The report noted that “Mr. Legum thought it was inaccurate to attribute the situation in southern Africa to a global conspiracy of Western Powers since the concept of a monolithic West was erroneous. Mr. Legum added, however, that the very strength of the
suspicions about Western policies and intentions established an important international dimension within the southern African situation.”

Thus, despite the fact that an international coalition of white minority regimes was questionable as a political reality, the idea was enough to mobilize African opinion. The implications of the resilience and potency of this idea were profound. The report continued: “Mr. Legum also suggested that the Seminar should closely examine the international relationship of the minority régimes in southern Africa. In this connexion, he pointed out that if the Western Powers were treated as a monolithic hostile force, the situation could only be solved by a conflict in which all major powers would have to take part.”

Legum’s balanced, and somewhat prescient statements (he also correctly predicted that Rhodesia was the weakest link in the white minority triad, and the South Africa could outlast them all, even alone) did not convince the attendees. The report noted that “[s]everal participants disagreed with Mr. Legum’s analysis.” John Malecela, Tanzania’s permanent representative to the UN, for example,

stressed that all problems in southern Africa derived from the same source, namely, colonialism. The political structures in southern Africa were closely linked to the Western countries which, with the exception of the Scandinavian countries, had given up moral values in the pursuit of wealth. The African States had no desire to denounce all the Western Powers, but the latter had invariably joined to oppose effective action toward a solution of the situation in southern Africa.

Also invited to speak at the Kitwe seminar was George Houser of ACOA. As with representatives from the UN, Houser concurred that the wave of African liberation had stalled at the Angolan border and that little progress had been made in southern Africa. Houser reported that “Portugal has had to increase military expenditures in its attempt to defend its colonies in Africa and suppress the active military threats of the liberation movements. Expenditures have gone up between 1961 and 1965 by more than 60%. It is estimated that there are at least 50 thousand Portuguese troops in Angola.”

Houser also commented on the increasingly strident and anti-western tone of some of the Kitwe Seminar participants, reminding them that “the U.S.
is not a monolithic state. One can make a distinction between official U.S. government policy and attitudes of many millions of American people.”\textsuperscript{157}

One consequence of this articulation of the impediments to independence was the conviction that an internationalized enemy by definition required an internationalized response. The majority of participants at the Kitwe Seminar worried about the seemingly inevitable clash between the white minority regimes and the African liberation movements, which were now committed to “seek liberation by means including violence in view of the apparent failure of international action in dealing with the South African régime and the other White minority régimes of southern Africa.”\textsuperscript{158} In order to combat the assumed collusion of the western powers, the liberation movements would have to adopt increasingly aggressive strategies, on and off the battlefield. Moreover, when the inevitable race war came, it would engulf the globe. As the Kitwe report summarized, “a race war in southern Africa was bound to affect the other States of Africa as well as relations between the White and non-White peoples all over the world.”\textsuperscript{159} As one participant recorded, “[m]any speakers expressed concern over the peculiar nature of racial oppression and the explosive implications of race war outside the immediate confines of southern Africa. It was pointed out that the issue of racial discrimination and oppression was such that it transcended national frontiers.”\textsuperscript{160}

After an extended series of deliberations, the Kitwe Seminar adopted an extensive set of conclusions and recommendations on 3 August 1967. Most significantly, the Seminar declared “the continued existence of apartheid, racial discrimination and colonialism in southern Africa constitutes a crime against humanity and poses a grave threat to peace and security, not only in southern Africa but also in other areas of the world outside the African continent.”\textsuperscript{161} It also recommended that the General Assembly issue a declaration recognizing the legitimacy of the struggle of the peoples of South Africa, South West Africa, Southern Rhodesia and the Territories under Portuguese domination for the achievement of their inalienable right to equality, freedom and independence in accordance with the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations Charter.

\textsuperscript{158} Kitwe, 30.
\textsuperscript{159} Kitwe, 33.
\textsuperscript{160} Kitwe, 33.
\textsuperscript{161} Kitwe, 55.
Regarding African liberation movements, the Seminar supported the General Assembly in appealing to “to all states to provide moral, political and material assistance to the national liberation movements in southern Africa recognized by the Organization of African Unity, and recommends that such aid be provided in co-operation with the [OAU’s] Co-ordinating Committee for the Liberation of Africa.” Finally, the Seminar warned the international community that it must face the consequences of failing to act to support African independence movements early on. The international system was now faced with a “revolutionary situation,” and had to reassess its collective behavior in light of this new reality.

The Kitwe Seminar illustrated the shifting terrain regarding Angolan nationalism in the United Nations. Angolan nationalists and their supporters would increasingly concur with the assessment that the main impediment to Angolan nationalism was not Portugal, per se, but multiple layers of hostile international forces, which combined to artificially sustain the weak Portuguese state. This Lisbon-Pretoria-Salisbury axis was supported by a wider conspiratorial arrangement of the western powers. Thus Portugal was extremely favourably situated because it existed comfortably in both hostile camps, the aggressively racist white minority regimes located on the African continent, and the reactionary industrialized states of Western Europe, which were directed by the United States. By 1967 certain key ideas had already been established: in the minds of many African states and of the liberation parties, Portuguese colonialism was intimately tied to South African and Rhodesia racism, and further linked to western ‘anti-Africanism’. The ‘enemy’ was thus multipolar and transnational. The UN, an international body which was supposed to regulate behaviours among states and impress the conditions for a just global order, could not enforce resolutions even as it created them. As one participant reported, the UN “was dependent on and reflected the balance of forces and the policies of the great Powers. It was necessary to understand that nation States acted out of self-interest, not on moral grounds, although at times actions were rationalized post facto in moral terms [emphasis in original].” It is worth emphasizing here that the post facto rationalization referred not the liberation movements, but to the existing member states of the UN.

The UN-OAU Conference on Southern Africa took place in Oslo, Norway, from 9-14 April 1973. Like Kitwe, the conference was a collaborative act by the UN and the OAU. The

162 Kitwe, 57-58.
163 Kitwe, 66.
164 Kitwe, 33.
conference was initiated by the OAU after a 1971 goodwill visit to the Scandinavian countries, which in the ensuing years had become the staunchest western allies of the African liberation movements. UN Resolution 2878 (XXVI), December 1971, acknowledged the conference plan, and Resolution 2910 (XXVII) requested that the Secretary General organize the conference for 1973.\textsuperscript{165} In attendance were delegates from 54 UN member states, including the People’s Republic of China and the Soviet Union (notably absent were most of the western nations, including Canada, France, the US, the United Kingdom, Portugal, and South Africa).\textsuperscript{166} Also present were representatives from the African liberation movements, including the ANC, SWAPO, FRELIMO, PAIGC, ZANU and ZAPU. From Angola, Johnny Eduardo (Songo Tondo), Kizola Mulala, and Mangali K. Tula represented the FNLA, while Agostinho Neto, Manuel Jorge, Saydi Vieira Dias Mingas, and Antonio Alberto Neto represented the MPLA. UNITA, as it was not recognized by the OAU, did not have a presence. The conference was divided into two committees: Committee I “was to consider moral and material assistance to the liberation movements in southern Africa and Guinea-Bissau;” Neto was appointed committee vice-president, and FRELIMO’s Marcelino Dos Santos was appointed rapporteur. Committee II examined “proposed action on colonialism and apartheid in southern Africa.”\textsuperscript{167} The meetings took place in the wake of the assassination of PAIGC leader Amilcar Cabral on 20 January 1973 who was widely considered the most effective of Portuguese Africa’s liberation leaders. Indeed, Guinea Bissau would be the first Portuguese territory to declare independence on 24 September 1973.

Oslo was a successor to the Kitwe Seminar of 1967, and many of the issues and perspectives that were prominent at Kitwe could also be heard at Oslo. Again, Angolan liberation was linked to each other case of racialism and colonialism in southern Africa, and especially apartheid. Second, it had already been widely accepted in the UN General Assembly and at the Kitwe Seminar that the intransigence of the Lisbon-Salisbury-Pretoria axis represented a threat to international peace and security. The Oslo Conference thus reiterated the “domino theory of liberation” in southern Africa, arguing that,


\textsuperscript{166} US Congressman Charles Diggs, Jr. (D-MI) was present as an “independent observer”. UN-OAU Conference, Volume I, Appendix, 265-272.

\textsuperscript{167} UN-OAU Conference, Volume I, 11.
The successes or setbacks in the liberation struggle within any one of the territories of southern Africa will obviously have positive or adverse effects on the liberation struggle within the other oppressed territories. According to the domino theory the liberation of South Africa will be facilitated by the liberation of other territories under white minority rule or under Portuguese colonial rule – and will start in Guinea-Bissau.”

The focus of the Oslo Conference was thus how to facilitate the “domino theory of liberation” and eradicate the colonialist and white minority regimes in southern Africa.

The Oslo Conference also issued several non-binding resolutions on a range of issues. In point 5, part I, the Conference proclaimed that “the struggles of the peoples in these Territories is entirely just and legitimate, deserving the complete support of the world community. The liberation movements which lead the struggle are the authentic representatives of their peoples and should receive full international recognition.” It was thus the “solemn duty of international organizations, Governments and peoples to accelerate the isolation of the colonial and apartheid régimes and channel massive assistance to the liberation movements.” Proposals for action regarding Angola, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, and Cape Verde, and São Tomé and Príncipe included:

…Support should be given to the liberation movements recognized by the Organization of African Unity in order to enable them to carry on their struggle for national liberation; … A warning should be given against any extension of the activities of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to the south Atlantic and the Indian Ocean, as this would be regarded as a threat to the peace and security of independent African countries and an act of direct support to Portugal and South Africa; … [and] an international campaign should be launched for the release of political prisoners. Report of the International Committee of the Red Cross on prison camps and the treatment of patriots detained by Portugal should be made available to the liberation movements.

Most significant, however, was the Oslo Conference’s focus on the increased role of the liberation movements themselves, declaring that “the primary responsibility for the struggle for freedom and independence belongs to the oppressed people themselves and to their liberation

168 The PAIGC were widely seen as the most militarily successful of the liberation movements, and Guinea-Bissau was expected to be the first Portuguese African territory to achieve independence. UN-OAU Conference, Volume I, 13.
169 UN-OAU Conference, Volume I, 18.
170 UN-OAU Conference, Volume I, 18.
movements. The role of the international community is supportive and complementary.\textsuperscript{172} The final report declared in point 91 that,

\begin{quote}
Assistance to the liberation movements southern Africa is appropriate and desirable since they are engaged in a struggle for a just cause, consistent with the purpose and principles of the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity and other organizations, while the colonial and racist regimes resort to colonial wars and oppressive measures in defiance of the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity and other organizations.\textsuperscript{173}
\end{quote}

The Oslo Conference also encouraged the creation of “Liberation support groups [to] be established in all countries to publicize the struggles and needs of the liberation movements, and to collect contributions in cash and kind for the liberation movements.”\textsuperscript{174} Transferring contributions to these groups would be facilitated by the OAU Liberation Committee. The final report, which was later shared with the UN General Assembly at the Twenty-eighth session, noted that the “conscience of the world demanded that these regimes [Portugal, Rhodesia, and South Africa] be liquidated so as to achieve peace and preserve the dignity of man,” and that “[t]he struggles of peoples of territories was entirely just and legitimate, requiring the world community’s support. Liberation movements leading that struggle were the authentic representatives of their people, requiring full international recognition.”\textsuperscript{175} It was argued that the role of the UN system should be to “promote and facilitate dissemination of more information on the need for assistance and about the evil effects of colonialism and apartheid, especially in countries which continued to provide financial and military support to oppressors.”\textsuperscript{176} Though the proposals were non-binding, the participants at the Oslo Conference thus signaled their frustration with the UN and with formal diplomatic efforts to force change in Portugal, Rhodesia, and South Africa, and the transfer of authority and legitimacy to the liberation movements themselves.

\section*{Conclusion}

\textsuperscript{172} UN-OAU Conference, Volume I, 33.
\textsuperscript{173} UN-OAU Conference, Volume I, 33.
\textsuperscript{174} UN-OAU Conference, Volume I, 36.
This chapter argues that Angolan nationalists capitalized on preexisting currents in the wider international system. Angolan nationalists began to concentrate on diplomacy, first gaining regional allies and support on the African continent through the OAU, then orienting themselves towards Europe and North America. There were several reasons for this tactic. First, material and pragmatic concerns were paramount. To successfully wage guerrilla campaigns against the Exército Português required materiel and medical supplies. Second, the Angolan nationalist movements also hoped that amenable western powers would use their considerable weight to weaken Portuguese intransigence on the colonial issue, particularly in international forums such as the UN General Assembly.

Angolan nationalism was further internationalized by currents of formal and informal internationalization, and by linking Angola to other key international issues. As noted in the introduction, this process is reminiscent of Bayart’s concept of extraversion, where African leaders compensated for difficult political situations by seeking external support. One consequence of this focus on formal and informal internationalization was that the rift between the Angolan liberation movements intensified, and in itself became an international issue. It was common knowledge the MPLA leader Agostinho Neto and FNLA/GRAE leader Holden Roberto had personal grievances with each other and refused to cooperate. Yet from the perspective of outside observers, including those who gave aid to Angolan nationalists and fought vigorously in international forums for the rights of Angolans, this divisive feud was considered frustrating, wasteful, and detrimental to the overall cause of securing Angolan independence. Faced with limited resources, most organizations were confronted with the difficult task of determining which of the Angolan liberation movements most deserved support. By 1968, most organizations had shifted their support to the MPLA, considering it to be the most successful of the movements in terms of international profile and battlefield success.

It is difficult to assess the amount of time and effort the liberation movement leaders devoted to securing the allegiances of Angolans themselves. What is very clear, however, is that by the mid-1960s the Angolan liberation party movement leaders – FNLA/GRAE’s Holden

Roberto, MPLA’s Agostinho Neto, Lúcio Lara, and Mário de Pinto de Andrade, and UNITA’s Jonas Savimbi – spent significant amounts of time engaging with extra-Angolan, and eventually extra-African publics. Whatever the machinations on the ground in Luanda and Huambo, the liberation movement’s elites focused much of their attention on diplomatic offensives.

Yet the seemingly inexorable march towards a non-colonial, non-racialized international system encountered some very formidable road blocks in the attitudes of the industrial states, many of which were either colonial powers themselves, or dealing with their own complex racial dynamics. Though the UN could institutionalize decolonization and non-discrimination, it could enforce neither. In particular, the US became notorious for advocating a slow, moderate pace of change, and using its considerable international influence to frustrate attempts at rapid transformations.
Chapter 4: Lisbon, 1974

“I do not say that the whole world has gone mad, but I do not think that anyone can deny that in it madmen have acquired a significance, an importance and an influence that they have never before enjoyed...The difficulty lies in governing in such a world, in which the sane sometimes are brought to doubt themselves and to wonder who is right after all....”

Marcelo Caetano, President of Portugal (1968-1974)

“The dictatorship in Portugal was a nightmare for Africa, a handicap to Europe, an embarrassment to our allies and a threat to the peace.”

Mário Soares, Prime Minister of Portugal (1976-1978)

Introduction: “Há momentos em que a única solução é desobedecer”

Few revolutions are heralded with a song. Just after midnight on 24 April 1974, Lisboans were surprised to hear Grândola, Vila Morena, a folk song about identity and solidarity in an idyllic rural town in the Alentejo region, broadcast on the Catholic radio station Rádio Renascença:

Grândola, Vila Morena
Terra da fraternidade
O povo é quem mais ordena
Dentro de ti, ó cidade

Grândola, swarthy city
Land of brotherhood
The people [give] the orders
Within thee, O city

It was most surprising because the song, by popular anti-Salazarist “Zeca” Alfonso, had been banned. Members of the clandestine leftist Movimento das Forças Armadas (Armed Forces Movement, MFA) had selected Grândola, Vila Morena as one of the cues to launch the third Portuguese revolution, leading to the final collapse of the Estado Novo and the end of the ‘last empire.’ While tensions within Portuguese society were readily apparent, the revolt of the “Captains of April” took the international community, including the Angolan liberation

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2 Soares was also Prime Minister from 1983-1985, and then President of Portugal from 1986 to 1996. Mário Soares, Portugal’s Struggles for Liberty, Mary Gawsworth, trans., (London, UK: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1975), 11.
3 “There are moments when the only solution is to disobey”, was the tagline for the 2000 film Capitães de Abril (Captains of April), directed by Maria de Medeiros.
movements, by surprise. The revolutionary process culminated in a near-bloodless transfer of power, which gave way to a byzantine series of negotiations, leadership changes, and political processes, including negotiations to finally grant the Portuguese Territories their independence.

The dramatic nature of the events of 1974-1976 has ensured that the majority of scholarship on Angolan independence remains focused on this relatively short period of time, from the 1974 Carnation Revolution until the crisis reached its cold war peak with the South African, Cuban, and US interventions, and the multiple declarations of Angolan independence in the autumn of 1975. Indeed, for many it is mainly these episodes of exogenous military force that defined ‘internationalization’. This dissertation has argued, however, that to more fully comprehend Angolan independence requires a broader definition of internationalization and a longer timeline. The rebellious turn of sections of the Portuguese army, and the later arrival of foreign militaries in Angola, were the apogee of a multifaceted process actually underway since 1961 or earlier.

Thus an alternate way of looking at the Angolan crisis years of 1974-1975 is as the intersection of three distinct but interrelated revolutionary trajectories: the challenge to four decades of authoritarian rule in Portugal, the thirteen year long struggle for Angolan national liberation, and the zenith of the Cuban internationalist ideal. Each revolutionary trajectory pre-dated the 1974 period. Portugal had its first revolution in 1910, transitioning from the Kingdom of Portugal to the República Nova, or New Republic. A sixteen year period of constitutional monarchy ended abruptly in 1926 with the Ditadura Nacional (National Dictatorship), a forerunner to the Estado Novo. Despite living in a police state, by the 1950s challenges to Salazarism simmered beneath the surface. Angolan revolutionary nationalism can be traced back to the pan-Africanist movements of the early twentieth century, and began its internationalist trajectory in the 1960s, as noted in chapter 1. Cuba was perhaps irrevocably changed by 1959, and yet prior to Castro’s revolution fought three wars of independence against Spain (the Ten Years’ War, 1868-1878, the Little War, 1879-1880 and the Cuban War of Independence, 1895-1898). The Cuban War of Independence escalated into the 1898 Wars between Spain, Cuba, the Philippines, and the United States. Each case challenged the status quo and aspired to remake relations between the people, the state, and the international system. The confluence of these three revolutionary moments increased the level of international attention and sped up the transfer of power and transition to Angolan independence.
Thus Lisbon is a key site in the history of Angolan independence. As the metropolitan capital, Lisbon was the centre of Portuguese colonialism and the focus of international anticolonial vitriol. If change was to come to the *Estado Novo*, it would have to come in Lisbon. The events in Lisbon in April 1974 were the catalyst for this next phase in Angolan independence. This chapter begins with a consideration of the transition from the last days of the *Estado Novo* to the Carnation Revolution. It considers two of the Caetano regime’s attempts to stem the tide of revolutionary nationalism in Angola – a nationalism which, like racism, officially did not exist. This section then details the rise of the MFA, concentrating on the difficult task of negotiating the transfer of power in Angola. In Portugal, the MFA found themselves in unwitting and unexpected agreement with the Angolan liberation movements; substantive reform in the *Estado Novo* would not be forthcoming. Thus, to paraphrase a line from a 2000 film dramatizing the events of April 1974, *a única solução foi desobedecer* – the only solution was to disobey.

Even after the so-called ‘Lisbon coup’ Angolan independence was not automatic, but was negotiated and contested through 1975. Part two addresses how the liberation movements responded to the startling turn of events, negotiating the transitions from independence war to civil war. By 1974, the three Angola liberation movements had been fighting each other and the Portuguese for over a decade, competing as much for international recognition and materiel as for Angolan territory. It is at this moment the distinctions between the liberation movements were thrown into sharp relief, which had significant consequences for the trajectory of Angolan independence. Finally, this chapter looks at the ideological motivations behind the Cuban intervention in Angola. It is now established that Cuban officials independently made the decision to intervene on behalf of the MPLA and were not acting on orders from the Soviet Union. The intervention was not only a response to the South African intervention, but reactivated a dormant Cuban commitment to internationalist acts in southern Africa. The decision was taken to meet the challenge of global imperialism and the South African Defence Force (SADF) head on, not with rhetoric, but with ground troops.
“The most dignified revolution in contemporary history”: the Carnation Revolution and the end of the ‘last empire’

The longest-standing European colonial empire ended with neither a bang nor a whimper, but with a political crisis that was quite unlike any other. Unsurprisingly, the Revolução dos Cravos (Carnation Revolution), named for the red flowers Lisboans gave to troops, remains a topic of intense scholarly and political debate in Portugal and in the wider Lusophone world. A partial list of the still contentious issues includes the extent of discontent among the Portuguese armed forces, the extent to which MFA elite were influenced by communism, the impact of the colonial wars on the decision to overthrow Caetano, and the intention and legacy of the revolution itself. Even the correct terminology is still up for debate. In the English language literature, the events of 25 Abril are generally called a coup d’état. In Portuguese, however, the preferred term is revolução, denoting revolution, as opposed to golpe, coup. This discrepancy is potentially due to two things: first, the relative historical anomaly of a left-wing military revolution and second, the lingering influence of political scientist Samuel P. Huntington’s 1993 declaration that the so-called “Third Wave of democratization in the modern world” began in Lisbon in 1974. It was a curious claim, since even Huntington admitted that “the installation of democracy, much less the triggering of a global democratic movement, was far from the minds of the leaders of the coup.”

The full story of the decline of the Estado Novo is beyond the scope of this dissertation, but its eventual collapse was accelerated by Salazar’s demise in 1968. For decades Salazar had encouraged the myth of Portugal as, in his words, “a happy country with no history,” possessed of a docile population interested only in pâtria, family, and church (or, alternatively, “football, fado, and Fátima”). Portugal’s only interests in the outside world were its African and Asian colonies, also populated with docile “natives” who were content to receive the blessings of Portuguese civilization, or Portualidade. Since 1961 the Angolan liberation movements and their supporters had challenged this image, with mixed results. However, in August 1968 Salazar

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5 Portuguese general and later president of the revolutionary council, the Junta de Salvação Nacional (National Salvation Junta, JSN) Francisco da Costa Gomes, quoted in Tom Gallagher, Portugal: A Twentieth-Century Interpretation, (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1983), 192.
6 Other examples included Gamal Nasser’s Free Officer Movement in Egypt in 1953 and Juan Velasco Alvarado’s “Peruanismo” movement in 1968. See also Samuel P. Huntington, The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century, (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), 3.
7 Huntington also echoed Kissinger’s slightly laboured allusion to the Russian revolution (Kissinger once having referred to new Portuguese Foreign Minister Mário Soares as a “Kerensky”, one who’s moderate inclinations would be subsumed by a wave of Communist radicalism), Huntington, 4.
8 Gallagher, 100.
suffered an incapacitating brain hemorrhage.\textsuperscript{9} His replacement was Marcelo Caetano, an ultraconservative in his youth who rose quickly through the ranks of Salazar’s government, eventually becoming the Minister Attached to the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, the number two position in the government.\textsuperscript{10} It was Caetano’s challenge to remedy Portugal’s increasingly precarious situation, both domestically and internationally.

When Caetano replaced Salazar in August 1968 speculation immediately began about the nature of the new regime – would there be any substantive change to Portugal’s Africa policy or liberalization at home, or would Caetano retain Salazar’s archaic corporatist imperialism? Initially, there were signs of change. In a brief flurry of liberalization, known as the Primavera marcelista (“Marcellist Spring”), Caetano made several symbolic gestures, such as changing the ruling party’s name from União Nacional (National Union), as it had been known since its inception in 1930, to Acção Nacional Popular (People's National Action), and allowing opposition parties to run in the 1969 elections. Caetano also permitted some pension and labour reforms, and changed the name of the dreaded secret police, the PIDE, to the Direcção Geral de Segurança, General-Directorate of Security (DGS). But liberalization within Portugal did not necessarily augur innovation regarding the Portuguese Territories. The Constitutional Reforms of 1971, known as the Organic Law, gave the Territories greater autonomy, and once again changed the nomenclature of colonialism, now styling Angola and Mozambique as overseas “states.”\textsuperscript{11} However, as late as 5 March 1974, Caetano told the National Assembly, “we must continue to protect populations whose desire is to remain Portuguese…We therefore consider it our duty to defend those who trusting in Portugal are loyal to its flag.”\textsuperscript{12}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{9} Salazar fell out of a deck chair while having his hair cut, though a later claim insisted that he fell in the bathtub. Regardless, Salazar was expected to die shortly after the incident. He lived for two more years, during which he believed that he continued to rule Portugal, and his acolytes did not disabuse him of this notion. Salazar finally died and was buried with full state honours in 1970. He had never once visited the African territories.
\item \textsuperscript{10} Alternately spelled “Marcello”, Caetano held many key posts in the Estado Novo, including chief of the Mocidade Portugueusa (a youth organization initially inspired by the Hitler Youth), Minister of the Colonies, and Rector of the University of Lisbon, where he resigned in 1962 after students clashed with riot police on campus. Between 1926-1927, the twenty year old Caetano co-edited the short-lived journal Ordem Nova (New Order), which famously described itself as “anti-modern, anti-liberal, anti-democratic, anti-bourgeois, and anti-Bolshevik; counterrevolutionary, reactionary, Catholic, apostolic and Roman; monarchist, intolerant and intransigent; unsupportive of writers, journalists, and other professionals in arts, letters, and the press.” Hemeroteca Municipal de Lisboa, Digital Archive [online]. URL: http://hemerotecadigital.cm-lisboa.pt/Periodicos/OrdemNova/OrdemNova.htm. Accessed: 17 September 2012.
\item \textsuperscript{12} Marcelo Caetano, Speech to National Assembly (Lisbon: 5 March 1974), quoted in Gerald J. Bender, Angola
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Cognizant of Portugal’s diplomatic isolation (as noted in chapter 3), Caetano actively sought international support for Portugal’s Africa policy. Like Salazar before him, Caetano was uncomfortable with international visits which opened Portugal to public scrutiny. As Norrie MacQueen and Pedro Oliveira have noted, in four decades Salazar’s only official foreign visit was to neighbouring Franco’s Spain. Caetano had visited Washington, Brazil, Spain, and even the Portuguese African Territories, unlike Salazar who never once visited Africa. Still, “these were either brief visits for large-scale events or trips to authoritarian and highly controlled countries,” places where the *Estado Novo* could count on mutual support for authoritarian rule, or at minimum, benign disregard toward Lisbon’s overseas policies. In particular, Caetano held high-level meetings with Nixon and French President Georges Pompidou to renegotiate the Azores Bases Agreement in December 1971, with British Prime Minister Harold Wilson, and with South African President Johannes Vorster. Despite Lisbon’s powerful partners (the US, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, and South Africa), it was increasingly difficult to gather widespread international support. Long abandoned by the UN and vilified by the OAU, in retrospect Caetano’s attempts to internationalize support for his regime were less successful than the liberation movements’ internationalization of the Angolan opposition.

In the end “Marcelismo” was hardly different from “Salazarism.” Trapped between the Salazarist *ultras*, who continued to tie the regime’s status and viability to the African territories, and reform-minded ‘liberals’, who felt the nation had no choice but to demonstrate flexibility and innovation on the overseas issue, Caetano’s limited reforms disappointed both progressives and conservatives within Portugal, in the colonies, and in the international community. During Caetano’s tenure Lisbon continued to underestimate the level of tension in the African colonies, and to attribute whatever violence existed to outside agitation, insisting that rebellion was confined to limited territorial areas and carried out by a small band of ‘terrorists’.

A document written in 1968, the year Caetano took power, but not widely publicized until 1974, the year of his overthrow, presented an administration in disarray and provides some insight into elite-level thinking at the time. The Dutch activist organization the *International Under the Portuguese: The Myth and the Reality*, (Lawrenceville, NJ: Africa World Press, 2004 [reprint]), xix.

13 MacQueen and Oliveira, 37.


Documentation and Communication Centre (IDOC) published a series of reports from a July 1968 meeting of Portuguese counter-subversion specialists, the Conselho Geral de Contra-Subversão (General Council for Counter-Subversion).\textsuperscript{16} Seven years after disturbances in Portuguese Africa began, this “Symposium on Counter-Subversion” was an initiative designed to clarify, and then terminate the rebellions in the African territories, especially in Angola. The reports were state secrets until they were “liberated”, to use IDOC’s terminology, and delivered to the Angola Committee in Amsterdam in 1972.\textsuperscript{17} The IDOC report presents a picture of a Council completely confounded by Angolan aspirations for independence, lacking confidence in its own tactics, and confused by the policies of the central government:

> We fear that in the present circumstances – since we do not know what are the aims of National Policy – a systematic study of the causes of the revolt, if it would not be a sheer loss of energy, would lead to inconclusive results. There is no indication that even if the government would commit itself totally to the elimination of the factors which are generally believed to be the motives of revolt, it would stop, since many causes are the consequences of international politics, and others exist in the mind of the people and hence are difficult to eradicate or to change.\textsuperscript{18}

After eight months of study, the Council concluded that ‘misguided’ demands for independence could be mitigated by material improvements in the lives of Angolans. Indeed, improving the lot of Africans was “an obligation for those who have assumed the lofty but difficult task of civilizing.”\textsuperscript{19} As the authors noted, Portuguese Africans had internalized high-minded yet false ideas about political independence that proved “difficult to eliminate: independence as the solution to all problems; [and] government by blacks, and hence exclusion of whites from the government, or even their expulsion from Angola.”\textsuperscript{20} The revolts in Angola were not caused by unmet aspirations for independence, but by a mixture of subversive elements


\textsuperscript{17} In its explanatory note, the IDOC claimed that “participants were grouped into six Sections…. They produced 25 written reports to be submitted to the Symposium for discussion and planning…. Together with some introductory statements, the total number of texts deriving from the Symposium was 38, plus appended material (letters, directives, etc.).” IDOC, 11.

\textsuperscript{18} It should be noted that the document does not make any distinctions between “Angolans” and “Africans”, nor does it mention the conflicts in the other African territories. IDOC, 25.

\textsuperscript{19} IDOC, 25.

\textsuperscript{20} IDOC, 26.
(including Protestant missionaries), poverty, and “[t]he existence of strong and numerous contrasts” between the African and European populations.\textsuperscript{21} Thus the “planning for counter-subversion” consisted of military action (“[i]ts aim [was] to neutralize and destroy the military capacity for subversion, the guerilla”), and political action (which aimed at “raising the economic, social and political level of the community”) to address these issues.\textsuperscript{22} Independence was never mentioned.

First, Angolans had to be reminded that they belonged in the Lusophone family. In a discussion simultaneously enlightened and condescending, the report noted, “[i]n the struggle against counter-subversion it will be of special importance to give back to the Africans their self-respect, through the elimination of all discrimination in every sphere whatsoever, but especially in the sphere of labor.”\textsuperscript{23} The cause was “not real racial prejudice” – which officially did not exist in the Lusophone world – but “ignorance” in the white European populations, who had a “tendency when dealing with Africans to adopt a feeling of superiority because of the color of their skin.”\textsuperscript{24} Less educated Europeans “[did] not always know how to distinguish an advanced African from a less advanced one, and they often pass on to generalizations. The advanced African [was] extremely sensitive to this kind of treatment.”\textsuperscript{25} Part of the solution then was to create a black Angolan middle class, which would be less revolutionary and less susceptible to subversion. In the words of one commentator, “I do not understand why no Angolan natives are to be seen in important government posts (the exceptions are extremely rare), whereas people born on the Cape Verde Iles [sic], Sao Tome and Goa have long held responsible positions in Angola. …This has provided the enemy with abundant material that, often if not always, was based on truth.”\textsuperscript{26}

Somewhat ironically, government representatives replicated the very accusations the liberation movement had turned against them – that a conspiracy of powerful external agents were collaborating to undermine the true will of the people (in this case, forcing the “natives” to absorb subversive ideas). In collusion with Protestant missionaries, who were also considered foreign enemies of the state, the liberation movements and their external accomplices had

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{21} These were the factors identified by Group No. 3. IDOC, 65-66, 75.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Political Action included: “a. the gathering of information, b. psychological influence, c. control of resources and population, d. foreign activity, e. national and community development.” IDOC 23-24.
\item \textsuperscript{23} IDOC, 81.
\item \textsuperscript{24} IDOC, 81.
\item \textsuperscript{25} IDOC, 80.
\item \textsuperscript{26} IDOC, 81.
\end{itemize}
succeeded in poisoning the Africans.27 The Council partially blamed other African states, namely Zambia, Congo-Brazzaville, and Zaire, which had achieved political independence and spread the gospel of liberation to the Portuguese Territories. If the Council suspected that ‘international communism’ was behind the Angolan rebellions, it was never stated directly. An extended quotation from the Report illustrates this point:

Here we are confronted with an able, merciless and persisting enemy who receives important support from abroad from the real engineers of the revolt. …The enemy has support bases abroad and from there enters the country. To be more exact, he crosses our borders with neighboring Congo and Zambia, where he has his most important bases. …Experts say that at least 90% of the local population has to give its support…. This is because the enemy's strategic leadership is neither in the hands of GRAE or MPLA leaders, nor is it situated in the Congo or Zambia, but in more powerful countries which are well informed of the techniques of subversion. On the other hand we shall have to face the fact that the war, even if it is conducted from abroad, would already be over (or limited to military combat) if the native population would not collaborate with the enemy. …At the moment, the war is stagnant. But time works to the advantage of the rebels. This war has been going on for many years. If it continues too long, counter-subversion will run out of officials and means.”28

In another example of constructive counter-subversion, the Conselho de Orientação de Acção Psicológica (loosely translated as the Council for Orientation of Psychological Action), discussed the findings of “Operação Concórdia” in February 1972. Though the exact details are unknown, Operação Concórdia sent loyal Portuguese to the Luanda slums, the musseques, to “maintain relations” with the population and to gather information from Luanda’s poor, who were considered especially vulnerable to the machinations of the liberation movements. The report opined that three ideas dominated thinking in the musseques: the war was one of blacks against whites; the policy of multiracialism was very good, but existed only on paper (indeed poor whites who lived in the musseques, known as fubeiros, were the most aggressive); and that

27 On the pernicious effects of Protestant missionaries: “These are foreign agents who exert influence over the native masses. They generate admiration and enthusiasm for certain anti-Portuguese ideologies and movements. They surreptitiously undermine the idea of Portuguese citizenship. They create mentalities in the service of ideas inimical to Portugal. At best they limit themselves to propagating a religious ideology not in conformity with our tradition. They neutralize our efforts for portugalization and occupy key positions which make it easy for them to implant ideas contrary to our interests.” IDOC, 115. For a recent study on Protestant missions in Angola see Kate Burlingham, “‘In the Image of God’: A Global History of the North American Congregational Mission Movement in Angola, 1879-1975”, PhD Dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 2011.
28 IDOC, 102-103.
private enterprise dominated by *fubeiros* led to racial and economic inequality in the *musseques* and was undermining the Government’s policies.\(^{29}\) In the authors’ telling, Luanda’s poor blacks did not adopt the idea of independence or “subversive” slogans. They wanted, above all, justice and progress. This was reason for optimism, and the Council should move right away with the “cleansing of inconvenient attitudes” and the further positive “mentalization” of the masses. However, the constant refrain of multiracialism was counter-productive.\(^{30}\) The group then proposed several ways to combat the “inconvenient ideas” circulating among poor blacks. One was to focus on “Angola: Communist objective”, emphasizing the communist connections of the “terrorists.” They would also emphasize that this was a war of “bandits against a peaceful population”, and to encourage Africans who had “suffered the violence of terrorism” to seek the assistance of the Civil and Military Authorities.

Combatting the failure of the multiracial ideal was a more difficult task. Akin to the General Council for Counter-Subversion in 1968, the Council for Orientation of Psychological Action recommended “mentalizing” the white population. This strategy could present the risk of backlash in the white population, but it was necessary. One tactic was to distribute “*fotonovelas*”, small photographic pamphlets which “exalth[ed] in the humanity of blacks and whites.”\(^{31}\) The Council would also encourage articles in the media which pointed to the “common family of man,” the necessity for racial conviviality in the world, and how a “mixed society” in the style of the Portuguese Territories would be the society of the future. To accomplish these tasks the Council proposed the creation of a cadre of “*conferencistas nativos*,” roughly “native” lecturers. It was assumed that black Angolans privileged the declarations of other “natives” above those of whites, and thus a trained corps of pre-selected, “politically prepared” black lecturers could counteract the flow of anti-Portuguese propaganda. Phase one included principles of “ethnic geography,” as well as training in elocution, oratory and debating skills, and “enthusiasm.” The second phase focused on the “history of terrorism,” the biographies of the “terrorist” leaders and the “despotic temperaments” of the movements, and the propaganda techniques used by the


\(^{30}\)“Proposta do Grupo da ‘Operação Concórdia’ ao Conselho de Orientação de Acção Psicológica”, 2.

movements. Finally, the lecturers would receive “political training” on the history of Portugal, and the idea of *Portugalidade*, “a comprehensive idea which included different lands, races, languages and beliefs.” Then lecturers would then be sent to the most vulnerable parts of the *mussuesques* to speak of the peace and prosperity of Portuguese rule and to demonstrate the futility of the “terrorist” war.

Portuguese officials still refused to acknowledge Angolan desires for independence. These sorts of policies reflect the intellectual bankruptcy of the late *Estado Novo*, and suggest that the liberation movements had proved effective at animating large sectors of the Angolan population and helping to inspire a cadre of international activists. This was cause for substantial concern, demonstrated by the Council’s fears about the “new ideas” confronting the African population. The successful internationalization of the Angolan liberation struggle helped to dramatically alter the terrain of what might have remained a limited ‘bush war’.

The result was increased pressure on the Armed Forces and on Portuguese society as a whole. According to a contemporary report by scholar George Houser, by 1974 Portugal was forced to employ over 150,000 troops and commit over half of its annual budget to fighting its three colonial insurrections. The Portuguese military authority reported over 100,000 draft dodgers, a sure sign of the unpopularity of the African wars. The 1974 Portuguese Revolution was a response to these difficulties and to the stagnation at the highest levels in Portuguese society. On 9 September 1973, 140 junior officers first met in a farmhouse in Évora, eventually forming the MFA. MFA meetings continued clandestinely through the winter of that year. On 5 March 1974 over 200 officers attended an assembly on the Estoril coast. Initially, the MFA met to protest upcoming changes to the Military Laws, which proposed, among other indignities, that recent conscripts (*milicianos*) would accrue the same benefits as long-term enlisted men and the officer corps.

The MFA’s final political program was finalized on 24 March. During the same period of 1973-1974, the actual fighting in the Portuguese Territories had fallen to a low ebb, and the

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32 “Corpo de Oradores Autoctones (Contactos directos com as Populações),” 6
35 Gallagher, 186.
challenge to Portuguese military might was stronger in Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique than in Angola. Still, human and financial costs were mounting, and the armed forces of the liberation movements were gaining troops and material support. A Portuguese report claimed nine soldiers killed and twenty-seven wounded in January 1974. This rose to eleven soldiers killed, sixty-three Portuguese wounded (the report did not specify soldiers or civilians), and seventy “rebels” killed in February. The 1974 Portuguese military budget was 3,688,462 contos. In terms of the armed troops of the liberation movements, the Portuguese put UNITA’s strength at 300 guerillas, concentrated around Luso. The FNLA reportedly had between 4,000-5,000 armed troops, but it was well-known that Roberto had visited Beijing in December 1973, likely to negotiate a military aid agreement. The FNLA also received substantial support from Mobutu. The MPLA’s numbers were disputed, but it was assumed they had fewer guerillas-in-arms than the well-sponsored FNLA. The guerrilla forces were not tactically or materially comparable to the Portuguese Army. However, they showed no sign of giving up the battle, with Portugal or with each other. The remarkable tenacity of these movements undermined Portuguese confidence and diminished the political will to continue the colonial wars.

There were other important factors which helped turn the Captains of April against the political architects in Lisbon. Like the liberation movements they had been trained to oppose, key members of the Portuguese Armed Forces were also influenced by the thinking of Marxist revolutionaries. Important MFA figures such as General Ernesto Melo Antunes had been introduced to and influenced by the writings of Cabral, Guevara, and Mao Zedong as part of their counter-insurgency training. As Gallagher noted, “[i]n the course of time these Marxist tracts helped to turn several apolitical lower-ranking officers into prospective revolutionaries.” In February 1974 prominent Portuguese General Antonio de Spínola published Portugal e o futuro [Portugal and the Future]. Spínola reiterated arguments that had been circulating among liberal


A ‘conto’ was an unofficial unit of measurement denoting 1000 escudos. “Angola”, ACR, 1974-1975, B 527.


Gallagher, 185.

Spínola was a well-respected military hero who had served in the African colonies from 1961-1973. After two terms as Military Governor for Guinea-Bissau, Spínola began to believe the only solution to the colonial wars was a negotiated political settlement, a belief he articulated in his famous 1974 book, Portugal e o futuro (Portugal and the Future). Though Spinola was not a key figure in the MFA, on 25 April 1974 Caetano refused to hand over control of Lisbon (and thus Portugal) to anyone other than Spinola. Thus Spinola inadvertently became President of the JSN,
circles for years: the military solution had failed, and it was time to consider a political response to ending the turmoil in the African provinces. Yet coming from Spínola, the argument took on special resonance. After a long and impressive military career where he distinguished himself as an officer, Spínola was appointed the Military Governor of Portuguese Guinea at Caetano’s request, first in 1968 and again in 1972. For one of the country’s greatest military heroes to argue in favour of negotiation was a crippling blow to the official claim that military superiority would eventually lead to a decisive Portuguese victory.

Colonial reform was not the main goal of the MFA revolutionary movement. Yet it is difficult to ignore the direct connection between the colonial wars and changes in the Portuguese Armed Forces. The opening paragraph of the final MFA Program directly attributed the revolution to the fighting and to Lisbon’s complete inability to manage or rectify the situation: “Bearing in mind that, after thirteen years’ struggle in the overseas territories, the ruling political system has proved unable to provide a concrete, objective definition of an overseas policy capable of bringing about peace among the Portuguese of all races and belief.” As Gallagher put it, “[i]n the context of authoritarian Portugal, the army’s involvement in a thankless jungle war was transforming it from a supine instrument of state will into a politically aware force whose thoughts were increasingly at variance with the antiquated ideas of its political masters back in Lisbon.”

It was all over by the morning of 25 April 1974. Lisbon was inundated with troops loyal to the MFA, and Caetano had handed over control of the nation to Spínola. The new Revolutionary Council, calling itself the Junta of National Salvation (Junta de Salvação Nacional, JSN), now focused on a program of ‘three Ds’: democratization, decolonization, and development. General Francisco da Costa Gomes, president of the JSN, called it “the most dignified revolution in contemporary history.”


42 Gallagher, 183.
43 Gallagher, 192.
From Independence War to Civil War: Negotiating Angolan independence

The JSN moved quickly to negotiate settlements with the African liberation movements. Formal independence agreements were signed with Guinea Bissau on 26 August in Algiers, and with Mozambique on 7 September in Lusaka. UN Security Council resolution 356 admitting Guinea Bissau to the UN was adopted unanimously on 12 August 1974. UN Security Council resolution 374 unanimously admitted a FRELIMO-led Mozambique on 18 August 1975. Both São Tomé and Príncipe and Cape Verde were admitted to the UN on 16 September 1975.

However, Spinola sought a different path for Angola. Angola was the world’s fourth-largest coffee producer and sixth-largest diamond producer, as well as an exporter of iron ore and oil. A post-1960 surge in modern infrastructure construction helped account for a doubling of the white population between 1960 and 1974, topping out at around 320,000 whites out of a population of 6.4 million in 1974. Due to Angola’s material wealth and symbolic significance, Spinola desired a negotiated federation that would preserve fraternal ties between a democratic Portugal and a quasi-independent Angola. This offer was for a Provisional Government comprised of representatives from each of the liberation movements and from Portugal, eventually resulting in a nationwide referendum on independence, predicated on a sustained ceasefire between the movements. In a September 1974 agreement, representatives of the Portuguese government wrote that, “in about two years, the Provisional Government should see to the election by direct, secret and universal ballot of a Constituent Assembly, whose task it will be to work out the Constitution of the new nation, and define what relationship it wants to have with Portugal.”

Spinola made certain to assure whites in the colonies that they would not be “abandoned.” Thus while Spinola was able to publicly announce “[w]e shall thus be able to hold our head high in the world; for in carrying out this action of faithfulness to the people’s rights we are, after all, celebrating the most difficult of victories – the victory over ourselves, over our mistakes and contradictions”, the liberation movements were furious. This was completely at odds with their goals, which were complete and immediate independence as was negotiated with the other territories. Further insult was added when General Silvino Silveiro

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45 Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, 233.
Marques, who had been governor of Angola from 1962-1966, was again appointed Governor of Angola on 11 June 1974. Commentators in the 1975 *Africa Contemporary Review* noted that Marques’ appointment was seen by the liberation movements as proof that Lisbon intended to retain control of Luanda and was not negotiating in good faith. The article referenced a statement by the MPLA’s Luanda Action Committee, broadcast on 24 June 1974, which warned that “by appointing the fascist General Silverio Marques as Governor-General of Angola, the Portuguese Colonialists, allies of international imperialism, are strengthening their position as exploiters and oppressors of the Angolan people.” The new Government of Portugal felt somewhat justified in delaying Angolan independence because of the escalating internecine conflict between the liberation movements. “Failure to stop fighting,” now Vice-President Costa Gomes warned on 6 May 1974, would leave Portugal with “‘no other choice than to continue the war. The armed struggle against the guerillas in Portugal’s African territories will continue as long as [the liberation movements] refuse a political settlement. It is our intention to continue fighting. This position will not change as long as the guerillas refuse to accept our offer.”

Unsurprisingly, both the MPLA and FNLA rejected Spinola’s plan outright. For both movements, recognition of Angola’s right to independence was paramount, and could not be subjected to either the dictates of the outgoing Portuguese government or the suspect results of Portuguese-run referendum. As Neto told the Algerian newspaper *El Moudjahid*, a referendum organized by the Portuguese “would not guarantee a serious result.” For its part UNITA agreed to the ceasefire on 14 July, although even Savimbi rejected the idea of a referendum. After the UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim visited Angola in late summer 1974, the Provisional Government issued a statement on 4 August finally recognizing “the right of the people of Angola to self-determination and independence.” Still, the battle was not over. Five days later, on 9 August 1974, it was revealed that the Provisional Government still envisaged a gradual, two to three year process towards independence. Infuriated, both the MPLA and FNLA again refused

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49 Like other JSN members Francisco da Costa Gomes had a long and storied career as a military officer in the *Exército Português*, including tenure as Commander of the Military Region of Angola and Chief of the Armed Forces. However, he had also demonstrated a rebellious streak, having participated in the failed 1961 Botehlo Moniz coup. In March 1974 Costa Gomes was removed from his position as Chief of the Armed Forces when he refused to swear a compulsory public loyalty oath to Caetano. Costa Gomes quoted in Le Monde, 7 May 1974. “Angola”, ACR, 1974-1975, B 528.
to consider the JSN’s proposal for a Constituent Assembly, and stepped up their attacks. By August 1974 the promised PRC military experts had arrived in Zaire to train Roberto’s forces, along with “450 tons of armaments.”  

On 3 September 1974 the JSN appointed a Provisional Government for Angola without any members of the liberation movements. Spinola first tried to isolate the MPLA, viewing them as most intransigent, by initiating talks with the FNLA, UNITA, and the Eastern Revolt faction of the MPLA, a splinter-group formed in 1972. When those talks amounted to very little, Spinola attempted to circumvent the difficult liberation movements all together by appealing to other members of Angola’s elites. On 23 September Spinola invited “23 ‘leaders of thought’” to meetings in Lisbon, none of whom represented the liberation movements. There, for the first time, Spinola promised Angolan independence – by October 1976. This delay was unacceptable to the liberation movements, as was Spinola’s attempt to exclude them from the process. Fortunately for the cause of Angolan independence Spinola resigned on 28 September 1974, and was replaced with the more amenable Costa Gomes.

Under pressure from the OAU, Roberto, Neto and Savimbi met in Alvor, Portugal on 15 January 1975. The signing of the Alvor Accord created a provisional tripartite government and set a timeline for independence. The official transfer of power was slated for 11 November 1975, the four hundredth anniversary of Luanda’s founding. The Alvor Agreement finally solidified the status of the liberation movements, recognizing all three movements “as the sole and legitimate representatives of the Angolan people.” Article 9 amnestied combatants from the movements, re-styling what was once termed ‘terrorism’ into “the patriotic action carried out in the course of the fight for the liberation of Angola”, and Article 10 granted Angola sovereignty “totally and freely, both internally and on the international plane.” Article 45 reaffirmed a general commitment to “non-discrimination,” defining the “attribute of Angolan is to be defined by being born in Angola or being resident there, so long as those residents in Angola identify

52 “Angola”, ACR, 1974-1975, B 530.
56 ACR, 1974-1975, C 221.
themselves with the aspirations of the Angolan nation through a conscious choice.\textsuperscript{57} The Accords stressed,

the atmosphere of perfect co-operation and cordiality in which these negotiations took place, and congratulate themselves on the concerting of this agreement which give satisfaction to the just aspirations of the Angolan people and fills with pride the Portuguese people who are henceforth joined together by ties of fruitful friendship and intentions of constructive co-operation for the good of Angola, Portugal, Africa and the world.\textsuperscript{58}

Despite the lofty words, however, the ceasefire was broken almost immediately, and with it went any hopes for an orderly transition to independence. The Angolan nationalist leaders refused to cooperate with each other, leaving open the question of which movement truly represented the Angolan people and was the most effective anti-imperialist force.

\textbf{“But a distant rumble”: the rise, fall, and rise of the liberation movements}\textsuperscript{59}

To paraphrase Piero Gleijeses’, by 1974 most scholars considered the liberation movements to be little more than “a distant rumble.”\textsuperscript{60} It seemed that Angolan independence was contingent upon the collapse of the Portuguese metropole and not only the manoeuvres of the Angolan liberation movements, who expended much of their revolutionary rage fighting each other. However, to ignore the liberation movements or to simply dismiss them as ineffectual omits a significant part of the story. The impact of the liberation movements cannot be discounted for at least two critical reasons: first, it was the challenge brought by the movements, including their appeals to the international community, that created much of the attendant pressure upon the *Estado Novo*; second, even after the accession of the JSN Angolan independence was not a \textit{fait accompli}. What is demonstrably clear is that even if the Angolan liberation movements did not precipitate the 25 Abril, they certainly influenced the shape of the transition to independence and the final form of independence itself. Angolan independence remained fraught and contingent; it was not an inevitable consequence of the April Revolution, but came about twenty months later after intense pressure from the liberation movements and their allies. One did not have to support Angolan independence to agree with observer Colin Legum’s assertion that “the collapse of Portugal’s
centuries of colonialism was brought about by armed struggle.” 61 As the public face of Angolan independence for thirteen years, the liberation movements were viewed by their contemporaries as the key actors in the direction and outcome of Angolan independence.

The dilemma in Angola thus raises still-relevant questions about the intersections of representation, revolution, and national liberation. There were no codified or widely-accepted mechanisms for determining the ‘authenticity’, ‘legitimacy’, or ‘representativeness’ of the respective movements, other than the recommendations of the OAU. External observers returned from the warzone with conflicting reports. Thus from a history of international relations perspective, perhaps the most significant role the liberation movements played was the extent to which they were integral in shaping and framing the debate establishing the very criteria for legitimacy. In many respects this is the preferred terrain of all national liberation or revolutionary movements. By definition it is up to the contentious movement to redefine the ‘true’ nature and legitimacy of the state in order to establish their right to contest the existing authority. Yet because this process took place in triplicate in Angola, the complexities grew exponentially. Due to uneven record keeping and difficulties of access, reconstructing the peregrinations of the Angolan liberation is a difficult task. 62 It remains problematic to definitively determine the extent to which the movements actively controlled Angolan territory (the so-called “liberated zones”), or the numbers of fighters that were members of each movement, especially since there were reports of Angolan villagers being forcibly impressed into service. On the military plane it was difficult to tell which movement was dominant, or if they were making any progress against the Portuguese. Each movement issued a continuous stream of unsubstantiated communiqués listing Portuguese troops captured, convoys ambushed and weapons confiscated, cadres freed from Portuguese jails, and territory ‘taken’ from the Portuguese and each other. The Government of Portugal retaliated with its own series of questionable official reports on damage inflicted to the liberation movements.

62 Few scholars have tried to focus on the movements themselves. Key sources include Marcum’s two volume set, which used limited sources from the movements, and Jean-Michel Mabeko-Tali’s Dissidências e Poder de Estado: O MPLA perante si próprio 1962-1977, Lisbon/Luanda, Caminho/Nzila, 2001: Volume I: 1962-1974, Volume II: 1974-1977, which deals only with the MPLA. Gleijeses correctly points out that the most famous biography of Jonas Savimbi, Fred Bridgland’s Jonas Savimbi: A Key to Africa (Paragon House, 1987), is widely viewed as hagiographic and of questionable impartiality. Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, 235.
More useful observations can be made about the activities, failures, and successes on the political/diplomatic plane. Though the level of internal respect each movement commanded within Angola is challenging to determine, the level of external support from varying sectors of the international community is somewhat easier to trace. Between 1968 and 1974 the political fortunes of the liberation movements as a whole, and of each individual movement, rose and fell as they continued to balance the need for external support with internal legitimacy. As noted in chapter 3, in 1968 the OAU de-recognized the FNLA due to its poor military showing, leaving the MPLA as the sole internationally recognized representative of Angolan liberation. This move greatly harmed Roberto’s prestige in Africa, and also curtailed the FNLA’s ability to approach international benefactors as a ‘legitimate’ representative of the Angolan people. However, the de-recognition was the formalization of whispered accusations which had been circulating for two years, since Savimbi defected to form UNITA (as discussed in chapter 1): that Roberto was a CIA agent (which was, of course, partially true); that Roberto was ‘controlled’ by Mobutu, a known US-ally who had come to power after the murder of Lumumba; and that Roberto, who remained in self-imposed exile in Zaire, was an ineffective leader since he was always outside of Angola proper. Roberto protested this characterization of his movement vociferously, but seems never to have been able to shake the taint of this association.

Thus the FNLA’s political fortunes declined even as its military fortunes increased. The cause of both situations was Roberto’s close association with Zaire and Mobutu. As Mobutu arranged for increasing amounts of military aid to be routed through Zaire, Roberto could not escape the disgrace of being considered Mobutu’s lackey and a US agent. UNITA suffered from political isolation, unable to attract the attention and aid of international benefactors. In attempting to secure allies Savimbi made alliances with representatives of the Estado Novo, and eventually with the South Africans. The revelations about Savimbi’s collusions permanently discredited UNITA in the eyes of many African states and the pro-independence factions of the international community. The MPLA political machine seized upon these ‘imperialist’ alliances to undermine confidence in its rivals.

In July 1970 two events raised the MPLA’s prestige. An international conference on the Portuguese territories took place in Italy, with delegates from sixty-four countries representing 177 organizations. The Rome International Conference in Support of the Peoples of the Portuguese Colonies met to “to study and decide upon ways of developing political, moral and
material solidarity with the struggling people of the Portuguese colonies.”⁶³ The final declaration reiterated the need for armed struggle, and noted that “one of the essential characteristics of the history of our times is the vigorous development of national liberation struggles which have been transformed for many countries into independence and the regaining of dignity for the hundreds of millions of men and women in Africa and elsewhere.”⁶⁴ Though it is hard to know if any material or financial support came out of the conference it did afford the participants a far more important political opportunity, an audience at the Vatican. Though his encyclicals on birth control were controversial, Pope Paul VI was known for a degree of ‘pastoral progressivism’, listing one of his major principles as “dialogue with the world.” As such, the “Pilgrim Pope” became the first sitting Pontiff to travel to six continents, and on his first visit to the US in October 1965 addressed the UN General Assembly and spoke of peace in Vietnam. The fact that Amílcar Cabral, Marcelino dos Santos, and Neto had such a high profile audience infuriated the Portuguese who sent a formal note of protest and recalled their ambassador to the Vatican, Dr. Eduardo Brassão, for “consultations.”⁶⁵ The Vatican’s response was that the visit had no political significance since the leaders were there as Christians rather than as politicians, and the Pope reportedly “‘encouraged [the leaders] to seek what they thought were their rights by peaceful means.’”⁶⁶ Still, it was a major publicity coup for Neto and the MPLA, who, along with the other members of CONCP, had now come to international prominence as the representatives of the Angolan people. The OAU Liberation Committee was especially pleased with the Rome trip, and formally congratulated the PAIGC, FRELIMO, and MPLA on their progress.⁶⁷

The FNLA received more bad news when the World Council of Churches (WCC), a prominent advocate of Angolan independence, significantly reduced the amount of aid to the FNLA. In 1970 the WCC allocated $20,000 in aid to both the FNLA and MPLA, and a further $10,000 to UNITA. In 1971, however, the WCC donated $25,000 to the MPLA, and $7,500 each

⁶⁶ Morris, “Portugal’s Year in Africa”, A 94.
to FNLA and UNITA.\textsuperscript{68} Furious, the FNLA/GRAE released a statement on 20 September 1971 accusing the WCC of basing its judgements on “political rather than humanitarian” considerations.\textsuperscript{69} The FNLA claimed to be recognized by approximately thirty African and Asian states. The report also emphasized that the FNLA alone was responsible for the almost 600,000 who had “fled colonialism” and found refuge in Zaire. Perhaps most tellingly, the FNLA/GRAE army (formally the Angola National Liberation Army) insisted it was the only fighting presence in areas which held Angola’s exportable resource wealth, coffee and diamonds, thus “[c]olonialism [was] forced to concentrate the majority of its fighting in those regions.” The MPLA, in contrast, fought “sporadically” on the Zambian frontier, “a zone of savanna [sic] and desert (one inhabitant per square kilometre) which [had] no economic significance.”\textsuperscript{70}

Later, four high-ranking FNLA cadres defected to the Portuguese, and in March 1972 Mobutu used Zairian forces to put down a rebellion at the FNLA training camp in Kinkuzu, Zaire.\textsuperscript{71} This dissention in the ranks raised the issue of the general weakness of the liberation movements. After several attempts, Republic of Congo President Marien Ngouabi and Mobutu were able to put aside their personal differences long enough to instigate a short-lived MPLA-FNLA rapprochement. Both Roberto and Neto agreed to place their armed forces under unified command as the Conselho Supremo da Libertação de Angola (Supreme Council for the Liberation of Angola, CSLA). The unification of the two movements temporarily reinforced their commitment to continue the liberation struggle against the Portuguese. Once again, Savimbi and UNITA were excluded from the proceedings. A frustrated Savimbi told the Zambian press, “what we are doing here is an integral part of the struggle for the total liberation of the African continent, so we think that the OAU should reconsider its position and extend support to UNITA.”\textsuperscript{72} In a formal statement protesting UNITA’s exclusion, Savimbi denounced the “unrealistic marriage of convenience.”\textsuperscript{73} After insisting that UNITA was “a revolutionary Party,


\textsuperscript{70} “GRAE Refuses Gift of the WCC Executive Committee”, ACR, 1971-1972, C21.

\textsuperscript{71} The defectors were listed as Marius Calamba, Fernando Sandala, Luciano Capula, and Antonio Santos Dias. Mobutu arrested over 1,000 mutinous FNLA troops. “Angola”, ACR, 1972-1973, B 478.

\textsuperscript{72} “Angola”, ACR, 1972-1973, B 477.

armed with the teaching of Marxism-Leninism, base[d] its correct strategy and policies and tactics on the concrete conditions of the struggle and on the concrete daily experiences of the oppressed masses,” Savimbi lambasted the “unity of Angolan groups imposed from outside Angola in order to help and fit a certain politique d’etat of a particular African State or great power [emphasis in original].”\(^74\) In January 1973 UNITA’s Central Committee published a statement noting that “it did not escape the attention of the [UNITA annual] Conference, that the formation of the CSLA without any provision for Unita [sic] to join in, may aim at the physical and political liquidation of our organization so to leave the road wide open for the two old movements to compete on the international arena with no tangible impact on the home front.”\(^75\)

In contrast, the MPLA’s great crisis was an internal one. In 1973 the MPLA was shaken by an internal split when Daniel Chipenda broke with Neto to form what would eventually be called the Revolta do Leste (Eastern Revolt, RDL). Chipenda accused Neto of ‘presidentialism’; in turn, they accused each other of assassination plots. It was Chipenda’s opinion that Neto had a “pathological case of authoritarianism.”\(^76\) Though Chipenda’s split cast doubts on the MPLA’s institutional viability, the MPLA still managed to present itself as simultaneously independent of great power meddling and as part of the global revolutionary tradition. The MPLA’s alliances with other members of the CONCP bolstered its claim to be the representative of progressive Africa.

Despite these setbacks, the movements were buoyed by several bits of good news. On 9 March 1972 the Danish government vowed to increase its material assistance to the African liberation movements to £350,000 annually, prompting an enthusiastic response from the Zambian press. In July the OAU Liberation Committee increased its operating budget to £1.5 million. King Hassan of Morocco pledged an additional £1 million, and Iran and Turkey also agreed to contribute to the fund. On September 30 the UN Committee on Non-Self-Governing Territories voted to accept representatives of varied African liberation movements as observers, the first step towards recognition by the General Assembly.\(^77\) But by 1973-1974 the liberation

\(^76\) Fernando Maria de Fontes Pereira de Mello, Mario Firmino Miguel, and Dr. Fernando Reino, “Relatorio da Visita Oficial a Kinshasa”, AHD-MNE, PAA-XI/944/1316-PAA, Angola: Reconhecimento Independencia/Alvor, Folder 1, 7.
movements’ military fortunes were once again on the decline. Little progress was made in the
ground war, to the extent that the Portuguese likely shifted some of their forces to the
Mozambican front. In an 18 January 1974 communiqué even the MPLA admitted that its
military activities remained virtually the same level as in 1972.\textsuperscript{78} By far the signal events of 1973
were the assassination of Amílcar Cabral on 20 January 1973, and the PAIGC unilateral
declaration of independence of Guinea-Bissau on 24 September 1973.\textsuperscript{79} Hostility between the
movements was also on the rise. When Roberto and Neto finally met in Kinshasa on 27 February
1973 to implement the much-vaunted agreement of 1972, it fell apart when Mobutu refused to
grant MPLA troops permission to cross through Zairian territory from its bases in the Republic
of Congo.\textsuperscript{80} The movements also disagreed on the place of armed struggle in the independence
campaigns. According the Roberto, “Although we did our best to resolve the differences, we
failed; e.g. MPLA insisted that we should insist on armed struggle being the only means to
achieve liberation; our view was that the struggle should be both political and military.”\textsuperscript{81} The
decaying fortunes of the guerrilla campaigns led Mobutu to take a much more aggressive stand
in support of African liberation (discussed in chapter 5), and to work with Tanzania’s Julius
Nyerere and Zambia’s Kenneth Kaunda to create unified force challenge the Portuguese.\textsuperscript{82} One
result of this period of cooperation was that Nyerere allowed the FNLA to open an office in Dar
Es Salaam, and encouraged the OAU Liberation Committee to re-recognize the FNLA, though
not in its capacity as a government-in-exile. The FNLA could once again claim to be an
internationally recognized representative of the Angolan people. UNITA, still isolated, began to
invite western journalists to tour its “liberated zones” in an effort to gain more recognition.\textsuperscript{83}

In 1974 the FNLA arguably was the best-equipped movement with the most prominent
international backers. Mobutu’s influence on Roberto’s movement was no secret, as the FNLA
benefited not only from Zairian materiel, but also from Mobutu’s international connections.
Though it would perhaps be an exaggeration to state that Mobutu was a \textit{respected} statesman,

\textsuperscript{78} “Angola”, \textit{Africa Contemporary Record: Annual Survey and Documents, 1973-1974}. Colin Legum, editor,
Elizabeth Clements, Executive Editor, Richard Synge, Associate Editor (London, UK: Rex Collings, 1974), B 517
(hereafter: ACR 1973-1974)
\textsuperscript{79} Yugoslavia was the first state to recognize an independent Guinea-Bissau. Within days it was followed by over
thirty states, including Algeria, Syria, Libya, Ethiopia and Kenya.
\textsuperscript{80} “Angola”, ACR, 1973-1974, B 518.
\textsuperscript{81} “Angola”, ACR, 1973-1974, B 518.
\textsuperscript{82} Soon, Mobutu, Nyerere, and Kaunda began to push the US to increase support to Roberto and UNITA. This is
discussed in greater detail in chapter 5.
\textsuperscript{83} “Angola”, ACR, 1973-1974, B 520.
Zaire was a geopolitically important state, and Mobutu could command international audiences.\textsuperscript{84} For example, in October 1974 several high-ranking members of the new Portuguese government were invited to Kinshasa to discuss decolonization. What the Portuguese delegation had expected to be a low-key confidential visit instead was a public reception with “all of the honours due to a foreign Chief of State,” including a full complement of Angolan journalists in Kinshasa for the event.\textsuperscript{85} At this meeting, Mobutu’s clear goal was to discredit the MPLA, and to convince the Portuguese Government to support Roberto’s claim. Among Mobutu’s new allies was Daniel Chipenda, former MPLA Field Commander and leader of the Eastern Revolt. Roberto and Chipenda were both present at the second day of meetings, which took place on Mobutu’s presidential yacht. The report noted that Mobutu insisted the “decolonization process should take into account the armed forces in Angola, considering the most representative the movement of Holden Roberto and the faction of Daniel Chipenda. Agostinho Neto and Pinto de Andrade were only intellectuals and politicos.”\textsuperscript{86} Mobutu also “admitted that complexity of Angolan decolonization was due to the intransigence of Agostinho Neto” and advised that “racial considerations would prevent the formation of a coalition government, perhaps implying that the ethnic differences of the movements’ adherents would preclude any power-sharing. Further, Mobutu claimed that, “following the request made by General Spinola and using his personal influence, [Mobutu received] Roberto’s consent to negotiate an immediate ceasefire, to be formally concluded with the Portuguese delegation.”\textsuperscript{87}

In a speech in Bucharest, Roberto tried to walk a fine line between revolutionary internationalism and African nationalism. At first, Roberto spoke the language of anticolonial internationalism, commenting that,

\begin{quote}
the liberation struggles are not aimed solely at violently correcting the relations between men and especially the production relations within the country – they are an important factor for the positive transformation of our entire continent and the whole world. The national liberation struggle is also a means of overthrowing a whole unjust social system of oppression existing in the world [emphasis in original].
\end{quote}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{84} Mobutu’s relations with the US are discussed further in chapter 5.  \\
\textsuperscript{85} De Mello, et al., 1.  \\
\textsuperscript{86} De Mello, et al., 3.  \\
\textsuperscript{87} De Mello, et al., 3.  \\
\end{flushleft}
Yet Roberto also discounted the ideal of a global black liberation struggle, which had for many been a key internationalist principle. Négritude, for example, “falsified the black problem.” And while Roberto could “not fail to express [his] full political identification with the struggle of the black peoples of America where they are…who are still oppressed and segregated in American society, especially in the United States”, he nonetheless contended that “America is America and Africa is Africa.”

Ideologically and strategically Roberto concentrated on a regional approach, which was ultimately unsuccessful.

The MPLA and FNLA, in turn, became “vitriolic” toward UNITA. In July 1974 the magazine Afrique-Asie published four letters allegedly from Savimbi to Portuguese officers between September and December 1972, which ostensibly demonstrated collusion between UNITA and the Portuguese against the MPLA. Savimbi denounced the letters as forgeries, but the accusations of collaboration only intensified. Yet as Gleijeses points out, Savimbi did have extensive relations with Portuguese authorities, certainly going back to meetings with Portuguese General José Bethancourt in Eastern Angola in 1971, and possibly to 1969. It is generally agreed that an unofficial Portugal-UNITA cease-fire agreement was concluded in late 1971, which lasted until a new Portuguese Commander in the east, General Abel Barroso Hipólito, launched attacks against UNITA. For his efforts Hipólito was later fired.

Gleijeses writes that after Caetano’s ouster, UNITA launched its most successful military raid – capturing an entire Portuguese company and returning them to their barracks naked and disarmed. With this, “Savimbi refurbished his credentials as a freedom fighter.” However, this point begs the question – in whose eyes was Savimbi redeemed? UNITA had the largest ethnolinguistic base, and yet the smallest number of guerillas (only 600-800 in 1974), and was a far smaller presence, within Angola and internationally. Fewer UNITA documents remain, but in a pamphlet published in the wake of the 1973 Third UNITA Congress, Savimbi declared that UNITA had to continue the battle against Portuguese colonialism and “international

89 Shea, 1.
90 “Angola”, ACR, 1974-1975, B 537.
91 In Conflicting Missions Gleijeses reports that Pompílío da Cruz, described as a “prominent right-wing Angolan settler,” later declared that the letters were not forgeries but had been leaked to the pro-MPLA magazine by a Portuguese officer “with the perfidy of a venomous beast.” Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, 239 and “Angola”, ACR, 1974-1975, B537.
92 Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, 239.
93 Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, 241.
94 Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, 241.
imperialism”, and that UNITA would happily accept aid from external sources.\textsuperscript{95} After calling for the unification of all of the movements (presumably under his own direction), Savimbi, cognizant of the rapidly changing international situation, made the following comments:

On the occasion of their victory against the most dangerous imperialist of our era, we send the Vietnamese people our warmest greetings. UNITA reaffirms its unconditional support to the fighting people of Cambodia, guided correctly in their liberation struggle by the United Front of Kampuchea. UNITA equally expresses its solidarity with the people of Laos who fight against imperialism.\textsuperscript{96}

He continued:

To our African brothers and sisters living on both American continents where they struggle against imperialist oppression, UNITA transmits its most militant greetings and renews expression of its active solidarity.\textsuperscript{97}

Savimbi too tried to use the language of international antiracist solidarity, and to locate UNITA in this wider trend, yet failed. According to Savimbi himself, UNITA was ignored by the global anti-imperialist champions: “We beat at the doors of Algeria in 1963, of Tanzania in 1964 and of the United Arab Republic (actually Egypt). None of these countries accepted our plans, none paid attention to our appeals.”\textsuperscript{98} Attempts to engage Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary and the Soviet Union also received negative responses.\textsuperscript{99} In a February 1976 memo to the Central and Southern Africa Department, British Foreign Service Officer Bryan Cartledge recalled an article he had read in \textit{Le Monde} on UNITA’s international profile:

I was incidentally struck by a report in \textit{Le Monde} of 3 February headed ‘The MPLA refuses all discussion with UNITA’... There is one particular quote from [Lúcio] Lara, the general-secretary of the MPLA, which ties in almost exactly with our assessment of what the Russians are saying, namely: ‘UNITA is a myth created in the first instance by Portuguese colonialism…we are not going to resuscitate this myth by negotiating with a movement which, in the eyes of our people represents treason...But there is no question of engaging in the least discussion with UNITA itself or even with UNITA militants presenting themselves as such.\textsuperscript{100}

\textsuperscript{96} Bureau de l’ UNITA à l’étranger, Communiqué Final du IIIème Congrès.
\textsuperscript{97} Bureau de l’ UNITA à l’étranger, Communiqué Final du IIIème Congrès.
\textsuperscript{98} Savimbi, \textit{Angola}, 19.
\textsuperscript{99} Savimbi, \textit{Angola}, 20.
UNITA, it seemed, had an image problem. UNITA tried to establish itself as a movement against outside political forces, regardless of their provenance, and demonstrated this fact by working with any group who would help them achieve Angolan independence. Yet they ultimately transgressed the boundaries of anti-imperialist solidarity by first negotiating a non-hostility pact with the Portuguese, then colluding with the South African Defense Force (SADF). The irony is that the one leader who received the least amount of outside help during the liberation wars became synonymous with being a lackey of international imperialism. Savimbi’s tale helps illustrate the precariousness and fine distinctions between nationalism and internationalism, and between internationalism and collusion. Remaining firmly planted on Angolan soil did little to boost UNITA’s fortunes or image, and seeking questionable international assistance led to charges of collaboration with the enemy.

It was the MPLA that was the most successful on the international diplomatic sphere, and had the most dramatic effects on the internationalization of Angolan independence. Since 1961 the MPLA’s carefully managed image gained the movement global prominence. Even after the divisive factionalism of 1973-1974, when only Yugoslavia continued to support the MPLA, the movement retained its high profile. Much of the surviving MPLA propaganda uses strikingly similar language and reflects the same themes: anti-racism, international solidarity of the oppressed, the end of colonialism and economic neocolonialism, the perniciousness of the US and its NATO allies, and political independence for all African nations, especially Angola. Gleijeses noted that between 1970-1971 Portuguese officials considered the MPLA their “most dangerous foe.” This MPLA declaration at the 1974 Conference of Militants (the first MPLA conference ever held), was characteristic: “After 500 years of resistance to the oppressor, this victory is the crowning achievement of the unshakeable will of a people who have always wanted to be free and who had no alternative but to assert this by resorting to the armed struggle launched by their conscious vanguard, the MPLA, on 4 February 1961.” It continued: “Throughout all these years of war, the Angolan people, led by MPLA [sic], have achieved great

101 Savimbi, Angola, 148.
102 Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, 275-276.
103 Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, 237.
104 Statement of the MPLA Inter-Regional Conference of Militants, 18 September 1974, Centro de Informação e Documentação Anti-Colonial (Centre for Anti-Colonial Information and Documentation, CIDA-C), CIDAC, H-desc. 5-7: Congresso do MPLA e Conferência Inter-Regional de Militantes – May-Sep 1974, 4. See note 109 for details on this archive.
victories, internally contributing to the forging of a nation out of a diversity of usages and customs, and in the liberated and controlled areas building new structures, a new way of life, a new Man.”

As Gleijeses wrote,

Over the years, the MPLA’s shortwave radio broadcasts had kept its name alive for hundreds of thousands of Angolans who had never seen an MPLA fighter or read an MPLA tract. The movement’s emphasis on class rather than ethnicity had gained its supporters throughout Angola’s urban centers and had made it, in the words of U.S. Consul General Everett Briggs (1972-1974), ‘the only Angolan [rebel] organization that had any national representativeness, that could be considered an Angola-wide organization.’

Briggs’ successor, Tom Killoran, noted the MPLA was “head and shoulders above the other two groups in terms of skills, education, and knowing what to do and how to do it.” In contrast, the US found the FNLA disorganized, and led by “corrupt, unprincipled men who represented the very worst of radical black African racism.”

The MPLA’s language also echoed the anti-imperialist currents that had been circulating in the Third World since the end of the Second World War and had increased during the Vietnam War years. This can be heard reflected in the statements and recollections of activists across the globe, many of whom shifted their support from the FNLA to the MPLA as the wars progressed. In May 1974, just after the Carnation Revolution, the Centro de Informação e Documentação Anti-Colonial (Centre for Anti-Colonial Information and Documentation, CIDA-C), opened in Lisbon.

CIDA-C was one of the many progressive anti-imperialist organizations finally permitted in Portugal after Caetano’s deposition and flight into exile. Like so many activist organizations, CIDA-C allied to the CONCP movements, and turned its attention to the new faces of ‘imperialism’, “the fascism incarnate by the FNLA and the social-democratic

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105 Statement of the MPLA Inter-Regional Conference of Militants, 4.
106 Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, 237.
108 Luanda CIA Station Chief Robert Hutslander. Quoted in Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, 238.
109 The organization has changed its name several times, but not its acronym. It is now an NGO focusing on civil society and international development, but maintains a small archive from the 1970s. This dissertation uses CIDA-C to designate the anticolonial organization, and CIDAC for the Lisbon archive, now called the Centro de Intervenção para o Desenvolvimento Amílcar Cabral. URL: http://www.cidac.pt/index.php/quem-somos/historia/amilcar-cabral/. Accessed: 9 July 2012.
moderation represented by UNITA.” CIDA-C, like ACOA and the WCC, began to doubt the FNLA and UNITA’s true commitment to international antiracist and anti-imperialist solidarity.

Consider the recollections of Nordic activists, whose memories on Angolan independence were compiled in a series called the Nordic Documentation on the Liberation Struggle in Southern Africa. Like many, Swedish activist and professor Dick Urban Vestbro became aware of the struggles on the African continent in the wake of the Sharpeville massacre in South Africa in 1960. In 1966 Vestbro and his university and activist colleagues in Lund turned their attention to the Portuguese Territories. At that point most Scandinavian organizations were in contact with the FNLA. As he recalled, initially,

There was very little attention paid to Angola and the attention that was gaining momentum was not necessarily for MPLA but rather for FNLA. The liberal party had got in touch with FNLA and one of their prominent members, Olle Wästberg, had visited FNLA liberated areas. No one wrote much about MPLA but I got a very favourable impression by asking questions of Aghostino [sic] Neto and other MPLA people. Yet by 1969, when Vestbro attempted to visit the liberated zones in Angola, things had changed: “when I came back to Sweden, after a year keeping in touch with most of the liberation movements all that time. …The MPLA became my main contact, [Mozambique’s] Frelimo was very important, the ANC, to some extent [Namibia’s South West Africa People's Organization] SWAPO and [the Zimbabwe African People's Union] ZAPU, but almost none of the others.”

As Vestbro recalled, in the highly ideological atmosphere of the 1960s, dominated by the shadow of the Vietnam War, the MPLA’s message of antiracist, anti-imperialist solidarity truly resonated:

We started to analyse the situation in Angola where there were three organizations calling themselves liberation movements, the MPLA, FNLA and UNITA. We decided not to take the stand that it was up to the Angolans to sort this out, but said we’d better examine them, so we collected all the information we could get. To do that, we kept in touch with other solidarity organizations in Europe and in North America. I’ve looked at my correspondence from the time and I really kept in touch with a lot of organizations. We managed to get quite a lot of good information. We also looked carefully at the

10 CIDA-C, “Africa em Luta: Fim às Agressões Imperialistas”, Boletim mensal do CID Anti-Colonial, October 1975, CIDAC, PP162/7/75,
Portuguese war communiqués and compared them with what the liberation movements said, and so we found that MPLA was serious, it was anti-racist which UNITA and FNLA weren't, and it was anti-imperialist. After intensive discussion among ourselves, in all five Africa Groups, we decided not to support UNITA or FNLA but only MPLA.\footnote{Interview with Vestro, 10 August 2005.}

In another interview, activist Christer Johansson explained the rationale for his involvement in African solidarity movements. In 1968 Johansson was doing “solidarity work” for the FLN in Vietnam when he first met activists focused on Southern Africa. What began as a “humanitarian aid” project through the international charitable organization Emmaus (Björkå, Sweden chapter), soon became, in Johansson’s term, “politicised.” Noted Johansson, “[w]e sent one of our fellow workers or members to southern Africa to make contact with the different liberation movements such as ANC and SWAPO and Frelimo and MPLA and ZANU in 1971.”\footnote{Interview with Christer Johansson, “Practical Solidarity”, 20 May 2005, Nordic Documentation on the Liberation Struggle in Southern Africa [online], Interview conducted by Bertil Högberg. URL: \url{http://www.liberationafrica.se/intervstories/interviews/johansson/ch_johansson.pdf}. Accessed: 22 July 2012.} When asked by interviewer Bertil Högberg why he was motivated to support African liberation, Johansson replied, “[t]he main motivation was to fight against imperialism. It was a political reason and [Emmaus] still ha[s] the same view, we are still an anti-imperialist organisation.”\footnote{Interview with Johansson, 20 May 2005.}

Though the date for the transfer of power was fixed, control of independent Angola was not. Unlike the situation in the other African territories, the transition to independence in Angola was complicated by the existence of the three liberation movements, each claiming to be the legitimate representative of the Angolan people, and each claiming the support of the international community. Ultimately, it seems that the MPLA could most claim to have the support of the international community. It was the MPLA’s ideological commitment to antiracist, anti-imperialist solidarity that precipitated the most dramatic act of internationalism, the arrival of the Cuban Military Mission in November 1974.

**Internationalism in action: the Cuban intervention**

Lisbon’s contemporaries in Pretoria, Salisbury, and Washington, DC, had for almost a decade based their southern Africa policies on the assumption that the trifecta of white minority rule – the Lisbon-Pretoria-Salisbury axis – could not and would not be defeated. As MacQueen and
Oliveira noted, akin to the State Department’s final assessment in NSSM 39 (discussed in chapter 3), “[n]owhere in the papers of either the Foreign Office or Downing Street held in the UK National Archives [was] there any sustained discussion of the likelihood of a military coup as an outcome to Portugal’s deepening political crisis at the end of 1973 and the beginning of 1974.” The 1974 revolution had “introduced a new element of uncertainty but also fluidity into a situation of stubborn rigidity,” and forced a rapid re-evaluation of policy.

International observers had watched the events in Lisbon and its former African Territories warily. The primary concern of the western allies was the fear of a full-fledged communist government in Portugal. However as military supremacy oscillated between the national liberation movements, Angola itself attracted increased attention. The fighting in Angola was destabilizing southern Africa as combatants from all sides, indifferent to the formal demarcations of sovereign states, crossed contiguous borders with impunity. On 23 March FNLA troops crossed the Angolan-Zairian border and attacked the MPLA headquarters north of Luanda. The attack was the death of the barely two-month old coalition government. During several rounds of fighting, military supremacy oscillated between the FNLA and the MPLA.

As November closed in, fighting around the capital intensified as each party vied to control Luanda before Independence Day.

In an effort to force a decisive end to the conflict, exogenous forces began more aggressive interventions. The full chronology of the Cuban and South African interventions has been well-covered elsewhere in works by Gleijeses, MacQueen, Peter Schraeder, William Minter, Witney Schneidman, and Edward George, among others. The arrival of the South African Defence Force (SADF) and the Cuban Military Mission in Angola (MMCA) represented

117 It is generally held that the FNLA broke the ceasefire.
118 UNITA combatants generally fought guerrilla campaigns in central and southern Angola. Gleijeses, Missions, 257.
an exponential growth in external intervention.\textsuperscript{120} Despite the long shadow that South Africa cast over post-1945 African politics, before the military intervention of 1975 Pretoria’s role in Angolan independence received little attention. While it is clear that Pretoria did represent the evils of imperialism and racism, Pretoria, like Salisbury, was part of the larger problem, but they were not the direct target of the guerilla activities of the MPLA, FNLA, or UNITA (though, as this dissertation has argued, Pretoria did figure into the political/diplomatic calculations). In Angolan liberation movement propaganda Pretoria was often depicted as a lackey of US imperialism, and South Africa remained diplomatically isolated throughout the 1970s.

Under the \textit{Estado Novo}, the Portuguese had good relations with South Africa, sharing intelligence and permitting “search-and-destroy” operations in south eastern Angola.\textsuperscript{121} Smith’s Rhodesia and the Portuguese Territories of Angola and Mozambique formed a \textit{cordon sanitaire}, protecting South Africa from the black nationalism that surged through the continent. And yet \textit{Estado Novo} Lisbon also treaded carefully when it came to South Africa, fearing that the Lusotropical, non-racial fantasy would be irrevocably tainted by Pretoria’s entrenched racism.\textsuperscript{122} According to Christopher Saunders, from 1968 on South African officials held secret meetings with the Portuguese to discuss logistical and financial assistance.\textsuperscript{123} These meetings ended when the Carnation Revolution destroyed Pretoria’s sense of safety, as the breakdown in central authority in Angola and Mozambique opened the door for African nationalist guerrillas to increase their operations against Pretoria and Salisbury.

Without the Portuguese Territories as a buffer, Pretoria and Salisbury feared that the OAU Liberation Committee would now turn the resources that were used against Portugal to ending the Smith and Vorster regimes and aiding the South West Africa People’s Organization (SWAPO).\textsuperscript{124} Sensing the proverbial winds of change, Vorster intensified efforts to resume a

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{120} Gleijeses, \textit{Conflicting Missions}, 298, 305.
\item \textsuperscript{121} Gleijeses, \textit{Conflicting Missions}, 273.
\item \textsuperscript{122} For its part South Africa also took care to not be overly identified with a colonial regime. Christopher Saunders, “The South Africa-Angola Talks, 1976-1984: A Little-known Cold War Thread”, \textit{Kronos: Rethinking Cold War History in Southern Africa}, 37 (November 2011): 106.
\item \textsuperscript{123} To quote Saunders: “South African aircraft were stationed at a Joint Air Support Centre at Cuito Cuanavale and the Portuguese military provided the SADF with maps of southern Angola, which no doubt came in useful a few years later when the SADF began to plan attacks in the area.” As Saunders points out, the true extent of this mutual assistance programme is unknown. Relevant documents from Portugal and South Africa remain classified. Pretoria and independent Luanda continued secret negotiations, this time antagonistic, until the South African withdrawal. Saunders, “The South Africa-Angola Talks, 1976-1984”, 106.
\item \textsuperscript{124} The South West Africa People’s Organization (SWAPO) was a national liberation movement agitating for independence from South Africa. After World War I South Africa occupied the former German South West Africa
southern African détente which began in 1970, extending Pretoria’s friendship to independent Mozambique. In September 1974 Vorster made it clear that the turmoil in Southern Africa was deeply unsettling: “I don’t like it. Unrest in any part of the world gives us cause for concern, especially in a neighbouring country.” Vorster was referencing Mozambique, but his comments were applicable to Angola as well. As it turned out, unrest in Angola would have a far greater impact on South Africa’s fortunes. South Africa’s interest lay not in the political sovereignty of Angola’s white settlers, but in the potential for disaster an MPLA-run revolutionary Angola posed for South Africa’s regional hegemony, as MPLA combatants aligned themselves with SWAPO guerillas on the Namibian border. Already waging a difficult battle against the People’s Liberation Army of Namibia (SWAPO’s armed wing), South Africa feared Angola would become a training ground and safe-haven for more SWAPO rebels. Accusations about South African military meddling in Angola were not new. A 23 December 1970 article in The Times (London) accusing South African military helicopters of operating within Angola was prominent enough to incur a sharp rebuttal from British Military Attaché Colonel W. P. Lunn-Rockliffe, who accused author Dan Van der Vat of “conform[ing] with the modern tendency to take a wild or unsupported statement and, despite its denial by responsible authorities, make a front-page splash of it.” According to Lunn-Rockliffe, it was common knowledge that:

South African helicopters have sporadically overflown Portuguese territory and have been lent to provide specific troop lifts for once only operations; we also know S[African] A[rmy] officers visit the fronts in Angola and Mozambique to see for themselves what is going on, and we are aware of exchanges of information and intelligence between the two countries. But we are fairly certain that at no time has South Africa actively participated with any significant forces in operations in Angola or Mozambique and we consider it extremely unlikely that Mr Vorster has offered any concrete military aid in the recent past [emphasis in original].

Still, in January 1971, British Foreign Officer in Luanda Robert W. Ford seemed to confirm South African support to Portugal, writing that an American colleague had “picked up the first positive admission volunteered by a Portuguese Army officer of the use of South African

and ruled it as a League of Nations mandate. Claiming that their right to control the territory remained even after the mandate system ended, South Africa annexed South West Africa outright during World War II. Namibia finally achieved its independence from South Africa in 1990. The battle over Namibia is yet another fascinating chapter in the story of southern Africa during the cold war. Legum, ACR, 1974-1975, A7.


“Alleged South African Offer of Military Aid to Portugal”, 1.
helicopter support in anti-guerrilla operations.”  The unnamed Portuguese Lieutenant explained that if a Portuguese foot patrol ran into a large unit of “guerillas,” they called in South African helicopter support from the Moxico district. This was the preferred form for support, as the helicopters from this base “were armed with cannon.”

According to Piero Gleijeses, in May 1975 Vorster commissioned a report on the situation in Angola from the South African Bureau of State Security (BOSS) and the SADF. Separately, both Roberto and Savimbi had approached the South Africans for assistance, and Pretoria agreed to small amounts as it needed to “keep its options open,” as well as get a sense of what was transpiring on the ground. The report concluded on 26 June that a civil war in Angola was inevitable, and that only South African assistance to a united FNLA-UNITA front could defeat the MPLA. Again, the concern was less for Angola proper, but that an MPLA-led Angola would certainly support and buoy SWAPO. On 14 July Vorster approved a list of 20 million rand ($14.1 million USD) worth of arms for Roberto and Savimbi, with the caveat that the arms be brought abroad to hide Pretoria’s hand. In August the first South African arms shipments began to reach Savimbi and Roberto.

On 9 August 1975 a small SADF patrol entered Angola ostensibly to protect the Ruacana-Calueque hydro-electric complex, a joint Pretoria-Estado Novo era project which was important for South Africa’s energy needs. Approximately two weeks later, on 22 August, the SADF launched operation “Sausage II” against SWAPO forces based in southern Angola, and soon after established training camps at Silva Porto (now Kuito) and Nova Lisboa (now Huambo). In September the FNLA and UNITA allied and declared war on the MPLA. On 14 October 1975, the SADF invaded Angola in Operation Zulu. SADF troops now bolstered UNITA in the east after Savimbi negotiated a mutual non-confrontation agreement. In hindsight, the inclusion of a regime committed to white supremacy in a struggle for black liberation is somewhat comical; at the time, it was a heavy blow for the MPLA. On 23 October the MPLA

129 “Use of South African Helicopters in Angola”.
130 Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, 276.
131 Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, 294.
132 Journalists were kept away from the frontlines and the war was rarely discussed. Thus sources are limited to personal accounts of the military battles. See Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, 301-304. This, combined with the fact that many documents from the South African side are still classified, has made it difficult to know much more about South African involvement in this phase.
suffered a serious defeat at the hands of the SADF, reducing MPLA control to three out of sixteen Angolan provinces.\textsuperscript{133} With the combined weight of CIA funds and the SADF behind it, the FNLA advanced rapidly.

Already under intense pressure, in May the Marxist MPLA had placed a desperate call to the socialist brotherhood. According to historian Vladislav Zubok, despite early attempts to support “progressive” regimes in Africa, by 1975 the Brezhnev Politburo had little stomach for Angola. Brezhnev already faced three “visible international setbacks” – the collapse of the socialist government in Chile in 1973, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat’s turn toward the west and the failure of a communist government to take root in Portugal.\textsuperscript{134} Brezhnev initially refused to offer any Soviet assistance to the MPLA. Castro took over six months to reply, ostensibly concentrating on domestic matters such as the first Congress of the Cuban Communist Party which was scheduled for December 1975.\textsuperscript{135} When Cuba finally responded, however, the results were astonishing. On the occasion of the departure of the first contingent of Cuban military advisors in September 1975, Castro commended the military volunteers for their bravery in undertaking this internationalist mission.\textsuperscript{136} In early October 1975 the advance assault force of the MMCA, named \textit{Operación Carlota}, after the African slave who led an 1843 rebellion in Matanzas province, confronted a combined SADF/FNLA/mercenary force en route to Luanda.\textsuperscript{137} After four months of brutal fighting, the SADF retreated across the South West African border. Only the expeditionary force of Cuban troops saved the MPLA. When the Portuguese flag was lowered from the state building at midnight on 11 November, the MPLA had effectively regained control of Luanda, and taken control of the country.

A generation after the military intervention, the Cuban action in Angolan Crisis continues to fascinate historians and political scientists. The Cuban military intervention in Angola was decisive, and took the international community by surprise. Yet upon reflection, it appears entirely in keeping with the nature of Fidel Castro’s Cuba. Angola was not Cuba’s first foray into


\textsuperscript{134} Vladislav M. Zubok, \textit{A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev}, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 253.

\textsuperscript{135} Gleijeses, \textit{Conflicting Missions}, 256.


African politics, nor was it the last. Other important interventions included Algeria, 1963, Congo, 1965, and Ethiopia, 1977. However, Angola was undoubtedly the most successful, stabilizing the MPLA until it formed a government in Luanda. Assessments of Cuban foreign policy are numerous. Many theories argue that Cuba had tried to increase its impact in the international system by adding new trading partners, joining the Non-Aligned Movement, or even Guevara’s ill-fated attempts to export the revolution to other Latin American nations in the mid-1960s. As Jorge Domínguez asserted in 1989, “[t]he support of revolutionary movements, in Cuba’s view, was an effective means to combat the United States and its allies throughout the world.” Supporting socialist states in Africa became the new iteration of Guevara’s geopolítica de liberación pursued “on the fringes of the bipolar system.”

The perspective offered from the Cuban state, however, was slightly different. Castro and his political vanguard situated post-1959 Cuba as one more stage in the longstanding Cuban anti-imperialist, antiracist, revolutionary tradition, dating back to the 1890s and José Martí. In this telling, Cuba had always been internationalist, perhaps not in a strictly Marxist sense, but committed to solidarity among the oppressed and to the principle of mutual assistance. As one recent writer noted, “[t]his alternative, national/revolutionary history maintains that the spirit of internationalism has defined Cuba since its inceptions and forms a central part of who Cubans are.” Certainly the Cuban state has not been the only one to rationalize its existence with the principle of revolutionary internationalism. However, Cuba remains the only small, Third World nation to explicitly project its military and ideological influence outside of contiguous states. It is difficult to view Cuban foreign policy except through the prism of its recent revolutionary past. This is not just a western conceit, born of the fifty-year adversarial relationship between the Cuba and the United States. Rather, the Cuban state itself has explicitly historicized, conceptualized and projected its image as that of a revolutionary state and, that most elusive

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141 Albers, 38
142 Albers, 38-39.
category, a revolutionary power. Necessary to the goal of being a revolutionary power is an explicit commitment to the projection of military, economic, ideological power and influence.

Domínguez contended that “[n]o master plan has guided Cuba’s leaders, but they have responded effectively to many international opportunities. ‘No master plan’, of course, does not mean no guiding principles.” A commitment to internationalism has been a part of Fidel Castro’s M-26-7 since its earliest days, despite Castro’s strong nationalism. As former fidelista Régis Debray suggested in 1967, the Cuban Revolution had always presented itself as the “vanguard detachment of Latin American revolution.” Though Castro himself was not a declared Marxist until after he seized power, this iteration of internationalism was broadly nationalistic, anti-imperial (in this case, anti-US) and pan-Latin American.

Cuba involved itself in Africa’s liberation struggles early on. The first engagement was providing assistance to the Algerian FLN. In December 1961 the Cuba ship Bahía de Nipe sent a shipment of arms, including US-made mortars, which was unloaded at Casablanca. The ship later returned with seventy-six wounded Algerian fighters. As Piero Gleijeses notes, Cuban assistance to the FLN had little to do with cold war tensions and everything to do with anti-imperialist solidarity. Cubans could identify with the FLN’s struggles against the French, and Algeria’s role as the vanguard of African liberation was impressive. This small, yet successful, episode of internationalism set the stage for further Cuban interventions in Latin America and Africa, such as Guevara’s 1965 Congo Campaign. Disgusted by Lumumba’s assassination and the inadequacy of the international response, yet buoyed by the vigour of African independence movements, Guevara felt the former Belgian colony would be the epicentre of a global Third

144 The quotation continues, “Fidel Castro’s central ideas and attitudes embody a deep hostility toward the U.S. government and toward many U.S. values; a belief that the direction of history can be perceived and that conscious revolutionaries can and ought to accelerate the rate of change; and a conviction that revolution in one country is impossible because the ‘imperialist enemy’ is a world system that must be met with global struggle.” Domínguez, 3.
146 Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, 31, 41.
147 Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, 31.
World revolution, centered not on Latin America, but in Africa. An excerpt from early in Guevara’s Congo diary are illustrative. During an early meeting with Congolese liberation movement leader Laurent-Désiré Kabila,

We talked at length with Kabila about what our government considered a strategic flaw on the part of some African friends: namely, that, in the face of open aggression by the imperialist powers, they thought the right slogan must be: ‘The Congo problem is an African problem’, and acted accordingly. Our view was that the Congo problem was a world problem, and Kabila agreed…. Victory would be continental in its reach and consequences, and so would defeat…. I tried to show them that we were talking not of a struggle of fixed frontiers, but a war against the common enemy, present as much in Mozambique and in Malawi, Rhodesia or South Africa, the Congo or Angola.

Thus while the world’s attention was riveted to the expanding conflict in Vietnam, Cuban attention was already turning toward the African liberation struggles that were consuming the continent. Rather than remain on the “fringes” of the bipolar system, Africa was on its way to becoming a key battle zone of the cold war.

Early Cuban internationalism did not go unnoticed, nor did its lack of success. The CIA was fond of listing Castro’s failures, citing “deficient leadership, inadequate training, poor support mechanism[s] and frequent internal struggles over leadership or tactics…which have led to disillusionment, low morale and desertions from the ranks.” The same 1968 report catalogued the Latin American nations where Cuban revolutionary forces were waging mostly unsuccessful battles: Bolivia, Colombia, Guatemala, Venezuela, and Uruguay. Still, CIA analysts warned officials not to entirely discount Castro’s radicalism. Despite it all, including the “spectacular failure and death of ‘Che’ Guevara in Bolivia”, the “Castro forces [were] clearly determined to continue their efforts to create, periodically, if not sustained, unrest throughout a number of countries in the area.” Within a year, however, a more formal assessment concluded that the days of Cuban subversion were ending. After (somewhat grudgingly) noting Castro’s improbable successes in radically refashioning Cuban society while maintaining a high degree of public loyalty, a 1969 CIA report then notes that “Castro’s other principle objectives –

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150 Guevara, 7.
151 Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), World-Wide Perspectives, “Castro’s Continued Attempts to Export His Revolution”, June 1968, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA II), CIA Records Search Tool (CREST), 1.
152 “Castro’s Continued Attempts to Export His Revolution”, 1.
to help Latin American revolutionaries emulate the Cuban Revolution and to achieve economic prosperity on Cuba – have been more elusive.” The report then asserted that “Castro probably considers his inability to ‘export’ the revolution as the greatest failure of his foreign policy.” According to the CIA, Castro’s revolution was holding on by sheer force of his charisma alone, as all economic and social indicators pointed to a lack of economic development and increased social unrest. With the death of Guevara it was argued that the age of Cuban revolutionary insolence was over. In a heavily redacted section entitled “‘Export’ of the Revolution”, intelligence analysts noted that several failed attempts at “convert[ing] the cordillera of the Andes into the Sierra Maestra of the American continent” had led Castro to deemphasize revolutionary upheaval in his foreign policy statements. Castro was seen to be motivated by security concerns, where exporting the revolution equalled “enlist[ing] the support of other young leftist extremists in Latin America to ratify and emulate the Cuban experience.” Noting that Cuba was not a “showcase of socialism in the Western Hemisphere,” the report also suggested that US intelligence personnel were aware that the Soviets and Cubans often pursued different policies and had substantial disagreements. The Soviet Union was known to “[allow] the Cubans a sphere of influence among extremist revolutionary factions in Latin America – a handy strategy which precluded Chinese gains in the area.” Still, the CIA remained convinced that Havana would always be under Moscow’s thumb, noting that “Castro’s obsession with pursuing a policy of violence in Latin America and his pretensions of independence from Moscow are tolerable nuisances to the Soviets.” Thus neither superpower expected the next wave of Cuban internationalism to take place an ocean away in Angola.

Why had Castro risked Cuban prestige and credibility, not to mention antagonizing both superpowers, on such a risky operation? What could be gained by a show of force 11,000 kms away, on a continent that rarely figured in cold war calculations? The particular circumstances of Angola in 1975 provide at least a partial response to the above questions. Historically, the legacy of the transatlantic slave trade gave Cuba a substantial African demographic, many of whom were from the region that became Angola. More important, the MPLA’s socialist credentials

155 Fidel Castro and the Cuban Revolution, 10.
156 Fidel Castro and the Cuban Revolution, 9.
157 Fidel Castro and the Cuban Revolution, 9.
were beyond reproach. Neto was an established Marxist intellectual and poet, and a personal friend of the Castro brothers. Tactically, it appears that Castro learned much from Guevara’s failed Congolese and Bolivian campaigns. In the Angolan intervention, Cuban forces joined an existing armed liberation struggle, rather than attempting to foment one from scratch. On a strategic level, Cuba’s force projection into Angola displayed its military and technical acumen to the entire world, and especially to the US. Perhaps most significantly, the Cuban intervention came at the direct request of Neto, and was directed against a clear case of external aggression from the US and South Africa. The arrival of the SADF and their reported collusion with retreating Portuguese troops, the CIA and UNITA, completely discredited the FNLA and UNITA and legitimized Cuban intervention in the eyes of many black African states. At the international level, superpower détente provided a “permissive world-context.”

With both the Soviet Union and the US preoccupied with arms control and limiting each other’s freedom of movement, Cuban actions – while still scrutinized – were more difficult to contain (the implications for détente are discussed in chapter 5).

The ideological impulses are almost more compelling than the strategic circumstances. Aspiring to Third World leadership was not only a strategic manoeuvre, it was also entirely in keeping with Fidel Castro’s revolutionary ethos. Since 1959 Cuban rhetoric and policy reflected a strong commitment to anticolonialism and antiracism, influenced largely by Cuba’s own experience of Spanish colonization and US domination. Despite the vagaries of the liberation parties, at its root the Angolan crisis was an anticolonial struggle of national liberation, made more acute by the collusion of South Africa and the CIA and the presence of the SADF on Angolan territory. This message was not lost on Angolans, and at least one MPLA combatant took the nom de guerre “Che Guevara.”

Cuba also felt a socialist imperative to support the

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159 *Nom de guerre* of Squadron Commander Miguel Sebastião João. Other noteworthy nicknames with international élan included “Gandhy”, “Lumumba”, “Petroff”, and “Bula Matadi.” Bula Matadi (or “Matari”, roughly translated to “breaker of rocks”) was the name the Congolese had given to Henry Morton Stanley as he explored and subjegated the region for the Belgian crown). The term later came to represent the violence of the colonial projcect (see M. Crawford Young, *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective*, [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994]). In choosing this pseudonym José Manuel Paive turned the vernacular of colonial authority into one of anticolonial resistance. “Untitled list of MPLA combatants”, c.1970, FMS-AMS, Document 04339.002.018.
oppressed classes in the spirit of Marxist “proletarian internationalism.” With Cuba always ideologically prepared to ‘export the revolution’, Angola provided an excellent arena for activist internationalism. Prominent African leaders including Nelson Mandela, drew a direct line from the Cuban challenge, via the Soweto Uprisings, to the end of apartheid.

Perhaps what differentiated the Cuban experience from that of other revolutionary states was not only its commitment to being ‘system-destabilizing’ (that is, to deliberately challenging the status quo in the international system), but rather the explicit decision to be perpetually system-destabilizing. As such, Cuban foreign policy was about more than simply antagonizing the US or supporting the Soviet Union. Cuba had a very different ideological conception of how the international system was constituted – not as west versus east, or strong versus weak, but as ‘oppressed’ versus ‘liberated’ states, deliberately seeking to challenge the balance of power and raise the profile of the Third World. Thus the Cuban intervention in Angola was the quintessential internationalist solution to what the liberation movements, and especially the MPLA, had always defined as an international problem. As Ali Mazuri argued, “Cuban internationalism, and particularly the intervention in Angola is unique because of the extent of this south-south exchange in relation to other forms of solidarity[.] As for the active participation of Cuban troops in the struggle to defend Angola’s sovereignty, this marked the strongest level of external support in an African war of liberation.”

For a brief moment Castro emerged from his calculated risk in Angola as the near-undisputed leader of the Third World. In 1976 the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) unanimously elected Havana as the site of its next summit meeting. Despite being accused of causing rifts in the NAM, Cuba’s aggressive action in Angola was rewarded by the Third World community. Reporting on the UN International Seminar on the Eradication of Apartheid and in Support of the Struggle for Liberation in South Africa, ACOA members George Houser and Raphael Gould explained the logic of hosting this prominent meeting in Havana. While the decision to host the meeting in a Latin American nation was taken in September 1975 before the Cuban intervention, “nevertheless it was realized during the course of the Seminar that there was symbolic significance to holding the meetings in Havana and due recognition was given to Cuba for the

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161 Albers, 38.
contribution it had made to the establishment of an MPLA government in Angola.” As the seminar coincided with the 25 May African Liberation Day celebrations, the meetings were adjourned to allow delegates to participate in the festivities – six solidarity rallies organized by the Cuban government.

The Angolan intervention highlighted both the strategic weight and ideological power of Cuban revolutionary internationalism. Through its alliance (however tense) with the Soviet Union it introduced a European power into the western hemisphere thus challenging the Monroe Doctrine and nearly a century of American dominance in the region. Most significantly, Cuba presented a different and apparently successful model of modernity and development. Cuban internationalism, while addressing the practical security needs of a small state, suggested the viability of revolution as a tool of rapid political change. The Cuban intervention, then, as now, was not without controversy. There was no western consensus on Cuban motivations for the Angolan intervention. Responses ranged from mild irritation to complete terror: was this a Soviet-inspired plot for world domination, or was this a Cuban move to raise Castro’s profile in his real target, Latin America – that site of profound US influence and Castro’s worst failures? Was Castro simply trying to increase his standing in the communist bloc as claimed by a February 1976 CIA report, which noted: “[u]nlike the four visits Castro made to the USSR in earlier years when he was cast in the role of underprivileged client seeking Soviet beneficence, he will consult with Soviet leaders this time from a position of strength,” or was he simply, as in the case of Cuban agitation over Puerto Rico, “flicking the eagle’s feathers”? Whatever Castro’s designs in Angola, it made observers very nervous. On an official trip to Latin America, US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger encountered sympathetic ears as he met with other leaders of the western hemisphere. Costa Rican President Daniel Oduber Quiros agreed with Kissinger’s assessment that Castro was actually creating an international “black power block” starting in Africa. Perhaps Colombian Prime Minister Alfonso López Michelsen summed up the feelings of paranoia best, claiming that “Hitler in the Sudetenland [was] a boy scout compared to Castro

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164 CIA, “Memorandum: Castro’s Expanding Role as a Broker between the Communist and Third World”, 26 February 1976, NARA II, CREST.


in Africa.” It was mainly Kissinger’s complete inability to accept the notion of an independent Cuban foreign policy that led the Ford administration to escalate American support for the FNLA and UNITA, extending the civil war for decades (discussed in chapter 5).

**Conclusion**

Despite the decisiveness of the Cuban intervention, there is little mention of Cuban assistance in the records and statements of the liberation movements. According to anthropologist Marisabel Almers, “in Angola, the MPLA leadership has downplayed the extent and decisive role of Cuban involvement in their ascent to power as a unifying and legitimizing project after decades of civil war…” Gleijeses concurred, recounting this statement from a former Cuban combatant in Angola: “That shows Angola’s true gratitude towards the enormous and selfless Cuban endeavor. In time, this assistance will be erased from Angolan memory, since it is in nobody’s interest (except the Cubans) that it be remembered. Was it worth it? Nooo…”

The Angolan intervention may not have been “worth it” for the ordinary Cuban who fought in Angola. However, the Cuban state happily used the internationalist mission for political points. In 2005 a Cuban press published a series of speeches commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of the Cuban Military Mission to Angola. The speeches, by Fidel Castro, Raúl Castro, and Angolan president José Eduardo dos Santos (who has ruled Angola without interruption since Neto’s death from cancer in 1979), given between 1989 and 1991, are in themselves unremarkable. They consist largely of the expected propagandistic feting of the heroism and sacrifice of the Cuban troops, vilification of the United States, references to the Cubans as a “latinoafrican” people (and therefore legitimate participants in an African liberation struggle), and exultation of this victory of the Cuban Revolution. A speech by Raúl Castro on 27 May 1991 praised the 377,033 Cubans who had served in Angola over the sixteen

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168 Albers, 72.
169 “Ése es el agradecimiento real de Angola al enorme y desinteresado esfuerzo cubano. Con el tiempo esta ayuda será borrada de la memoria Angolana, pues no le conviene a nadie (excepto a los cubanos) recordarla. ¿Valió la pena? Nooo…” (http://www.militar.org.ua/foro/cuba-en-africa-guerra-de-angola-t90-585.html). Quoted in Albers, 56.
year period, and the 2,077 who had died.¹⁷⁰ Angola was described as “a milestone, a landmark in history”, and a “brilliant, clean, honourable, transparent page in the history of solidarity among peoples, in the history of internationalism, in the history of the Cuban contribution to the cause of liberty and the betterment of humanity.”¹⁷¹ According to Raúl Castro, the sole reason for the Cuban intervention in Angola was antiracist and anti-imperialist revolutionary solidarity. To “seek reasons in simplistic geopolitical explanation, in the derivations of the cold war, or the global conflicts between the east and the west” was to “err in good faith” – Cuba had been fighting American expansion and neocolonialism since the days of Martí.¹⁷² What is notable, however, was that Portugal was not mentioned once in any of the speeches. The entire story of Angolan independence and anticolonialism now revolved around the Cuba-US feud and the battle between revolution and counterrevolution.

¹⁷¹ Raúl Castro, 32.
¹⁷² Raúl Castro, 33.
Chapter 5: Lusaka, 1976

“I have come to Africa because in so many ways the challenges of Africa are the challenges of the modern era....”

Henry Kissinger, “Lusaka Speech”
April 1976

“Seven years of neglect is what Africa deserved....”

Henry Kissinger,
Meeting with Brand Fourie, South African Secretary of Foreign Affairs, and R. F. “Pik” Botha, South African Ambassador to the United States
December 1976

Introduction: “Seven years of neglect” in Africa

In April 1976 Henry Kissinger found himself in an unusual situation. After “seven years of neglect,” Kissinger took his first ever official trip to sub-Saharan Africa. There, on 27 April 1976 in the Zambian capital, Kissinger delivered his first – and only – major policy address on US-Africa policy, known as the ‘Lusaka Speech’. On the surface the ‘Lusaka Speech’ was intended as a confidence-building measure for a volatile continent, representing the Ford administration’s last attempt to exert some control over the difficult situation in southern Africa by shifting the focus away from Angola and toward the increasingly tense situations in Rhodesia and South Africa. The speech was an attempt to reclaim some of the moral authority that was lost over Angola by implying that the US would finally take a leadership role in African affairs;

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2 Meeting with B.G. (Brand) Fourie and R.F. Botha (Ambassador to the US), 15 December 1976, National Archives and Record Administration, College Park (hereafter: NARA II), Record Group 59 (hereafter: RG 59), Folder 5. Box 15.
5 In 1976 Kissinger made thirteen official trips to ‘black’ or Sub-Saharan Africa. Prior to that he made one state visit to Portugal in 1973. His predecessor, William Rogers, made eight trips to black Africa and three to Portugal. Before him, Dean Rusk visited Portugal twice. Between the Truman and Ford Administrations no president made an official visit to black Africa. The first State visit of a sitting US President to Sub-Saharan African was Jimmy Carter’s visit to Nigeria in March 1978. See U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian, “Presidents and Secretaries of State Foreign Travels.” URL: http://history.state.gov/departmentshistory/travels.
however, it was too little too late. By December 1975 US policy in Angola, both the covert action and the later diplomatic campaign, had already failed. Kissinger and his allies, including President Ford, had drastically misread the domestic and international political and ideological climates.

This crisis over Angola was far more of an issue than the Ford administration cared to admit. It was a very public failure of US policy which came at an inopportune time for an administration struggling to retain a sense of legitimacy in a difficult domestic and international climate. This chapter proceeds in three sections. The first section revisits 1970s international system, and investigates prominent currents in Nixon and Kissinger’s intellectual foundations, especially their views on détente, order and revolution, and the US’ historical role. These intellectual undercurrents help explain the Ford administration’s thinking on Angola. The second section traces the rapid evolution of the Ford administration’s Angola policy from 1974 to mid-1975, focusing on the elite-level decision-making which culminated in the covert operation IAFEATURE. Section three examines the fallout and backlash from IAFEATURE, Kissinger’s subsequent diplomatic offensive, and the consequences of US actions for the wider project of superpower détente.

It is generally assumed that the proximate cause of increased US action in Angola was the April 1974 Lisbon revolution, which installed the left-wing Junta de Salvação Nacional (JSN). Yet the Carnation Revolution itself was not enough to propel the Ford administration to act. The archival record demonstrates that there was still debate among Secretary Kissinger’s regional and principal advisors over Angola well into September 1975. Rather, US Angola policy was influenced by a constellation of factors, both strategic and ideological. This chapter investigates the links between détente, disorder, and the international system. The Soviet and Cuban intervention in Angola undermined the policy of détente in the eyes of many American

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6 Angola receives very short mention in Kissinger’s third volume of memoirs, Years of Renewal (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1999), and no mention at all in the other two, White House Years (covering his years as National Security Advisor, 1969-1973) and Years of Upheaval (covering his first two years as Secretary of State, 1972-1974). In Gerald Ford’s memoirs, A Time to Heal, Angola appears once. Both occurrences are addressed later on in this chapter.

7 IAFEATURE was the Central Intelligence Agency’s cryptonym for the “Angola Project” of July 1975 to November 1976. The cryptonym technically refers to the covert paramilitary operation. Recent authors have noted that other aspects of the covert intervention, such as propaganda and psychological warfare features had their own codenames (e.g. Project IACADMUS). See John Prados, Safe for Democracy: The Secret Wars of the CIA, (Chicago, IL: Ivan R. Dee, 2006), 448. For consistency and clarity this paper will use IAFEATURE to refer to the entire range of US covert action in Angola during this period.
observers, and put the Ford administration on the defensive. The Angolan crisis highlighted the ambiguities and frailties of superpower détente. When Kissinger appealed to African heads of states in Lusaka in 1976, it represented the failure of the Ford administration’s Angola policy and the discrediting of thirty years of poor US decision-making regarding Portuguese Africa.

‘Grand Strategy’ as global strategy: Managing the international system under Nixon and Kissinger

As with other cold war battles, in Angola US-Soviet antagonism exacerbated a pre-existing conflict. Yet the crisis over Angola reached its zenith during a period of supposedly relaxed tensions, which added another layer of complexity. The abrupt change in US policy in 1975, from low-level monitoring to a 40 Committee-approved covert operation, is most helpfully understood by investigating the intellectual environment of the détente period. The crisis over Angola took place within the environment of superpower détente and a corresponding preoccupation with equilibrium and order in the international system.

To return to Nixon’s time in office, after more than two decades of escalating cold war tensions and fifteen years mired in Vietnam, Nixon and Kissinger appeared to acknowledge the limits of US power. Both foresaw a multipolar world of mutual coexistence, if not necessarily cooperation. Détente was not implemented, but rather it evolved. The existence of strategic nuclear parity and mutually assured destruction (MAD) made a measure of superpower cooperation seem imperative for human survival. Both Nixon and Kissinger were, to again borrow Dean Acheson’s phrase, “present at the creation” of the postwar US, Kissinger as a refugee from Nazi Germany and young scholar, Nixon as a congressman before becoming Eisenhower’s vice-president in 1952. They perceived a precipitous decline from the respected superpower of the 1950s to the ‘wounded colossus’ of the 1970s. They charged their Democratic predecessors with binding the US to draining international campaigns in the name of a nebulous ideology, trading away America’s freedom of movement in international relations, and irrevocably damaging US global leadership in the process. Beset by economic, social, political and military crises, by the early 1970s US credibility and status were gravely damaged.

Détente was intended to give both the US and the Soviet Union much needed ‘breathing room’ to deal with their respective economic and internal issues and reduce the threat of nuclear warfare while maintaining an essentially static balance of power. The policy of “linkage”
encouraged cooperative Soviet behaviour through concessions in the economic and military spheres. High-profile arms control negotiations (such as SALT I, 1972) and summit meetings were considered a means of containing Soviet behaviour, in George Kennan’s original, non-militarized sense of the term. Nixon and Kissinger attempted to transform the idea of negotiating with the Soviet Union from a sign of weakness to a show of strength. This Soviet-American détente was the hallmark of the early Nixon years, and was intended to be a key part of Nixon’s presidential legacy of a “structure of peace.” However, because the parameters of détente were never clearly articulated there were misunderstandings on both sides. Despite attempts at cooperation the US-Soviet antagonistic relationship remained. Throughout this period, Henry Kissinger was the figure most responsible for raising Angola’s profile and placing it ever higher on the American foreign policy agenda. Even before his promotion to Secretary of State in September 1973, Kissinger exerted a formidable influence on the contours and direction of US foreign policy. By 1974, invested with the roles of both National Security Advisor and Secretary of State, Kissinger had an iron grip on the US foreign policy regime. Thus examining Kissinger’s beliefs about the international system, revolutions, national liberation, and US primacy is an important and often neglected aspect of understanding the US response to the challenge of Angola.

Studies of Kissinger are legion. No other national security advisor or secretary of state has commanded such scholarly attention. Predictably, most biographies begin with the Kissinger family’s flight from Nazi persecution in 1938. Leaving the Bavarian town of Fürth, the Kissingers settled in New York with hundreds of other European Jewish émigrés. This early experience of social and political upheaval is often considered central to Kissinger’s career trajectory and intellectual foundations. As writers such as Jeremi Suri and David Landau have suggested, it was Kissinger’s personal experience of disorder and ruin that led to a lifelong preoccupation with stability and limits in international relations and American foreign policy. Written before Kissinger’s term as secretary of state, David Landau’s The Uses of Power concluded that Kissinger maintained a “deep horror” of social revolution, a pessimistic view of

9 The Basic Principles of Relations between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was signed on 29 May 1972 on the last day of the Moscow summit meeting. Historians debate the relative importance of the document. Raymond Garthoff holds that while Brezhnev held the agreement in high regard, particularly since it acknowledged the Soviet Union’s need for “equal security”, Nixon and Kissinger merely found it a useful gesture of goodwill. Garthoff, 326-7, 332-3.
world affairs, and a conviction that only the moderate, “non-ideological” weight of the United States (and its statesmen) stood between order and collapse. In Bruce Mazlish’s 1976 assessment Kissinger: The European Mind in American Policy, “for better or worse there [was] not a liberal bone in Kissinger’s body. At no point has he evinced the slightest convincing regard for the traditional liberties or values that undergird the American tradition of liberalism; or for the newer concerns of civil liberties and social welfare. In his mind, ‘liberal’ is a kind of epithet.” Decades later, in Suri’s controversial interpretation, incipient American decline (the failure of Henry Luce’s “American Century”), “democratic weakness” (the Second World War’s near-fatal challenge to democracy and the rise of totalitarian regimes) worried Kissinger, and the postwar rise of the American Jewish community gave men like Kissinger the occasion to rise to positions of prominence in business, academia and government, without providing all the privileges of the Anglo-Saxon elite.

The foundations of Kissinger’s particular understanding of politics, international relations, the United States, and its role in history were all shaped by decades of his own historical thinking. Kissinger emphasized the fragility and malleability of new nations. The moment of independence was seen as having the greatest potential for both creativity and disaster. In The Necessity for Choice (1960), Kissinger wrote that the western tendency to promote economic development strategies over political ones left fragile emerging states in an institutional lurch. If the west did not appreciate the value of its own political institutions, the Third World could not be expected to, and would certainly fall to authoritarianism. The west, fearful of its negative association with colonialism, frowned upon exporting democracy, however the communist bloc had no such scruples.

Kissinger himself was the first to acknowledge that politicians drew on preconceived notions when crafting policy. Early in White House Years (1979) Kissinger states that when he entered office he brought with him a “philosophy shaped by two decades of the study of history.” For Kissinger, “if history [taught] anything it is that there [could] be no peace without

equilibrium and no justice without restraint.”\textsuperscript{15} In one of his earliest works on international relations titled \textit{A World Restored} (1957), Kissinger defined a successful international system as one where “stability [was] based on an equilibrium of forces within a legitimate international order.”\textsuperscript{16} Kissinger was referring to the post-Napoleonic disorder that preoccupied Europe’s great powers (Austria, Prussia, Russia, the United Kingdom, and Bourbon France) at the Congress of Vienna in September 1814. It was the chaos of the French Revolution that had enabled Napoleon Bonaparte’s rampage through Western Europe, and it required an alliance of great powers (known as the Sixth Coalition) and over two million troops to stop him and banish him to Elba. Though much of Kissinger emphasis was on the considerable diplomatic skills of Austria’s Prince Metternich and the United Kingdom’s Viscount Castlereagh, it is clear that Kissinger drew strong lessons from the nineteenth century balance-of-power and applied them to his thinking on the post-1945 world (Mazlish called this intellectual transference the “Europeanization of American foreign policy”).\textsuperscript{17}

In Kissinger’s vision of the international system the global political order was a constant conflict between stable and revolutionary orders. An international system with rules accepted by all major powers was stable, and therefore legitimate. In a stable (read: “legitimate system”), conflict still occurred, but was limited by the actions of states, which sought to protect the system’s integrity above all.\textsuperscript{18} There existed a general consensus to which all states that wanted legitimacy must agree. Conversely, a revolutionary system operated not from the established principles of global equilibrium, but from its own radical ideological base. Thus, revolutionary regimes were by definition illegitimate as they elected to orient themselves and operate outside of the established international order. Inevitably, this clash of irreconcilable beliefs led to confrontation. Revolutionary states eroded the international system by privileging ideology instead of reason and moderation. As pariah, or, in contemporary parlance, ‘rogue’ states, these radical states were insecure, and as such prone to belligerent or ‘irrational’ acts. In Kissinger’s words, “whenever there exists a power which considers the international order or the manner of

\textsuperscript{15} Kissinger, \textit{White House Years}, 55.
\textsuperscript{17} Mazlish, vii.
\textsuperscript{18} Kissinger, \textit{A World Restored}, 1-3.
legitimizing it oppressive, relations between it and other powers will be revolutionary.” It followed that revolutionary states must be restrained and controlled by the community of legitimate nations. It was the conservative’s heavy burden to keep revolutionaries in line, resorting to force if necessary. As Kissinger wrote in *A World Restored*, “‘[t]he conservative himself is thus forced to become self-conscious, which violates his principles; he must, in short, pick up one of the revolutionary’s tools. He who wishes a quiet stability must now fight.’” Revolution was not just the fashionable battle cry of Third World radicals, but denoted a fundamentally oppositional and illegitimate approach to the international system.

While it is possible that Kissinger was unique in his particular understanding of revolution versus global equilibrium, he shared Nixon’s foreign policy priorities and was uniquely positioned to direct US foreign policy. From Kissinger’s perspective détente was predicated on two seemingly contradictory beliefs: a vaguely Spenglerian notion of western decline, and a more resilient belief in US primacy. Kissinger did not believe in an orchestrated, controlled Soviet takeover of the world, an idea which had been circulating in the west since 1917 but was practically entrenched as natural law during the ‘high-containment’ period. As a nation the Soviet Union simply was not strong enough: politically there was no means for succession and the top brass were as easily threatened by violent purges and bureaucratic stagnation as they were by the US. Similarly, despite achieving military parity, the Soviet economy was weak and would never be able to really compete with its western rivals and support its foundering satellites. Kissinger suggested that the Brezhnev Politburo was not captive to delusions of grandeur, unlike Stalin and Khrushchev. Instead, the Soviet leadership was well aware of their weaknesses, and therefore used incrementalism as a basis of foreign policy. Lacking the resources to decisively execute its foreign policy goals, the Soviet Union scavenged for opportunities to increase its international status and extend its influence throughout the globe. As Kissinger explained in *White House Years*, the Soviets were disinclined “to stake everything on a single throw of the dice.” Rather, Soviet grand strategy was one of “ruthless opportunism.

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20 Kissinger in *A World Restored*. Quoted in Mazlish, 157.
No chance of incremental gain must be given up for Western concepts of goodwill.”

Thus the west had the historical responsibility to implement the conditions for “long-term security” and to curb Soviet adventurism. In Kissinger’s words,

To expect the Soviet leaders to restrain themselves from exploiting circumstances they conceive to be favourable is to misread history. To foreclose on Soviet opportunities is thus the essence of the West’s responsibility. It is up to us to define the limits of Soviet aims” [emphasis in original].

Understanding national liberation: Lord, Kissinger, and NLMs

During Nixon’s second term the situation in Angola remained tense, yet administration officials were more confident than ever about their relations with the African continent. In a January 1973 assessment, National Security Council (NSC) Staffer Fernando Rondon asserted that the administration had largely met its objective to “[inject] some needed realism into US-African dealings.”

Most of the independent African states now ‘knew their place’, and nationalist movements realized they could not count on US support. Rondon nevertheless recommended certain “positive steps” which would bolster US support in the region without committing too many resources or requiring a dramatic policy shift. These included appointing an Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, a new National Security Study Memorandum (NSSM) series on sub-Saharan Africa and a “contingency paper on Portuguese Guinea, where rebels may proclaim an independent state in 1973,” a presidential visit to “Black Africa,” and “reviewing the possibility of repealing the Byrd Amendment [which forbade the embargoing of any strategic resource from a non-communist state, so long as the US was already importing that material from a known communist state], both on international law and African policy grounds.”

Over the next four years, we are going to witness mounting international pressure against Portugal's African policy. We may also see the increasingly sophisticated liberation movements in Portuguese Guinea (Bissau) and Mozambique inflict heavier casualties on

24 Kissinger, White House Years, 118-19.
25 Kissinger, White House Years, 125.
26 Kissinger, White House Years, 119.
27 The quotations continues, “Unlike previous Administrations, we made it clear to Africans that we could not afford unlimited economic assistance and that we could neither back the armed liberation of southern Africa nor support measures designed to isolate Portugal or South Africa.” Memorandum, Fernando Rondon [National Security Council Staff] to Henry Kissinger [President's Assistant for National Security Affairs], 2 January 1973, Foreign Relations of the United States, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Volume E-6, Documents on Africa, 1973-1976 (hereafter: FRUS Volume E-6), Document 1. URL: http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve06/ch1


the Portuguese…. In the United Nations, we may well find ourselves in the lurch on Portuguese African questions as our NATO partners court African favor and disassociate themselves from Portugal's African policy.28

Rondon also noted that domestic interest in the affairs of “Black Africa” was on the rise, commenting that:

Last May's [anti-apartheid] demonstration in Washington by 10,000 blacks seeking changes in our southern African policies was intended by its sponsors to prove growing black American awareness of Africa. Church groups are also showing greater concern about southern Africa. With the winding down of Vietnam, we may see far more racially motivated attention given to Africa by black Americans and sympathizers. This will result in domestic pressure being brought to bear not only on policy-makers but on US corporations doing business in southern Africa. 29

African nations were asserting themselves more forcefully in international institutions. In particular, African countries sided with the Arabs in the ongoing Middle East conflict. The 1973 October War further solidified the Luso-American relationship. During the Arab-Israeli conflict, the United States used the Lages bases to refuel its planes, which delivered arms to the Israeli army. Portugal took advantage of this situation and used its newly acquired leverage to increase its demands upon the US. US officials noted that:

The more activist Arab governments are happy to use the voting power of numerous sub-Saharan states to reinforce their position. In return, these countries welcome Arab support on such issues such as southern African liberation. Each group believes the US has the power to force changes they themselves desire, be it in the Middle East or in southern Africa. 30

It was beleaguered Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs David Newsom who truly injected some realism into US-Africa dealings. Newsom briefed Kissinger in October 1973, noting that,

Our relations with Africa overall [are] going downhill. The gap between the Africans' preoccupations and our policy responses is widening. Their frustrations center on the United States, and they view US commitments as ineffectual. Our access to their resources and our influence on their votes are at stake. Our credibility on moral questions of racial equality is challenged.31

28 The demonstration took place on 27 May 1972. Memorandum, Rondon to Kissinger, FRUS Volume E-6.
29 Memorandum, Rondon to Kissinger, FRUS Volume E-6.
Newsom advocated aligning the Administration on the side of repealing the Byrd Amendment, which permitted the US to import chrome ore from Rhodesia, thereby defying international sanctions against Smith’s white minority state.\textsuperscript{32} Newsom also suggested inviting an aligned African leader, either Zambia’s Kenneth Kaunda, Botswana’s Sir Seretse Khama, or Tanzania’s Julius Nyerere, to the White House in 1974.\textsuperscript{33}

According to Newsom, southern Africa was an area of the world where “violent confrontation [was] intensifying,” placing the US in a now familiar predicament. Due to their NATO ties and “position on issues in the UN,” the US was already engaged in southern African affairs, whether it wanted to be or not. Thus “[a] major outbreak of conflict in this area could bring pressure for US involvement from both sides of the conflict. We want to avoid this, if only because our influence is limited.” This last idea, that American influence was actually limited, flew in the face of the attitudes of many US policymakers, and certainly went against Kissinger’s beliefs about US power. Newsom advocated “readjusting” the US position toward the national liberation movements, noting:

> These movements have become the symbols in Africa, in international conferences and at the United Nations of African opposition to colonialism, particularly in the Portuguese territories. The United States is increasingly isolated with Portugal and South Africa and, occasionally, Britain and France on issues relating to those movements. We should cease active opposition to them without according recognition.\textsuperscript{34}

On the same day as Newsom’s memo an intelligence note from the State Department’s Bureau of Intelligence and Research reflected upon Guinea-Bissau’s unilateral declaration of independence two weeks earlier. While an unnamed Portuguese spokesperson proclaimed the announcement of Guinea-Bissau a “‘fantasy’” and “‘fictitious and without legal or moral foundation,’” the report noted that by 4 October 1973 “the new Republic of Guinea Bissau had been recognized by 38

\textsuperscript{32} The Byrd Amendment led to a legal challenge, \textit{Diggs v. Schultz}, in 1972. Congressman Charles C. Diggs (D-MI) brought the suit on behalf of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), against Secretary of the Treasury, George P. Schultz, arguing that the US was violating specific treaty commitments by trading with Rhodesia. The challenge failed as the judges determined that Congress had the right to abrogate any international treaty as per the “Supremacy Clause”. The amendment was finally repealed in 1977.

\textsuperscript{33} Briefing Memorandum, 5 October 1973.

\textsuperscript{34} Briefing Memorandum, 5 October 1973.
nations, including the Soviet Union, the PRC, Romania, Yugoslavia, and a score of African states.”

US foreign policy decision makers may have determined that they could anticipate state behaviour in the détente-era international system, but they demonstrated little knowledge about non-state actors, such as movements of national liberation. Historically, the US had watched with alarm as anticolonial independence movements such as the *Front de Libération Nationale* (FLN) in Algeria had wreaked havoc on the metropolitan state. The US’ own protracted and humiliating experience fighting the National Liberation Front (NLF) and the People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) attested to the difficulties these groups could cause. Increasingly, groups such as the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the African National Congress (ANC) were becoming key international actors, with the potential to derail US-led initiatives and to destabilize the international system. In the carefully managed world of superpower détente, this was an unacceptable intrusion. Kissinger tasked Winston Lord, head of the Policy Planning Staff, with making sense of national liberation movements (NLMs).

In June 1974 Lord responded to Kissinger’s questions about the role of NLMs in international organizations with a confidential briefing memorandum and policy paper, using the PAIGC, the PLO, and the Cambodian government-in-exile, the *Gouvernement Royal d’Union Nationale du Kampuchéa* (GRUNK), as examples. Several recent events had brought the issue into “sharper focus,” including in 1972 when the UN Fourth Decolonization Committee “granted the right of participation (on relevant matters)” to NLMs recognized by the OAU. In 1974 the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the UN’s Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and the World Health Organization’s (WHO) World Health Assembly (WHA) all granted observer status to various African NLMs. Guinea-Bissau’s PAIGC had not only unilaterally declared independence in 1973, but was quickly admitted to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Law of War Conference, the WHA, and the Universal Postal Union Assembly. All of this occurred before Guinea-Bissau, under PAIGC control, was officially admitted to the UN on 17 September 1974.

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35 Intelligence Note, Bureau of Intelligence and Research (RAAN-27), 5 October 1973, FRUS Volume E-6, Document 69. URL: [http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve06/d69](http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve06/d69).
37 Lord to Kissinger, 20 June 1974, 8.
NLMs were nebulous constructs that were difficult to define, either by structure or goals (for example, some NLMs asserted the right to participate in organizations that consist of states, but others did not seek territorial sovereignty and were content to participate as observers). For Lord, “the most important and credible claimants to NLM status are anti-colonial movements in Africa... For historical comparison we might recall our own Revolution, and the Latin American revolutions (which we supported) as well as the experiences in Algeria and a host of other colonial areas that have now attained independence.” For Lord, the real difficulty was that international opinion had increasingly been on the side of the NLMs. Lord noted that states were more and more “prepared to ignore, or at least selectively disregard, even minimum criteria when faced with a claim to statehood or governmental status by a national liberation movement (NLM) that is recognized by a regional bloc or otherwise enjoys broad international support.” Lord admitted that “United States resistance to this strong recent trend toward increased participation of NLMs has been largely ineffective” and that the instances of such problems were only going to increase in the future. In Lord’s words:

Whatever the analysis may have been, many foreign observers see our position as a mixture of excessive and irrelevant legalism intertwined with a conservative political attachment to the status quo. This contrasts most particularly with the views of many NLMs who seek to manipulate international law as an element of political change, and find the status quo weighted against them – indeed in Southern Africa, patently intolerable.

Thus Angolan liberation highlighted a conundrum for US policymakers. Not only were there the perennial issues of Europe vs. Africa and status quo vs. radical political change, but it also underlined the tensions between state and non-state actors. Lord speculated that with the Caetano government the US would have more flexibility in its approach, leaving only South Africa and Rhodesia as the “pressing ‘colonial’ problems for us in Africa.” According to Lord, the US could not simply “ge[t] into the position of accepting the claims of any rag-tag group to international status,” nor could they “allow the functions of international bodies to be seriously

38 Lord to Kissinger, 20 June 1974, 8.
39 Lord to Kissinger, 20 June 1974, 3.
40 Lord to Kissinger, 20 June 1974, 4.
41 It should be noted that while PAIGC and FRELIMO were mentioned by name, the Angolan NLMs were not. Still, it is clear that Lord’s conclusions about national liberation were widely applicable. Lord to Kissinger, 20 June 1974, 6.
42 Lord to Kissinger, 20 June 1974, 5.
disrupted by the admission of large members of dissident political groups.” Yet it was clear that the tendency of dissident groups to align with each other within what Lord called the “NLM framework,” and against the United States, even on peripheral or subordinate issues of no direct relevance, would ultimately cause problems for US foreign policy. It was this belief that NLMs sought to manipulate the international system which came to characterize the US attitude towards NLMs in general. Nowhere was this clearer than in their responses to developments in Angola.

“After Vietnam friends of the United States are in trouble”: The decision to act in Angola

It fell to Gerald Ford to not only wake the United States from the ‘long national nightmare’ of Nixon, Vietnam, and Watergate, but also to deal with the crisis in Angola. Though most scholars focus on Nixon, Ford was not silent on the issue. Like Kissinger, Ford was concerned about restoring American credibility and authority in the international system. Historian Yanek Mieczkowski begins to address the issue when he states that “[b]oth Vietnam and the energy crisis portended a new era when Third World nations could demoralize or defeat a superpower.” If, as former Press Secretary Ron Nessen once suggested, “Ford’s role in history was to clean up other people’s messes,” then the situation in southern Africa required direct attention.

Few features of the US engagement with Angola have attracted as much attention as the covert action operation, codenamed IAFEATURE. Covert action was one of the most contentious aspects of US foreign policy. All covert operations seek to change the balance of political forces in the target state, either to support a favourable balance of forces or undermine an unfavourable one. This can include interfering with media outlets, supporting preferred political, media, business or labour groups and recruiting spies from within their ranks, or clandestine provision of money, material or training of paramilitary forces. Covert action is but one tool in the arsenal of modern statecraft, nevertheless it quickly became a favoured tool of

43 Lord to Kissinger, 20 June 1974, 5.
45 Yanek Mieczkowski, Gerald Ford and the Challenges of the 1970s, (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 2005), 274.
46 Mieczkowski, Gerald Ford and the Challenges of the 1970s, 7.
cold war US policymakers. Two prominent successes, operations TBAJAX (Iran 1953) and PBSUCCESS (Guatemala 1954) set the stage for decades of dubious covert operations around the world. At least two aspects of the Angolan operation distinguished this episode from the record of US covert actions elsewhere. First, covert action remained an inherently risky tactic, and was generally reserved for critical cases where vital US interests were at stake, where speed was of the essence, and where strategic political goals appeared unachievable by more standard political approaches. Second, at least in terms of the short-term achievement of US goals, most other covert actions were successful (with the glaring exception of the Bay of Pigs). This section addresses the decision-making that led Kissinger to champion a risky covert action in what was assumed to be a low-priority region, and in a difficult political climate.

Here the influence of the US’ African allies, especially Zaire’s Mobutu Sese Seko and Zambia’s Kenneth Kaunda, cannot be overstated. It was at the independent urgings of Mobutu and Kaunda that the US’ Angola policy moved from a largely passive approach, handled by the maligned Africa Bureau, to a covert action which was approved at the highest levels. Mobutu and Kaunda articulated their concerns in language that Kissinger would understand and respect: the Soviet threat to territorial integrity and regional stability. Mobutu especially was able to convince Kissinger that a lack of US aid would lead inevitably to a communist takeover of southern Africa and a regional war. It is clear that despite a healthy skepticism about Mobutu’s imperious nature, Kissinger took his concerns about increasing Soviet presence in the region seriously. The archival record shows that Zairian and Zambian representatives were granted audiences with high-ranking officials, and that Kissinger often referenced their concerns in later meetings with the 40 Committee, intelligence communities, and President Ford.

In the wake of the Carnation Revolution, on 7 July 1974 the CIA raised its payments to Roberto to $10,000 a month. On 12 August 1974 Kissinger and Acting Assistant Secretary of African Affairs Edward Mulcahy met with Zairian Foreign Minister, Umba-di-Lutete. After noting that Angola and Zaire shared a 2,000 km border, Umba-di-Lutete initiated a discussion on Angolan independence. Noting that the socialist states were “exerting pressure on the Portuguese to deal with Neto,” Umba-di-Lutete asked the US to “assist us in our efforts to counter [socialist]

47 Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, 281.
48 Umba-di-Lutete’s full title was Commissioner of State for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, which corresponds to the designation of Foreign Minister.
pressure.” He continued, “[w]e believe you should support Holden Roberto. Since the socialists are behind Neto, and since it is said that Holden is favorably inclined toward United States interests, we think he deserves US support.” In response, Kissinger admitted that he had not had the time to study the problem, but he agreed that “sometimes if you want to get something done you have to exert pressure.” The meeting ended with a promise to consider ways the US could support Zaire in its efforts to contain the MPLA. Kissinger was true to his word. A month later, 19 September 1974, the CIA’s Director of Intelligence (DCI) William Colby wrote to Kissinger that the CIA intended to “increase substantially our payment of [less than 1 line not declassified] to Holden Roberto [less than 1 line not declassified]."

By spring 1975 it was clear that the nominal US effort to bolster the FNLA was not enough to decisively affect the ground war or to placate Zaire and Zambia. The MPLA did not appear to be weakening, despite the injection of US cash to support Zairian efforts. The January 1975 Alvor Agreement and ceasefire had disintegrated almost immediately. As the deadline for independence approached, the situation for anti-MPLA advocates became more desperate. The solution was the ‘third-party candidate’, Jonas Savimbi. Despite the emergence of UNITA in 1966, it appears as through Savimbi did not become a genuine contender (at least in the eyes of international benefactors) until post-1974. It is difficult to determine whether or not this was actually due to UNITA weakness, or simply because invested parties had pinned their hopes on the FNLA and did not want to split their resources. However, by April 1975 Kaunda was actively encouraging Kissinger to support UNITA as well, in the hopes that a two-pronged attack would fatally weaken the MPLA. Where once Zambia had “ignored Savimbi while he was fighting in the bush,” Kaunda now felt that having Savimbi on-side was tactically safer than leaving him as an independent third force in what was already a complex military and political situation.

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financed from Moscow, confirming the accusations made by the Zairians in 1974.\textsuperscript{54} Kaunda had a prescient warning for the Ford administration and their casual attitude toward disorder in southern Africa, urging the US and “others in the West” to attempt to find solutions to the regions escalating violence, “[o]therwise, events may overtake you and the U.S. could find itself even fighting on the side of the racists.”\textsuperscript{55} Zambian Foreign Affairs Minister Vernon Mwaanga continued, “President Kaunda is not an advocate of armed struggle, but peaceful change. Our whole position would be weakened if the West and the U.S. do not support our stand. Change is bound to occur in southern Africa but it will not be automatic. It needs to be worked for to be achieved. A joint effort for peaceful change is needed.”\textsuperscript{56} This was exactly what Kissinger wanted to hear – peaceful change, not revolutionary upheaval; skilled diplomacy, not armed struggle. Kaunda claimed that “[w]e realize it is not for us to choose a leader of that emerging country. That is for the people themselves to do.” Yet in the very next exchange he noted, “[i]n the future the people themselves can choose their leader.”\textsuperscript{57} Soon after he admitted that, “Savimbi [did] not even know of the compromise proposal for having him be President although it may have leaked. We have not yet told Savimbi. We must convince him of the rightness of it.”\textsuperscript{58}

Kissinger took the concerns of key African allies seriously, and it is evident that the idea of supporting Savimbi was passed along to the CIA for some form of feasibility report. At a 5 June 1975 40 Committee meeting, Colby noted that a CIA paper recommended granting an undisclosed sum to Savimbi’s group “to strengthen it.”\textsuperscript{59} Yet the discussion demonstrates that Kissinger had concerns about modifying the strategy, noting that “we don’t want to make the same mistake we did in Chile – to give money to everybody and then lose to the Communists.”\textsuperscript{60} Moreover, though there was some division in the Africa Bureau, the consensus among staffers and the principals remained that Roberto was still the US’ best choice. This was now complicated by Kaunda’s turn toward Savimbi. As Kissinger noted, “[w]e have Kaunda telling

\textsuperscript{54} “Office call on the President”, 19 April 1975.
\textsuperscript{55} “Office call on the President”, 19 April 1975: 237.
\textsuperscript{56} Zambia’s own relatively peaceable independence was the result of a series of tense negotiations which ended the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland in 1964, resulting in the independent states of Zambia and Malawi (and Ian Smith’s Rhodesia in 1965). “Office call on the President”, 19 April 1975: 242.
\textsuperscript{57} “Office call on the President”, 19 April 1975: 238.
\textsuperscript{58} “Office call on the President”, 19 April 1975: 239.
\textsuperscript{59} Memorandum for the Record, 40 Committee Meeting, 5 June 1975, FRUS Volume XXVIII, Document 106: 26-248. URL: http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v28/d106
\textsuperscript{60} Memorandum for the Record, 5 June 1975.
us that Savimbi is going to win; the Portuguese left is backing Neto; Mobutu wants Roberto. We can concede; not do anything and let nature take its course.”

Undersecretary of State Joseph Sisco commented that “Angola [was] not of great importance” and that “everything is going our way so we don’t need to do anything.”

Kissinger retorted, “we can’t let the communists win there.”

The meeting concluding with Kissinger encouraging the staff to finish NSSM 224 on US policy toward Angola, and then “determine what our interests are.” In Kissinger’s mind the real question was not Angola’s relative significance, but which US ally to assist: Mobutu, still focused on the FNLA; Kaunda, now advocating Savimbi; or some combination thereof.

Less than a week later on 11 June 1975, a memorandum “discuss[ed] in a preliminary way what could be done covertly to support a major effort to prevent a Neto takeover in Angola.” The memo listed three categories of covert action: covert financial aid to “Neto’s principal opponents at a level matching that now enjoyed by Neto”; covert political action to “prevent civil war in Angola and advance a Roberto-Savimbi coalition”; and covert military aid to Mobutu, with the understanding that Mobutu would supply the FNLA forces and the US Government “would inconspicuously make good [Mobutu’s] losses.”

The memo also advocated a secret collaboration between Mobutu and Kaunda, the use of African intermediaries for distributing materiel to the FNLA and UNITA, and maintaining a level of secrecy during the entire operation. Mobutu was clearly a critical reference and information point on the entire continent. Mobutu spoke a language that Kissinger could understand and grudgingly respect: anticommunism, territorial integrity, and regional stability. Not only was Mobutu critical to the success of anti-MPLA forces in Angola, but he was an important Third World ally at a time when these were in short supply. Keeping Mobutu happy was an important US foreign policy goal, however this was increasingly difficult due to Mobutu’s erratic behaviour. After having had a cordial relationship with US Ambassador to Zaire Sheldon Vance, Mobutu developed a

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61 Memorandum for the Record, 5 June 1975.
62 Memorandum for the Record, 5 June 1975.
63 Memorandum for the Record, 5 June 1975.
64 Memorandum for the Record, 5 June 1975.
65 The origins of the paper are not identified, though the most likely sources are the CIA or the State Department’s Angola Working Group. However, the document was located in the Library of Congress’ Kissinger Files, Box CL 102. Memorandum, “Angola”, 11 June 1975, FRUS Volume XXVIII, Document 108: 251-253. URL: http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v28/d108
66 Though the actual dollar amount is not declassified, US sources claimed that Neto’s aid from Yugoslavia alone was $1.7 million USD, and that Yugoslavia was not his “chief backer.” Memorandum, 11 June 1975.
67 Memorandum, 11 June 1975, 251.
personal dislike for his successor, Deane R. Hinton, eventually declaring him *persona non grata* in 1975. Mobutu had also joined the African chorus opposing the appointment of Nathaniel Davis as Mulcahy’s replacement for Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs in April 1975 due to Davis’ involvement in the Chilean controversy of 1973.68

On 18 June 1975 Kissinger and the Africa team discussed Mobutu’s intransigence and its effects on the worsening situation in Angola. Hinton was quickly recalled and replaced by Vance (interim), since in Kissinger’s determination, “it [was] impossible to let our diplomatic relations break with a country adjoining Angola.”69 Mulcahy concurred that there was “too much at stake.”70 On the same day, the National Security Council’s Africa Bureau – Interdepartmental Working Group produced NSSM 224, in response to the direct order from Kissinger to investigate US policy options in Angola. NSSM 224 first acknowledged that the US had “important but by no means vital interests in Angola.”71 American investment in Angola was estimated at $400 million dollars, with $300 million representing the Gulf Oil investment in the fractious Cabinda exclave; this made Angola the US’ second largest trading partner in black Africa, after Nigeria. The study listed five objectives for US policy, including: “contain[ing] the present conflict in Angola and foster[ing] a peaceful transition to independence...; hav[ing] a post-independence Angolan Government that is stable and that follows a policy of cooperation and friendship with the United States...; and “prevent[ing] potential enemies from achieving exclusive use of Angola’s strategic facilities.”72 Finally, NSSM 224 presented three potential strategies for US policy: neutrality, diplomatic engagement to promote a “peaceful solution,” and active support for one or more of the liberation movements, “choosing selectively from the whole spectrum of tools available to us.”73 While the study weighed the pros and cons of each option, it did not produce a definitive recommendation. One week later a Special Sensitive Memorandum was produced “in response to questions posed by the Assistant to the President for

68 Davis was the US Ambassador to Chile between 1971-1973, through the presidency of Salvador Allende Gossens and the September 1973 US-backed coup which deposed him. Though Davis always maintained that the US was not involved in Allende’s assassination, he was unable to escape being tainted by association.


70 Memorandum of Conversation, 18 June 1975.

71 National Security Study Memorandum (NSSM) 224, United States Policy Toward Angola. 18 June 1975, Digital National Security Archive (DNSA), 2.

72 NSSM 224, 2-3.

73 NSSM 224, 10-11.
National Security Affairs [Lieutenant General Brent Scowcroft] during the Senior Review Group meeting, [also on] June 18, 1975.”

Discussion centred around determining exactly where Mobutu stood on the Angola issue. Africa Bureau staff member Walt Cutler noted that Mobutu may no longer support Roberto, and Mulcahy commented that Mobutu had recently been in talks with Savimbi. For Kissinger the imprecise situation was frustrating, as was the lack of a definitive US response, which implied a lack of US resolve: “I think Mobutu has decided, at least according to the intelligence reports, that after Vietnam friends of the United States are in trouble. I don’t know how he assesses Angola.” Later Kissinger said, “I want some serious talk with Mobutu on Angola. [Redacted]. We are in the process of installing a communist regime by total default.” Later still, “My concern is Mobutu must think that a country which permits a country as rich as Angola to go communist has written off the area.” By the end of the meeting Mulcahy too advocated a change in tactics, wanting to “bring [Savimbi] into our confidence” because he “leans more in our direction ideologically. He needs some help and it’s best given to him on a cash basis.”

Two days later Kissinger berated Vance ahead of a visit to Kinshasa: “I really have few instructions to give you – since I know what I want. I don’t really care what AF [Africa Bureau] thinks. I just want you to do what I tell you or there’s no sense in your going.” Kissinger then explained to Sisco, Vance, Mulcahy, Cutler and notetaker Jeremy Bremer how he viewed Mobutu’s situation:

I think we’ve mishandled Mobutu and the whole area. I have not given too much attention to it, so it’s partly my fault. Mobutu looks at the Congo in 1960 and…what we’re doing in Angola now where the Communist influence is greater than 1960 and he must conclude that we have written off the area. If we’re letting Angola go, then in essence we’re letting him go. At least I think if he’s rational, that’s what he’s thinking.

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81 Memorandum of Conversation, 20 June 1975.
Kissinger continued, “If you add in that whole situation in Vietnam I don’t find what [Mobutu] does incomprehensible.” Though there was some unease about the level of Mobutu’s “rationality” (Kissinger later commented that he thought Mobutu was a “semi-savage”), the loose consensus was that Mobutu was correct to question US resolve in the face of what appeared to be clear Soviet aggression. Between 1960-1965 Mobutu’s ascendance was decisively helped by US actions, even though Lumumba’s communism was understood to be nascent at best. Now, in 1975, the communism of the MPLA was an established fact, and yet the Africa Bureau advised caution and the principals could not agree on a strategy.

By this point Kissinger appeared to be strategically, ideologically and personally committed to action in Angola. A commitment to action, however, did not necessarily mean a public US presence on the issue, or US leadership. Kissinger “[was] not in favor of the US involving itself, but in favor of making it possible for Kaunda or Mobutu to.” The consequences of a failure to act, in however limited a capacity, meant that US allies in the Third World could not count on support: “What real choice do we have? If Angola is taken by the Communists, what conclusions can the African leaders draw about the United States[?]” Later in the same discussion, “[f]orget for a moment how important Angola itself may be. I am concerned on the impact on [Tanzania’s Julius] Nyerere, and Kaunda and Mobutu when they see we’ve done nothing.”

Sheldon Vance did go to Zaire in June 1975 to try to assess Mobutu’s views on Angola, and diffuse a pesky unfounded rumour that high-ranking US officials were involved in an anti-Mobutu plot. Vance reported from Kinshasa that Mobutu and the new Portuguese Government had “reached an understanding that [the Government of Portugal] would not go out of its way to help Augustinho[sic] Neto and [Mobutu] would similarly restrain himself with regard to Holden Roberto in the hope that the Angola parties would work things out among themselves.” However, Mobutu noted that arms and money were “pouring in for Neto” via Brazzaville, and that Roberto, with only the limited supplies of Zaire and the long-distance supplies of the PRC,
was at a distinct disadvantage. Mobutu acknowledged that “under today’s circumstances it [was] obvious that the US could not help directly,” but an infusion of military help to Zaire would benefit Roberto’s forces. Then, citing the irreconcilable differences between Roberto and Neto, Mobutu also began to argue for supporting Savimbi, giving him “30 thousand in cash.”

The standard narrative of US intervention in Angola is one of Kissinger leaping towards covert action in response to clear Soviet aggrandizement in Africa. However, the 25 June Special Memorandum demonstrates that Scowcroft seriously raised the prospect of option B, a diplomatic solution, by asking the question “Implications for U.S. Interests if we do nothing and if MPLA Were to Come Out on Top.” Against expectations, the Special Memorandum noted:

We believe it is highly unlikely that the MPLA will be able to vanquish its rivals and achieve complete control of Angola in the next several months. ... Even if the MPLA gained such supremacy in the capital with would not have ‘won’ in the sense of imposing its rule on the whole of Angola. It would face a long and costly insurgency by the other groups that would tax the regime’s economic and administrative resources.

The portrayal of MPLA leader Neto was even somewhat moderate, noting that while he was unlikely to grant the US Navy access to Angola’s strategic facilities, he would take a pragmatic approach to US-Angolan economic relations and continue to sell the US Angolan oil. To achieve option B, the US would first determine Mobutu’s assessment, then pressure Portugal to maintain its full troop strength (24,000) past the February 1976 withdrawal deadline, encourage African states to “seek reductions in Soviet arms,” “quietly stimulate” European Economic Community and NATO countries to press Portugal to influence Soviet support for the MPLA, and finally, “directly but privately request” the end or drastic reduction of Soviet arms to Neto’s forces.

Should these measures fail, the Special Memorandum counseled encouraging Congress to publicly express its concerns over foreign intervention in Angola, and publicizing “in escalating fashion if necessary” US fears for Angola. Neutrality and active support were to be considered if option B failed. Neutrality, it seems, was largely dismissed, and the least amount of attention was

87 Telegram 5605, 23 June 1975.
88 The result was that Kissinger recommended a $20 million aid package to Zaire. See Action Memorandum, Edward Mulcahy [Acting Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs] to Henry Kissinger, 28 August 1975, FRUS Volume E-6, Document 282. URL: http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve06/d282.
89 Telegram 5605, 23 June 1975, 3.
90 Special Sensitive Memorandum, 1-2.
91 Special Sensitive Memorandum, 1-2.
92 Special Sensitive Memorandum, 9-11.
paid to this option. Option C, active engagement, was clearly the second choice, and yet the authors still advocated caution:

The uncertainties of the situation in Angola make the risks of becoming directly involved greater than the probably-e (?) [sic] gains to be derived there from. We would have to commit US resources and prestige in a situation where the outcome would still be in doubt and over which we can exercise only limited influence at best. In any case, we could not realistically consider any direct, overt military support, such as arms shipments or commitment of US personnel. Any assistance would have to be covert, and military assistance would have to be channeled through third parties.93

Thus covert financial support would be increased for Roberto and extended to Savimbi to bring UNITA up to comparable strength with the FNLA and MPLA. The US would encourage a Savimbi-Roberto coalition and urge Zaire and Zambia to support this endeavour, and covert payments to Zaire would necessitate increasing US AID programs to Africa and the 1975 Military Assistance Program (MAP) allotment to “free Zairian resources for use in Angola.”94

Mobutu’s tilt toward Savimbi helped clarify the situation. On 27 June 1975 Kissinger hosted another meeting with Deputy Secretary of State Robert Ingersoll, Vance, Mulcahy, Cutler and Bremer, in advance of a presidential briefing at an NSC meeting.95 Vance reported on his last meeting with Mobutu, where he also met Roberto. Once again, both reiterated the need for a rapid influx of US cash and materiel in order to shore up Roberto’s flagging FNLA and support UNITA. Two points remained – the final presidential decision, and to determine who would manage the proposed operation on the ground in Zaire. Vance suggested Lawrence Devlin, former CIA Chief of Station Congo, who was already making $100,000 a year as a security contractor in Kinshasa.96

Later that day President Ford was briefed on Angola and “related problems” at an NSC meeting. Kissinger outlined the key points: Mobutu and Kaunda’s shifts toward Savimbi, the assumed influx of Soviet arms into the region, and the previous 40 Committee decisions, first

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93 Special Sensitive Memorandum, 10.
94 Special Sensitive Memorandum, 10.
96 Larry Devlin was infamous for his role in the US government plot to assassinate Congolese Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba, cryptonym Operation PROP, using untraceable “deadly poisons.” Though the order came from Eisenhower himself, Devlin later recounted that he felt that assassination was morally wrong and thus he dragged his feet, hoping the “Congolese would solve the Lumumba problem themselves.” They did – Lumumba was murdered by Katangese soldiers under Belgian authority on 17 January 1961. See Larry Devlin, Chief of Station Congo: A Memoir of 1960-1967, (New York: Public Affairs, 2007), 94-98.
granting only money, and then an arms package routed through Zaire. Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger briefly considered advocating the “disintegration of Angola,” noting that with Mobutu firmly in control of the oil-rich Cabinda enclave (at the time fighting its own independence war) this would mean “greater security for petroleum resources.” He continued, raising the interrelated issues of confidence and commitment, “if we do something, we must have some confidence that we can win, or we should stay neutral.”

It is apparent, however, that Ford was already interpreting the situation much more in line with Kissinger’s views, than with the more cautious attitudes of Sisco, Colby, and Schlesinger. “It seems to me that to do nothing is unacceptable,” Ford argued and urged Colby to “re-study” the proposed levels of assistance. Colby noted that “South Africa would like us to join with them in an effort, we can avoid the problems that would create for us and deal with the blacks. Some would be encouraged for the US to take a role, and that would activate them.” The CIA had also prepared an option paper for the President which advocated limited covert support for Roberto and Savimbi, providing up to “one-third of the arms and supplies needed by Savimbi and Roberto.” The attached briefing paper admitted that US officials did not know how much Soviet military aid was reaching the MPLA, and the “Soviet long-range goals in Angola [were] unclear.” It also outlined fears of full-scale civil war in southern Africa, and noted that the South Africans did not “seem to be planning any action to counter this threat.”

By July 1975 Mobutu was reporting to US officials that “that three Soviet vessels delivered more than 41,000 tons of arms and munitions to the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola during the past week, deliveries which he said he could verify.” The following day a DCI Briefing for the Senior Review Group identified a “new dimension to the long-standing conflict between the two main Angolan liberation groups” – the MPLA had

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98 Minutes, 27 June 1975, 269.
100 Just who exactly is the “some” in Colby’s statement is unclear, though he is likely referring to members of the Africa Bureau. Minutes, 27 June 1975.
101 It is worth noting here that notations on the document implied that this option was considered too large to remain covert. Minutes, 27 June 1975.
103 Attachment, 27 June 1975.
succeeded in driving the FNLA out of Luanda almost entirely.\textsuperscript{105} In mid-July Sisco again voiced his concern that Angola was not significant enough to warrant covert action, but Kissinger replied that he did not intend to “let [Angola] go Communist.”\textsuperscript{106} Kissinger displayed frustration with his own key advisors: “What you are saying is that the Soviets and Chinese should take action, but the U.S. should not. That’s what it comes down to.”\textsuperscript{107} DCI William Hyland reminded Kissinger that the US’s biggest asset was their carefully cultivated posture of neutrality, noting, “[w]e can go and say to Africans that we are staying out and Africans can face up to the fact that it is the Communists who are sending arms.”\textsuperscript{108} After a somewhat heated back and forth, Kissinger admitted, “I’m scared of losing. Is anyone else?”\textsuperscript{109} Later, “[i]f all the surrounding countries see Angola go Communist, they will assume that the U.S. has no will. Coming on top of Vietnam and Indochina their perception of what the U.S. can and will do will be negative. If the USSR can do something in a place so far away, what is the U.S. going to do?”\textsuperscript{110}

Three days later Kissinger and Ford agreed upon the need for action, and the consequences of inaction, in Angola. Kissinger told Ford bluntly:

> On Angola. I favor action. If the U.S. does nothing then Soviet-supported group gains dominance, I think all the movements will draw the conclusions that they must accommodate to the Soviet Union and China. I think reluctantly we must do something. But you must know that we have massive problems within the State Department. They are passionately opposed and it will leak.\textsuperscript{111}

Both men knew that Davis and the Africa Bureau were opposed to any increase in intervention in Angola, and that Davis’ imminent resignation was expected.\textsuperscript{112} Kissinger’s disdain for the Africa Bureau was legendary. At the 40 Committee meeting on 14 July 1975, it was clear that Davis had already fallen out of favour. Not only was he absent from the meeting, but the regionals and


\textsuperscript{107} Memorandum for the Record, 14 July 1975.

\textsuperscript{108} Memorandum for the Record, 14 July 1975.

\textsuperscript{109} Memorandum for the Record, 14 July 1975.

\textsuperscript{110} Memorandum for the Record, 14 July 1975.

\textsuperscript{111} Memorandum of Conversation, “Frank Lindsay; Angola; Zaire; Middle East”, 17 July 1975, FRUS Volume XVIII, Document 117: 284-285. URL: [http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v28/d117](http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v28/d117)

\textsuperscript{112} Memorandum of Conversation, 17 July 1975: 285.
principals could not even be certain if Davis had been invited, and the meeting proceeded without him.\footnote{Memorandum for the Record, 14 July 1975.}

Still, Ford echoed Kissinger’s thinking, noting that, “I am not sure if we are opposing the Soviets, we are not right.”\footnote{Memorandum of Conversation, 17 July 1975.} The next day Kissinger vowed to “clean out the Africa bureau”, and Ford refused to be deterred by “someone in Foggy Bottom.”\footnote{Memorandum of Conversation, “Middle East; Angola; Soviet Grain; SALT; President’s Trip”, 18 July 1975, \textit{FRUS Volume XVIII}, Document 118: 286. URL: http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v28/d118} Ford noted the stakes: “[I]f we do nothing we’ll lose Southern Africa. I think we have an understandable position. I think we can defend it to the public.” Kissinger agreed, linking the outcome in Angola to wider calculations about Soviet behaviour: “…in six years I have been on the tough side. But I push détente in order to be able to be tough. If we were publicly tough, the Soviet Union would have no incentive. Now, so long as they think we are pushing détente, they will keep their heads down.”\footnote{Memorandum of Conversation, 18 July 1975.}

According to former CIA Chief of Station in Angola John Stockwell’s 1978 memoir, \textit{In Search of Enemies}, on 18 July Ford signed a presidential ‘finding’ authorizing Colby to direct a covert paramilitary operation in “Africa.”\footnote{Stockwell claims the document was so vague only the continent was specified. John Stockwell, \textit{In Search of Enemies: A CIA Story} (New York, NY: Norton, 1978), 47.} Within days of his return from Vietnam, Stockwell was summoned to Langley, Virginia, and informed by CIA Africa Division chief George Costello that “[t]he Soviets are screwing around in Angola and the agency is supposed to stop them. We’re putting together a program to support Savimbi and Roberto. This is big, the biggest thing in Africa Division since the Congo….”\footnote{Stockwell, 37.} Stockwell claimed that the first US arms shipment was en route to Kinshasa within two days.\footnote{Stockwell, 46.} On 28 July 1975, Executive Secretary of the 40 Committee Rob Roy Ratcliff sent Colby a memo confirming that “higher authority” had approved the covert operation in Angola.\footnote{Memorandum From the Executive Secretary of the 40 Committee (Ratliff) to Director of Central Intelligence Colby, “Angola”, 28 July 1975, \textit{FRUS Volume XXVIII}, Document 122: 293. URL: http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v28/d122} The covert action in Angola, IAFEATURE, had begun.

Strategically, a limited covert action seemed like an appropriate tool to restore the balance of power in the region, send a signal to the Soviet Union, and achieve the US’ policy goals without opening it up to Congressional debate. It might also, in the words of one senator’s
aide, help the US “find out if you could still have covert operations.”¹²¹ Initially, the Ford administration’s goals were limited to avoiding “a cheap Neto victory [emphasis in original].”¹²² On 18 July Ford did approve $6 million for IAFEATURE; by 20 August this total was $24.7 million. When Ford added the last $7 million, bringing the total to $31.7 million, it used up all funds in the CIA’s Contingency Reserve Fund for FY 1975.¹²³ Any more funds for Angola would have to come from Congress, rendering a covert operation overt. Nine days later a National Intelligence Bulletin reported that the FNLA was trying to regain ground in Luanda, aided by “Chinese equipment from Zaire,” but that success was unlikely. The Portuguese government, which was technically neutral in the independence debate, had established a military perimeter around the city to protect the inhabitants from any increase in fighting. The effect, however, was to defend the city for the MPLA.¹²⁴ Most shockingly, a 25 July report claimed that Roberto actually entered Angola to visit FNLA headquarters in the north. It was his first visit since the insurgency began, and was “obviously intended to boost sagging morale.”¹²⁵ The propaganda wars accelerated between the PRC and the Soviet Union as each began to increase their attacks on the other’s participation in the Angolan question. While the PRC was said to “have had an uneasy feeling for some time that they were betting on the wrong horse in Angola,”¹²⁶ the CIA saw “a new note of Soviet self-confidence in international affairs, seen in Moscow as validating the concept of a progressive historical march, is emerging in the 1970s.”¹²⁷ Like Kissinger, the CIA believed that a more ‘mature’ Soviet Union had “developed an increased stake in international stability and ha[d] come to accept the prospect of an indefinite period of coexistence with the West.” Since Soviet foreign policy was understood to be motivated by their historical sense of insecurity, a more secure Moscow boded well for détente. The report claimed that “Moscow still expects and seeks international change. But the USSR cannot, in a period of

¹²¹ Peter Lakeland (Senate Aide) to Senator Jacob Javits (R-NY), 5 February 1976. Quoted in Robert David Johnson, Congress and the Cold War, (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 222.
¹²² Stockwell, 53.
¹²³ Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, 330.
détente, be the direct agent for much of the change its leaders still hope will occur.” Yet it also claimed that the Soviets would still be prepared to intervene abroad “in areas and on occasions when they think the political and military risks are justified – as seems to be the case in Angola,” though they had to reassess “the costs involved.”128

By the 8 August 40 Committee meeting Kissinger was impressed at how quickly the CIA had gotten the operation off of the ground and how rapidly the CIA had spent the allotted funds. Kissinger was confident, noting: “my view is that they can’t touch us on this. I don’t see how we can be faulted on what we are doing. We are not overthrowing any government; we are not subverting anyone. We are helping moderates combat Communist domination.”129 Though Hyland was cautious, countering that “the [critics] can claim that we are perpetuating war by arming the people; that we will turn a civil conflict into a bloodbath,” overall the feeling was that IAFEATURE would be successful.130 CIA assessments implied that the FNLA-UNITA coalition had won several military victories.

However, by the autumn of 1975 events turned against Kissinger and Ford. On 25 September 1975, details of the US covert operation were leaked to the press in a New York Times article by Leslie Gelb.131 Then, in November 1975, news came of the Cuban intervention, Operation Carlota. Simultaneously, with the CIA’s annual fiscal allotment exhausted, Kissinger, now fearful of ceding territory and influence to the Cubans, was forced to request an emergency supplemental appropriation of $28 million.132 Disclosures on US involvement in Chile had already tarnished the CIA and the Ford administration, and in the wake of the Hughes-Ryan Amendment (1974)133, Congressional and public opinion quickly turned against US activities in

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129 Memorandum for the Record, 40 Committee Meeting, 8 August 1975, FRUS Volume XXVIII, Document 123: 293-298. URL: http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v28/d123
130 Memorandum for the Record, 8 August 1975.
133 The Hughes-Ryan Act was an amendment to the 1961 Foreign Assistance Act, designed to increase Congressional oversight over US intelligence activities, especially covert operations. In order to receive Congressional funds for covert operations, the Hughes-Ryan act required a Presidential “finding” (written approval), confirmation of the operation’s importance to US national security, and that each “finding” be presented to one of six Congressional committees.
Africa. By November 5th, a mere six days before Angolan independence, the CIA reported that “Peking appears to be lowering the visibility of its involvement in Angola.... The moves are probably designed to limit strains on China’s regional relations and to forestall potential international embarrassment.” On 6 November Colby and Sisco testified before the Senate, where they admitted to covert funding of FNLA and UNITA. The response to this admission was widespread Congressional outrage. This is despite the fact that between July-December 1975, there were fifteen Senate briefings and twenty-three briefings before the House on Angola, none of which raised much attention or alarm. Senator Dick Clark (D-IL) proposed an amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act, which was vetoed by President Ford. Undaunted, members of Congress continued efforts to disentangle the US from the shaky venture, and eventually passed the Clark Amendment which banned aid to paramilitary groups fighting in Angola, foreclosing on Kissinger’s ability to continue the covert operation. This effectively ended US policy in Angola: by the time the strictures could have been circumvented and more funds acquired, the situation might have irrevocably changed. The US had lost its window of opportunity. This period, in the words of historian Robert David Johnson, “represented the high point of a congressional revolt against the anti-Communist ethos of the Cold War and executive authority in foreign policy.” The blowback from IAFEATURE itself had a profound impact on the US intelligence community: increased Congressional oversight, a rash of firings in the CIA, and an overall loss of faith in the intelligence process. The CIA’s credibility was especially damaged – not only was the Agency characterized as a ‘rogue elephant’ with no regard for sovereignty and Congressional authority, but they continually damaged US prestige by failing to deliver operational success.

Kissinger and his regional and principal advisors repeatedly ignored the advice of the State Department’s Africa Bureau, instead privileging the advice of high-ranking allies and their

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134 Several recent studies address the institutional and legislative changes brought about in part by revelations surrounding IAFEATURE. In addition to Congressional and Senate studies (Church and Pike Committee reports, respectively), see Johnson, “The Unintended Consequences of Congressional Reform.”
136 Memorandum, Angola: Congressional Briefings by the Executive Branch, [n.d., c. 1975-76], NARA II, RG 59, Box 358 WL Chron. Entry 5027, Folder 1.
137 The Clark amendment was repealed in 1985 when the US decided again to support UNITA in the renewed struggle. Robert David Johnson, Congress and the Cold War, Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 222-3.
own assessments and predilections. The decision to escalate US involvement in Angola was in large part the result of prodding from key African allies, who couched their own ideological biases and security needs in the persuasive language of anticommunism and US credibility. Despite the constant refrain of self-determination, anticommunism, and the evils of external intervention Kaunda and Mobutu were content to partner with external powers to affect the outcome of Angolan independence. Though they justified their own intervention as ‘saving’ Angolans from communist exploitation (again reifying the politically expedient notion that communism was somehow external to ‘legitimate’ African political ideologies), they also removed agency from Angolans themselves. Intelligence estimates privileged an adversarial cold war worldview, reinforcing biased judgements on Soviet and Cuban intentions, the weakness of African liberation movements, and, somewhat paradoxically, the utility of covert action as a display of US resolve. This demonstrated that while the public dialogue spoke of détente, rapprochement, and cooperation, realistically the US-Soviet adversarial relationship remained. This corresponded with Kissinger’s entrenched suspicion of Soviet motives and “historical pessimism.” Admittedly “unsure” about the quality of the judgements, nevertheless Kissinger opted for the most risky and least transparent of the US’ policy options. Despite Ford’s public exhortations of an “African solution” to an “African problem,” the covert operation in Angola was really a US solution to a perceived cold war problem. The US covert operation was intended to “harass” the Soviets in Angola as punishment for contravening détente’s unspoken rule against Third World interventions, but it had failed. Contemporaries recognized that the events in Angola had rapidly escalated into one of the first serious tests of superpower détente.

“We’re getting into new Angolas all over the place”: Angola challenges détente

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142 Stockwell, 45.

143 Transcript, Secretary’s Staff Meeting, 5 March 1976, NARA II, RG 59, Box 8 – Secretary’s Staff Meeting (7/14/1975-10/10/1975), Transcripts of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger’s Staff Meetings, 1973-1977, Office of the Secretary of State.
The external interventions in Angola had profound consequences for regional stability in southern Africa, and were disastrous for Angolans themselves. Yet an examination of documents from Washington and London reveals an interesting pattern. Western observers were preoccupied with unexpected and interrelated ramifications of the internationalization of Angolan independence: strains on the western alliance and a weakened détente. The Cuban intervention, the MPLA victory, and South Africa’s humiliation were seen as directly ordered by the Kremlin, as part of their incremental strategy to slowly undermine the global balance of power, bit by bit, ‘unimportant’ territory by ‘unimportant’ territory. The US response to Angolan independence caused rifts in the western alliance and highlighted the ambiguities and frailties of superpower détente, putting the Ford administration on the defensive. With the collapse of the covert operation, which was hamstrung by too much publicity and a lack of funds, the Ford administration launched a multi-track diplomatic offensive to reign in the Soviets and Cubans and to prevent the MPLA from taking power in Angola. With the Soviet Union, Kissinger linked the Cuban intervention directly to the future prospects of Soviet-American détente. With the western allies, Kissinger aimed to convince them that acquiescing to an MPLA government set a dangerous precedent in international relations. Domestically, Kissinger and Ford fought charges of recklessness and naiveté, eventually defending the very principle of détente itself. Finally, Kissinger ventured to the epicentre of radical African politics, Lusaka, to try to salvage US prestige on the continent. It was the Angolan intervention and not the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 that first seriously undermined the policy of détente. By publicly linking Angola to détente, Kissinger and Ford had in fact discredited both policies.

The domestic fallout from the revelations of IAFEATURE was immediate and politically costly for the Ford administration. US liberals were aghast that their nation had colluded with South Africa and was still engaging in what were widely considered to be reckless covert operations overseas. Conservatives pounced upon what they perceived to be American weakness and lack of resolve. On the eve of the Senate vote on the Tunney Amendment in December 1975, after urging Ford to “throw the full weight of [his] high office behind negotiations with the USSR to cease their interference in the internal affairs of Angola,” the old-hand Senator Strom Thurmond said what many on the left and right now felt:

Détente has offered nothing but false illusion. The [S]oviet goals are unchanged and Angola is but the most recent example of both Russian and Cuban policy to export
Communist influence wherever possible. Mr. President, it is time we see things as they are, not as we would like them to be.\textsuperscript{144}

A December 1975 Congressional newsletter commented that the “rain forests of Angola [were] the wrong place to nail the flag of American prestige.”\textsuperscript{145} The Governor of Pennsylvania Milton J. Shapp was emphatic in his condemnation in a letter to the president, insisting that “[t]he very fact that you and Mr. Kissinger have committed $50 million to Angola without the consent or advice of Congress and the American people [was] in itself reprehensible.”\textsuperscript{146} Shapp accused the Ford administration of having “lost its sense of direction, just as your predecessor had lost his.”\textsuperscript{147} Kissinger was forced to defend US policy, and even deny that he would resign over the Angola issue.\textsuperscript{148} During the 1976 Republican primaries Ford deleted “détente” from his vocabulary, replacing it with “peace through strength,” but it was too late.\textsuperscript{149} Completely identified with what was widely perceived to be an error in judgment, Kissinger, Angola, and détente became liabilities for the Ford administration during the 1976 Presidential elections. Thus Ford noted in his memoirs,

Instead of getting mad at the Senate, people tended to blame me. Angola was going down the drain, they said, and as President Ford was responsible. All this led to new questions. Was détente worthwhile, or just another Soviet trick? The public quite understandably

\textsuperscript{144} Telegram, Strom Thurmond to Gerald Ford, 18 December 7, GRFL, Box 32, White House Central Files, Subject Files. ND 18/CO 1-7 Wars – Middle East 2/1/76 (Exec) to ND 18/CO 26 Wars – Cambodia 5/26/75.
\textsuperscript{145} Newsletter, “U.S. Policy in Angola”, Senator Clifford P. Case reports to you, December 1975, GRFL, Folder: CO 7 Angola 8/9/74 – 2/29/76, Box 7, CO Angola (Gen), White House Central Files , Subject File.
\textsuperscript{146} Letter, Milton J. Shapp to Gerald Ford, 24 December 1975, GRFL, Box 22, White House Central Files. Subject Files. FO 3-2 Mutual Security 1/15/77 (Exec) – FO 3-2/CO 7 Mutual Security/Angola (Exec).
\textsuperscript{147} As the Governor of an important industrial state, the Ford Administration considered Shapp’s accusations important enough to warrant a response on the President’s behalf (albeit nearly a month later). The response was, “[i]n using the word ‘trivial’ the Secretary was replying to a question which compared U.S. policy in Angola to our experience in Vietnam. He was refuting the thesis that the expenditure to [sic] tens of millions of dollars in Angola will simply lead to a commitment of hundreds of billions as was the case in Vietnam. The Secretary was also speaking in the context of the United States’ responsibility in the worldwide quest for peace – for an international environment which would allow us to devote more of the funds at our disposal to the pursuit of peace and to promoting the welfare of the American people.” It is unknown whether Governor Shapp was placated by this letter. Letter, Stephen G. McConahey [Special Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs] to Milton J. Shapp, 30 January 1976, GRFL, Box 22, White House Central Files. Subject Files. FO 3-2 Mutual Security 1/15/77 (Exec) – FO 3-2/CO 7 Mutual Security/Angola (Exec).
\textsuperscript{148} A prepared briefing note for Press Officer Ron Nessen included this statement: “FYI a transcript of the Secretary’s remarks is attached. It includes a denial that he will resign over the Angola issue.” Briefing Note. “Kissinger Trip: Indications of Progress”, 23 January 76, GRFL, Box 121, Domestic Guidance for Press Briefings. Taft-Hartley Act, Folder: Angola. Ron Nessen Papers, 1974-77.
\textsuperscript{149} Ford Quotes – Economy, Research Office: President Ford Quotebooks, President Ford Committee Records, 1975-76, GRFL. Box H36. Folder: Foreign Relations (2).
found it hard to comprehend why we should have any dealings with the Russians when
they were stealing a march on us in Angola.\textsuperscript{150}

The now widespread notion that Soviet Union had exploited détente for gains in the Third
World opened the Ford administration to charges of foolhardiness abroad. Clearly Kissinger’s
faith in the willingness of the Soviet Union to cooperate with the west was at best misguided, at
worst dangerous. The Angolan crisis increased tensions among European states and between the
US and the western allies. The western alliance was at once a formal and an informal construct.
Formally, it consisted of the members of NATO, and France.\textsuperscript{151} Informally, however, it signified
the presumed cultural affinity of the democratic “western world” united against not only the
communist bloc, but also against the proliferation of newly-independent Third World states. In
1975 the oldest of the postwar independent states, India and Pakistan, had only been independent
for 28 years. Most African nations had been independent for less than twenty years. These new
states were unknown quantities. The western alliance was crucial to the maintenance of western
security. NATO was the primary bulwark against the spread of international communism, and
was also essential to achieving a variety of US goals. If, as Kissinger thought, the foundation of
global stability was predicated on US credibility, then it was imperative that the US actively
defend its interests: limiting nuclear proliferation, pursuing normalization with China, and
responding to the presence of Cuban troops on another nation’s soil. In Kissinger’s
understanding no other nation was sufficiently powerful or had the specific historical mission to
create and maintain global equilibrium. However, the US could not do this alone. The western
allies also had their part to play by resisting Eurocommunism, respecting détente and supporting
US endeavours in the international system. It was a collective western responsibility to maintain
the conditions for global equilibrium.

Tensions in international forums caused certain western leaders, especially Kissinger, to
look back with ill-placed nostalgia to a time when western leadership, and western civilization,
seemed unchallenged. A 1973 conversation between Kissinger and Caetano is illustrative:

\begin{quote}
Caetano: And yet Uganda has the same voting strength in the United
Nations as Great Britain or the United States.
Kissinger: Some members of the U. N. have 50,000 people!
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{151} The original signatories to the 1949 North Atlantic Treaty were: the US, the United Kingdom, Canada, France,
Denmark, Iceland, Norway, the “Benelux” states (Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxemburg), Italy, and Portugal.
France left the integrated military command in 1966.
Caetano: How long can the world be run like that?
Kissinger: We probably in the next General Assembly will raise the problems of bloc voting and mini-states. We will lose, but we will have established a position for the future.  

This problem of “mini-states” and “bloc voting” would frustrate US policy in the UN for years to come. In August 1975, on the accession of Cape Verde and São Tomé and Príncipe to the UN General Assembly, Kissinger noted,

I think that even though we will probably ultimately vote for it, I think we should start raising some questions about countries of 20,000, 30,000, with no historical tradition, that suddenly declare themselves as states with full membership and equal rights in the Assembly to members of the Security Council. It just doesn’t make any sense.

Thus discussions on Angola occurred in unlikely places. At a May 1975 breakfast meeting where Angola figured highly on the agenda, President Gaston Thorn of Luxembourg appealed to Kissinger to maintain US leadership of the western coalition, noting that while,

some on our side, particularly during the Viet Nam war differed with your position but now people seem to be afraid and they don’t want you to leave us. I think we should take advantage of this move and reaffirm our commitment to Europe’s special relationship with the United States…. We are, after all, 2/3 of the democracies left in the world.

In January 1976, Kissinger explained the rationale of US intervention in Angola to a sceptical Danish Prime Minister, Anker Jørgensen:

If the MPLA had won and the Soviet Union had sent $5 million or $10 million – something relevant to the African situation – we wouldn’t have gotten involved. What worries us is the massiveness of the Soviet escalation and the Cuban troops. If this is accepted it will have massive consequences. They must be made to pay a price. …The place to teach them a lesson is where it’s small.

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153 Transcript, Meeting of the Secretary’s Regionals and Principals, 15 August 1975, NARA II, RG 59, Folder 6, Box 8.
154 Memorandum of Conversation, Breakfast Meeting between Luxembourg and the U.S., 29 May 1975, NARA II, RG 59 Records of Henry Kissinger, Box 11, Folder 3.
British policymakers were irritated when the Federal Republic of Germany broke with “The Nine” and decided to recognize the MPLA, despite the decision of the Conclusions de la réunion de la groupe afrique in Rome in December 1975. The Angolan crisis made the agenda of several NATO ministerial meetings in 1975 and 1976, again suggesting that the crisis was viewed as an international issue. One briefing note noted that “[t]he major subject at the Ministerial [Meeting] will be the future of East-West relations. Soviet intervention in Angola has posed important questions for the Alliance of emerging global Soviet power.” A second note exemplified the difficulties facing the west. It was not that the west had not confronted the Soviets before. However, “[t]he new key factor in the Angola situation was that Soviet adventurism met no significant Western response. This failure of Western will may have conveyed the wrong signal to the Kremlin.” From a NATO perspective Angola was understood to have set a dangerous precedent in international affairs, permitting Soviet-Cuban “adventurism” in the Third World.

Since the Soviets had ostensibly reached their goal in Angola with little resistance, “the success of their intervention there could tempt the Soviets to use their capacities for military intervention in other distant places of marginal strategic importance.” Kissinger’s failure in Angola was not lost on even their closest allies. As a British Foreign and Commonwealth officer commented to the head of the United Kingdom delegation to NATO, “I do not think we can escape the conclusion that Kissinger has handled the Angola problem clumsily…You will see from the enclosed copy of Capetown telegram No 9 that even the South Africans think the Americans have played their hand badly – and they should know!”

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156 Memorandum, 29 January 1976, The National Archives of the United Kingdom (TNA), FCO 45 (Angola), Folder 1884.
157 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Oslo Ministerial Meeting. Secretary’s Visit to Oslo [for NATO Ministerial Meeting], Agenda, May 1976, NARA II, RG 59, Box 240, Folder 1.
159 NATO, Ministerial Agenda Book, Secretary Kissinger’s Visit to Oslo, 20-21 May 1976, NARA II, RG 59, Executive Secretariat Briefing, NATO Agenda Book to Operations Center Logs, Box 240.
160 The quotation in its entirety is instructive: “I think you put your finger on the reason for the difference in our policy on Angola and that of the Americans when you suggested to your colleagues on 13 January that Kissinger had tended to concentrate too much on the East/West balance of power aspects of the problem of Angola to neglect of the African considerations. ... Your diagnosis of Kissinger’s position was confirmed rather strikingly the other day when a member of the American Embassy here told the Department in confidence that Kissinger had no concern for Angola itself, or its people. For him Angola was primarily a problem of US/Soviet relations and, to a lesser extent, a factor in American domestic politics: that was all. A striking feature of the discussion which you report is the contrast between the overwhelming consensus that the West are taking a beating in Angola and doing nothing about it, and the absence of any suggestion from any quarter as to what the West should actually do about it…”
Foreign Officer commented that Sisco “wondered if our crystal ball indicated where the Russians and the Cubans would become involved next. It was the US belief that Angola was not an isolated case and that recent events had serious implications for the rest of the continent in strategic terms.” The issue preoccupied the NATO Ministerial Meeting in Oslo in May 1976. After first accusing the Soviet Union of developing long-range force projection capabilities for ten to fifteen years in preparation for just the kind of mission undertaken in Angola, the authors noted that the Soviets had “pursued their objectives steadfastly and in parallel with the improvement of relations with the West. …Their intervention in Angola served as a reminder that the Soviets are prepared to use these capacities when presented with opportunities to exploit weakness.”

Unexpectedly, and very much counter to the ‘grand strategy’, events in Angola had to be raised at the highest bilateral levels if détente was to be saved. Kissinger knew the optics were poor, commenting at a NSC Meeting that “if we cancel the [proposed January 1976 Moscow] trip because of Angola, Congressional critics will say we are jeopardizing SALT because of Angola.” Kissinger raised the Angolan issue directly with the Soviet Union during his trip, but the Soviets were dismissive. They knew what everyone else had refused to believe – that the Cubans had launched their invasion independently. The Soviets considered their aid to the MPLA as little different to US involvement, thus Brezhnev resented Kissinger’s hypocritical accusations. The tone of their discussion, while jocular, belied the serious nature of the problem:

Brezhnev: Dr. Kissinger, you know what’s here? A map of our attack on the United States. [He shows the map on the wall behind the curtain].
Kissinger: Of course. From Angola! [Laughter]
Brezhnev: Don’t mention that word to me. We have nothing to do with that country. I cannot talk about that country.

The next day Kissinger tried again with Soviet Foreign Minister Anatoly Gromyko, with similar results:

Letter, Michael Palliser (FCO) to Sir John Killick (United Kingdom Delegation to NATO), 22 Jan 1976, TNA, FCO 45/1883.

*161* Record of Discussion at State Department, 13 February 1976, TNA, FCO 7 (Latin America)/ 3128 Part A, Reaction of Foreign Countries to Cuba’s Involvement in Angola.

*162* NATO, Ministerial Agenda Book, Secretary Kissinger’s Visit to Oslo, 20-21 May 1976.


Kissinger: I have something [to discuss on the Middle East]. But I must point out that messages on Angola at the highest level have a tendency to go unanswered, which is a new factor in our relationship.

Gromyko: What do you suggest?

Kissinger: You suggested the Middle East; we suggested Angola – we can compromise on discussing peaceful nuclear explosions. [Laughter].

Kissinger worried that “Angola”, like “Vietnam”, could become code for both the failure of US political resolve and the costly need to police the globe. In the Secretary’s Staff Meeting of 5 March 1976, Kissinger and his staff discussed the eruptions all over the African continent, not just in the south. The border dispute between Morocco and Algeria threatened to escalate, and numerous Arab states sent mediaters to intervene, dangerously complicating the issue. Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research Harold (Hal) Saunders worried that “we’re getting into new Angolas all over the place.” Later commenting on a Soviet-backed insurgent movement in Dijbouti, Kissinger noted, “…the fact is it’s a Soviet-supported insurgent movement moving with impunity everywhere. … Gradually you’re going to see adjustments to any place where the Soviets come out in an insurgent movement. That’s one of the penalties of Angola, even if it isn’t the same.”

Unable to salvage the situation in Angola, Kissinger turned to the continent at large, taking his first official visit to “Black Africa” in April 1976. Kissinger felt that he was on a strategic mission to stem the tide of African radicalism. Kissinger went to great pains to distance his administration from those events. Of the three main addresses given, two mention Angola obliquely and the Lusaka address did not mention Angola at all. Most discussions addressed the upcoming United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), bilateral relations, or the deteriorating situation in Rhodesia. In a stunning about-face Kissinger now advocated majority rule in Rhodesia, a timeline of independence for Namibia, and a comprehensive African aid plan, which Kissinger himself presented at the UNCTAD conference in Nairobi. Kissinger wisely took no State Department officials or Africa experts who might muddy the political waters, but rather brought journalist Charles L. Sanders, Managing Editor of the prominent African-American magazine Ebony to report on his triumphs.

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165 Memorandum of Conversation, USSR and U.S. Moscow, 23 January 1976.
166 Transcript, Secretary’s Staff Meeting, 5 March 1976, NARA II, RG 59, Box 8 – Secretary’s Staff Meeting (7/14/1975-10/10/1975), Transcripts of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger’s Staff Meetings, 1973-1977.
167 Transcript, Secretary’s Staff Meeting, 5 March 1976.
In a post-trip debriefing with the President and Scowcroft, Kissinger was optimistic about the possibility of empowering the African moderates and calming anti-American sentiment, saying “I kept saying Africa is for the Africans. I told Nyerere we wouldn't support particular liberation movements, but in return he would have to keep out Communist support too. I think we succeeded more than I ever thought possible. If we pursue it, we will have the Soviets on the run within a year.”168 As Ford said at a Cabinet meeting in May 1976:

…we recognized that since the fiasco of Angola there was a growing radicalization of the situation in Southern Africa and that if we didn’t do something we would be creating serious problems for ourselves. Henry has now gone to Africa and carried out a good responsible policy. We got a little political flack out of the trip; but it was totally without merit. If we are going to hold our position in the world we cannot have a foreign policy in limbo in an election year.169

Kissinger was confident that the US’ new look policy in Africa would have the desired effect on the Soviet Union, and on the wider project of détente:

President: Did Brent [Scowcroft] tell you about [Soviet Ambassador to the US Anatoly] Dobrynin?
Kissinger: Yes. I think the Cubans will get out of Angola. I said we would recognize Angola if the Cuban troops were removed.
President: Some movement would really help.
Kissinger: I will tell Dobrynin if they want détente, they have got to get the Cubans out.170

However, most other observers did not share Kissinger’s and Ford’s optimism. Despite its intentions, the public reaction to the trip was all about Angola. Kissinger left for Zambia in April 1976, a mere three months after losing the vital Senate vote on the Tunney Amendment, and four months before the Republican presidential primaries that August.171 “Seven years of neglect” and mutual suspicion could not be undone in a single speech, or even in a single trip. Long-term and influential Angola scholar and ACOA activist George M. Houser first commended Kissinger for finally “discover[ing] Africa”, noting that:

168 Memorandum of Conversation, 9 May 1976, FRUS Volume E-6, Document 42. URL: http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve06/d42.
170 Memorandum of Conversation, 9 May 1976.
171 Ford narrowly defeated Reagan by a tally of 1187-1070 on the first ballot. Ford then lost the 1976 Presidential Election to Jimmy Carter.
as a global strategist no area of the world seems to have entered [Kissinger’s] consciousness unless it had within it the seeds of conflict with the other big powers. Therefore Angola woke Kissinger up. He discovered what we at ACOA had been pointing out for a long time, namely, that there could be a worldwide conflagration triggered by the issues of southern Africa.  

Houser was also supportive of US moves to repeal the Byrd Amendment, isolate Rhodesia, push for a timeline for Namibian independence, and the apparent rejection of NSSM 39. Though Houser was concerned about others points, such as a lack of comment on the South African Bantustans, the main issue was that the US still refused to support southern African liberation. Houser noted that Kissinger presented “no real discussion of how international confrontation [was] to be avoided in the struggle in southern Africa.” On the American preoccupation with the presence of Cuban troops in Angola, Houser was not the first to highlight the irony: “[i]nasmuch as American troops have bolstered up regimes elsewhere in the world many times, it is placing a rather grave limitation on the independence of an African state to tell it what it must do regarding support from its allies.” Neil Leighton, then of the University of Michigan-Flint, wrote that the speech was “upon reflection merely a recognition of changes in the status quo which proceeded its delivery.”

Ebony magazine reflected popular concerns from the black community about Angola and southern Africa. A December 1975 letter to the editor wondered:

if anyone [could] cite a reason, other than that of international racism, why that as long as the Angolan guerrillas from the liberation movements in that southwest African territory were fighting against Portuguese colonialism they received only minimal supplies of light scale weapons and armaments from their erstwhile patrons, but as soon as the Portuguese were defeated in Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Angola, Russia and the United States could then send bazookas, missiles, jet planes, tanks, and all kinds of sophisticated weapons with which Angolans could proceed to kill each other at a rapid pace?

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The August 1976 edition was devoted entirely to African affairs, and a lead article noted that while most African leaders were pleased with the high-profile visit, they preferred to adopt a “wait and see” approach to Ford’s new Africa policy.  

Conservatives also distrusted Kissinger’s motives. A June 1976 memorandum from Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs (and former US Ambassador to Nigeria) John E. Reinhart to new Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs William Schaufele, Jr. tallied the American public’s reaction to Kissinger’s Africa trip. The mail responding to the Secretary’s speeches in Africa was “immediate and heavy,” with “99 percent” of the 802 letters received on the subject expressing opposition to the change in direction toward southern Africa. A Louisiana doctor’s response was presented as characteristic: “Why is our government hell bent on supporting Maoists, Communists, terrorists, and dictatorial regimes in Africa and at the same time savaging Rhodesia and squeezing South Africa, who have always been our friends and allies?” Overwhelmingly, respondents either felt the US had sided with the “bad guys” against the “good guys,” or simply could not determine any “American advantage, or interest, in our current policy.” It seemed that very few conceded that “the Soviet and Cuban activities in Africa necessitate an American response.”

Why did Kissinger become convinced that the US needed to respond in Angola after “seven years of neglect” regarding African affairs? Part of the answer lay of course in the anticommunism that had dominated US foreign policy since 1947. However, Nixon and Kissinger both supported the loosening of tensions with the Soviet Union and with the People’s Republic of China. Also, by 1975 the United States already had cordial, if not exactly warm, relations with Mozambique, by then a definitively Marxist nation, born of similar historical processes to Angola. The discrepancy in responses towards two similar regimes helps reveal Kissinger’s attitudes towards meta-historical problems, especially the nature of revolutionary regimes, the problems of emerging states, and the role of the United States and the west.

177 Charles L. Sanders, “Kissinger in Africa: Secretary of State makes promises, African leaders listen, then wait to see if the U.S. is a true friend”, *Ebony*, August 1976: 54. URL: http://books.google.ca/books?id=zd0DAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA52&dq=Kissinger+lusaka&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=2#v=onepage&q=Kissinger%20lusaka&f=false.


179 Memorandum, 14 June 1976.
To understand the debacle over Angola requires investigating a man who freely admitted to having held “quasi-presidential” authority in order to “insulate national security from our domestic upheavals” during Watergate and the Ford transition. Achieving the nation’s ideological and political goals was contingent upon good leadership, defined by Kissinger as the ability to “take his society from where it is to where it has never been,” with a “willingness to travel on the difficult road between a nation’s experience and its destiny.” The distinction between Angola and Mozambique lay not their respective Marxisms, but in the scope of the conflict itself. Without revolutionary Cuban troops on its soil, Mozambique was unlikely to become a launch pad for communist domination of the continent.

Though Kissinger was sharply critical of Woodrow Wilson’s idealistic moralizing (and its long-term effects on the shape of US foreign policy), it can be argued that Kissinger’s management impulse was in some ways not that far removed from Wilson’s. Both found their current international system fragile and on the verge of collapse, and both feared catastrophe of total war (in Wilson’s case conventional, in Kissinger’s case nuclear). More importantly, both felt the US had a historic mission to protect the global equilibrium, that order and stability depended on US credibility, and that collective security had to be supported by force. Both sought a selective engagement with the international community, yet both also felt the US had to be seen as actively pursuing and protecting its interests. Moreover, both assumed that their particular understanding of the international system was in itself universal and absolute.

The Vietnam conflict was case in point: there the US was unable to achieve a viable medium between “abdication” of its historic role and “heroic posturing.” Wilsonianism mistakenly rejected peace through balance-of-power in favour of peace through “moral consensus.” This is explicitly apparent when Kissinger confronted the Africa Bureau:

Insulated as the [Africa] bureau was from the Cold War, it provided the ideal sort of environment for the promulgation of a rather inflexible version of Wilsonianism: one basing stability on economic progress, peace on democratic institutions, and international relations on multilateral diplomacy and international law. Since they were not part of the mainstream of policymaking, many officers in the African bureau evolved a kind of siege mentality in which they transmuted their isolation into a claim to moral superiority, casting themselves as defenders of American idealism. Determined to keep the Cold War out of their region and to protect Africa from the depredations of power politics, they

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180 Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, 100.
181 Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, 1061.
182 Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, 97.
183 Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, 97.
became passionate apostles of the view that African issues had a special character requiring a unique kind of ‘African’ solution: not weapons but economic aid, not alignment but a mystical African skill of manoeuvring among contending forces without ever blighting the effort by a relationship to historic elements of power.  

In a statement entitled “Implications of Angola for Future U.S. Foreign Policy”, Kissinger outlined what was truly at stake if American freedom of action was curtailed over Angola. It is also worth quoting at some length:

The Soviet Union’s massive and unprecedented intervention in the internal affairs of Africa...is a matter of urgent concern....But our deeper concern is for global stability. If the United States is seen to emasculate itself in the face of massive, unprecedented Soviet and Cuban intervention, what will be the perception of leaders around the world as they make decisions concerning their future security?...The question is whether America still maintains the resolve to act responsibility [sic] as a great power – prepared to face a challenge when it arises...Do we want our potential adversaries to conclude that, in the event of future challenges, America’s internal divisions are likely to deprive us of even minimal leverage over developments of global significance?

Upon the pillar of US credibility rested every other assumption about superpower behaviour and the international system. The Angolan crisis forced the US and the Soviet Union to acknowledge that strategic bipolarity alone was not sufficient to ensure a “global equilibrium of forces”: Third World nations could have competing agendas of their own which could have ramifications on the system at large. In Kissinger’s view the fact that an African revolutionary state had been able to upset détente and cause tensions in the western alliance was cause for great alarm. The fact that world and domestic opinion limited Kissinger’s range of action was even worse. In Kissinger’s mind it was “the Vietnam pattern all over again – you know, construction of credibility gaps, proving that we’re losing anyway; therefore, we can’t do anything – a total misstatement of the issue.” By exploiting American and western goodwill (read: détente), the Soviets and Cubans were being wilfully belligerent, and the US had no choice but to escalate involvement and respond in kind.

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184 Kissinger, Years of Renewal, 800.
185 Statement from the Secretary of State, “Implications of Angola for Future U.S. Foreign Policy”, Statement before the Senate Subcommittee on African Affairs of the Foreign Relations Committee, NARA II, RG 59, Box 358, Policy Planning Council/Policy Planning Staff/ Director’s Files (Winston Lord).
186 Transcript, Secretary’s Regionals’ and Principals’ Staff Meeting, 23 December 1974, NARA II, RG 59, Transcripts of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger’s Staff Meetings, 1973-1977, Box 9, Secretary’s Staff Meeting.
Conclusion

In true realist thinking international relations are conducted between great powers. Thus Kissinger approached the prospect of Marxism in Angola through his understanding of Soviet policy. The real problem with the Angolan crisis was that the Cuban intervention, perhaps unsurprising given the historical context, was assumed to be Soviet-inspired. While there is now substantial evidence to the contrary, for the self-proclaimed realists in the Ford administration (and internationally) the idea that Cuba was not a Soviet proxy and could be motivated by a uniquely Cuban conception of order and justice was inconceivable. At stake was not control over Angola or the welfare of its inhabitants, but rather American credibility. Advocates of isolationism or disengagement not only imperilled global stability, but also failed to recognise the nation’s destiny. The initial US strategy replicated a policy successfully enacted earlier in numerous places, such as Iran and Indonesia, Chile and the Congo – co-opt the most malleable or pro-western elements and support them until victory is secured. However, because the situation within Angola was misread, the initial policy of limited intervention was insufficient to be decisive. The liberation struggle in Angola was complicated and constantly in flux. Given the different ethno-religious affiliations, domestic support bases, ideologies and external associations, the fortunes of the MPLA, FNLA and UNITA rose and fell on a monthly basis. The battle lines were never set in stone. All three leaders regularly campaigned outside of Angola. Careful monitoring of the situation was thus an absolute necessity. Kissinger disregarded the suggestions of the Africa Bureau when it did not correspond with his limited understanding of the conflict. Repeatedly Kissinger blamed the Soviet Union for instigating and encouraging Cuban involvement, exacerbating conflicts even if it did not cause them, and finally, imposing an alien ideology on sub-Saharan Africa. This was a specious claim, since Marxism, and socialism existed in Africa since the origins of the independence movements in the late 1950s. Kissinger concluded that the reverberations from an Angolan collapse to communism would have irrevocable consequences in Zaire and Zambia. As he noted, “these countries can only conclude that the US is no longer a factor in southern Africa. We will pay for it for decades.”\footnote{Kissinger, 
Years of Renewal, 807.} What mattered was that American interests in the region triumphed and were seen to triumph. Conversely, the concern of the nationalist leaders in Angola was not US credibility or global
equilibrium, it was revolution. Kissinger’s insistence that US policy was realistic and non-
ideological was not only inaccurate, but precluded the Nixon-Kissinger-Ford decision-making
apparatus from making nuanced responses to policy challenges, especially those from the
Conclusion: Cuito Cuavanale, 1988

To forestall violence, national and international, we must not cease to appeal to those concerned to change their policies and to bear in mind the stage of history which mankind has reached. The process will be completed sooner or later, peacefully or by force.

UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim, Address to Rabat Summit of the OAU, 13 June 1972

Remote from the American experience, Africa was the stuff of legends and stereotypes: it was the last remaining land of white hats and black hats, a Manichean playground for underemployed Western activists on the right and on the left. Where else was there such a pure play on racism or anti-communism? Where else was there so little need for knowledge, experience or self-discipline?

Chester A. Crocker, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs (1981-1989)

Africa’s Stalingrad, Africa’s Girón, Africa’s Czechoslovakia

On 11 February 1976 the OAU recognized the MPLA-led government of Angola, despite extensive lobbying by the US. Almost a year later, on 1 December 1976, Angola became the 146th member state of the UN.

Though twenty-eight countries were absent from the vote, only the US formally abstained. Angola’s accession to the UN General Assembly signified an end to

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5 Three years later Agostinho Neto died of cancer in Moscow, where he was undergoing treatment. Neto’s replacement, José Eduardo dos Santos, has ruled Angola uninterrupted ever since, winning two highly contested elections in 2008 and 2012. Dos Santos is often considered one of Africa’s “least known autocrats.” See David Smith, “Angola’s José Eduardo dos Santos: Africa’s least-known autocrat”, Guardian UK [online], 30 August 2012. URL: http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/aug/30/angola-jose-eduardo-dos-santos. Accessed: 28 June 2013. In June 2013 Dos Santos gave his first televised interview in twenty-two years. The fact that the interview was granted to a Portuguese station (rather than Angola’s own, pro-MPLA state broadcaster Televisão Pública de Angola), and that Dos Santos continued to blame colonialism as the source of Angola’s economic stagnancy did not endear him to an increasingly unhappy Angolan public. See Louise Redvers, “Dos Santos's hollow triumph on TV”, Mail & Guardian [online], 14 June 2013. URL: http://mg.co.za/article/2013-06-14-00-dos-santoss-hollow-triumph-on-tv/. Accessed: 28 June 2013. Dos Santos’ daughter, Isabel dos Santos, recently became Africa’s first woman billionaire, according to Forbes magazine. See Kerry A. Dolan, “Isabel Dos Santos, Daughter of Angola’s President, Is Africa's
the Angolan revolution, but not to the conflict between the liberation movements, or to the US’ animosity toward the MPLA-led regime. Nor did the end of the independence struggle denote the end of hostilities between Cuba and South Africa. Indeed, the saga of Angolan independence, international intervention, and national reconciliation continued into the 2000s. Fifteen years of struggle for national liberation was immediately followed by a further twenty-six of destabilizing civil war. Angola remained an international issue for three main reasons: first, the country possessed lucrative natural resources (including oil, diamonds, and coffee) which western businesses were eager to exploit; second, Cuban troops remained in Angola, aggravating US anticommunist sentiments and encouraging neoconservative bellicosity; finally, Henry Kissinger had begun a process designed to link Namibian independence from South Africa to Cuban withdrawal from Angola. Though the explicit revolutionary transnationalism that characterized the early days of the liberation movements had dissipated Angola remained a site of international intrigue as Cuba, the US, and South Africa continued to try to shape and direct Angolan affairs for their own ideological and geopolitical needs.

In the wake of the MPLA victory in 1976, Castro gave a speech commemorating the fifteenth anniversary of the failed Bay of Pigs invasion and the 20th anniversary of the departure of the *Granma*, which transported Cuban fighters from their haven in Mexico to confront Batista. In it Castro claimed that “the victory in Angola was the twin sister of the victory at Girón… For the Yankee imperialists, Angola represents an African Girón….” According to Castro, the South African withdrawal represented “one of the most brilliant pages in the liberation of black Africa….”

Though known for his tendency to exaggerate, Castro had a good sense of what had occurred in IAFEATURE. He knew that it was “really Kissinger’s war,” and that Kissinger had proceeded with the covert action despite the warning of some of his “closet collaborators.”

Castro also knew the timeline of the Congressional decisions to withhold funds for additional ventures in Angola. Castro even noted Kissinger’s sudden interest in Africa (as discussed in the previous chapter):

> with the imperialist defeat in Angola, Mr. Kissinger scarcely has time enough to run from place to place whipping up fear of the Cuban Revolution. A few days ago he traveled

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through a half-dozen Latin-American countries and now he has announced a new trip to Africa, a continent he never deigned to look at before his African Girón.8

Castro’s damning historical allusions did not end there: “Moreover, perhaps as one indication of Ford’s cultural level, now becoming proverbial, he declared on one occasion that Cuba’s action in Angola was similar to what happened in Ethiopia in Mussolini’s time.”9 In 1935 the League of Nations (minus the United States) had famously botched the case of the Italian invasion of Ethiopia. When Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie appealed to the international body for assistance, the League found both Ethiopia and Italy at fault. The lack of a forceful international response seemed to legitimize Mussolini’s ambitions and aggression. But Ford had it wrong, according to Castro: “[t]rue, events in Angola resemble those of Ethiopia, but in reverse.” In Ethiopia the invading army was successful and the international community had stood idly by. In Angola the invading army (South Africa, aided and abetted by the US and its NATO allies) had been repelled by an internationalist progressive force, led by the Cubans.

Like “Africa’s Girón”, another prominent analogy was “Africa’s Czechoslovakia.” In the same 1976 speech Castro noted,

true, events in Angola resemble those of Czechoslovakia at Munich, but also in reverse; the people who were attacked received the solidarity of the revolutionary movement, and the imperialists and racists could not dismember the country nor divide up its wealth nor assassinate its finest sons…We advise Mr. Ford to study a true bit of history and draw the correct conclusions from its lessons.10

It is difficult to consider foreign policy in the post-1945 world without encountering the so-called ‘lessons of Munich’. At its most basic 1938’s Munich Agreement permitted Adolf Hitler to annex the Czechoslovakian Sudetenland, which was populated with ethnic Germans, in an effort to preclude more aggressive behaviour.11 To later generations the Munich Agreement demonstrated the folly of appeasement; thus “Czechoslovakia” became a site of near totemic significance in the history of international relations and diplomacy. Undoubtedly Mark Chona chose his words carefully in 1975 when he worried that Angola was becoming “Africa’s

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11 The agreement was negotiated by the major European powers – France, Britain, Italy, and Germany – without a Czechoslovakian presence. The Czechoslovakian delegation was persuaded to accept the decision or face the might of Germany alone.
Czechoslovakia.” At the tumultuous intersection of decolonization, national liberation, and cold war, “Angola”, like “Czechoslovakia” became identified with both appeasement and resolve. Like Czechoslovakia, Angola became a site where opposing interests competed to demonstrate resolve to the wider international community.

In 1979 South African Defence Force troops withdrew from Angola, but continued to support UNITA forces and wage a low-level counterinsurgency campaign against SWAPO. As the South Africans had feared, independent Angola did become a staging ground for the liberation movements of the frontline states. Angola became inextricably bound to the independence movements in Namibia and Zimbabwe, as well as the end of apartheid in South Africa. A small contingent of Cuban forces remained in Angola in support of the People's Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola (Forças Armadas Populares de Libertação de Angola, FAPLA), now the Angolan national army. The resulting military stalemate, while devastating to Angolans, did not garner much international attention. This changed in September 1987, when FAPLA launched what was hoped would be a final definitive attack against UNITA forces still fighting in the south. The goal of Operação Saludando Octubre (“Greeting October”) was to dislodge and defeat Savimbi’s movement once and for all, and to finally consolidate government control over the entire country. Instead, it set the stage for a protracted confrontation between FAPLA and the SADF at the strategic town of Cuito Cuanavale in southern Angola.

In a familiar pattern, South Africa, Cuba, and the US mobilized again to support their respective sides. The anticommunist resurgence of the Reagan years legitimated renewed US intervention in Angola. With Cuban troops still on Angolan soil, Namibian independence still unsettled, and “constructive engagement” with South Africa still a high US priority, Reagan lobbied to successfully repeal the Clark Amendment, thus opening the door to resume support for UNITA. In the parlance of the Reagan Doctrine, Savimbi became a key “freedom fighter” in

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13 Defined as those African states who were not only geographically proximate to South Africa, but were also directly affected by Pretoria’s military and economic policies: Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Rhodesia/Zimbabwe.

14 Technically “Cuito Cuanavale” refers to a series of individual battles between 1987-1988 which took place between Angolan (and later Cuban) forces and the SADF in and around Cuito Cuanavale.
the global anticommunist struggle of the ‘second’ cold war.\textsuperscript{15} The presence of Soviet military advisors further cemented the cold war connection. For example, Vladimir Shubin notes that in July 1977, twelve Soviet advisors arrived in eastern Angola to support the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army, the armed wing of Joshua Nkomo’s Zimbabwe African People's Union. Later, 200 Soviet “specialists and interpreters” were positioned with Umkhonto weSizwe (the armed wing of the African National Congress) in Angola, from 1979-1991.\textsuperscript{16} Similarly, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) authorized sixteen military advisors to head to Lubango to support the People’s Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN, SWAPO’s armed wing) in 1976 (indeed, Shubin notes that three PLAN units were named “Moscow”, “Red Square”, and “Leningrad”).\textsuperscript{17}

Depending on the perspective, the decisive battles at Cuito Cuanavale ended in a Cuban-Angolan victory, a stalemate, or a South African ‘tactical withdrawal’.\textsuperscript{18} So significant was the battle that it quickly earned the nickname “Africa’s Stalingrad”, after the epic battle of 1942-1943.\textsuperscript{19} It was perhaps the largest land battle in Africa since the Second World War. Memorialized and commemorated by South Africans, Angolans, and Cubans alike, its outcome remains intensely debated by military historians and ex-combatants, and there are still heated debates over the force each side brought to bear and their respective tactics and strategies. While the military outcome of Cuito Cuanavale remains contested, few could deny the MPLA/Cuban political victory. When South African troops withdrew from Angola for the second time in 1988, it had echoes of the first withdrawal a decade earlier, an event which sent shockwaves throughout the African world. “Africa’s Stalingrad” aptly described not only the scale and destructiveness of the battle, but the sense that Cuito Cuanavale represented a ‘tipping point’ in

\textsuperscript{15} Noted Reagan in his 1984 State of the Union address: “Together, we can continue to advance our agenda for peace. We can establish a more stable basis for peaceful relations with the Soviet Union; strengthen allied relations across the board; achieve real and equitable reductions in the levels of nuclear arms; reinforce our peacemaking efforts in the Middle East, Central America, and southern Africa; or assist developing countries, particularly our neighbors in the Western Hemisphere; and assist in the development of democratic institutions throughout the world.” Ronald Reagan: “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union”, 25 January 1984, Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project [online]. URL: http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=40205.


\textsuperscript{17} Shubin, “Unsung Heroes”, 160-161.


the story of black liberation and white minority rule, compelling the various parties to return to the negotiating table. Cuito Cuanavale represented the extent to which the legacy of Angolan liberation was now almost completely subsumed by broader international currents. In the end, as eminent sociologist Christine Messiant noted, it took three multinational peace processes (New York, 1988; Bicesse, 1991; and Lusaka, 1994) and finally the death of Jonas Savimbi in Moxico province on 22 February 2002 for “the guns to be silenced in Angola.”

It may seem surprising that Angolan independence elicited the number of historical comparisons that it did, but it should not. From the earliest moments of the independence campaign Angolan nationalists invoked the revolutionary heritages of other Third World revolutions, and situated their own independence struggle in a global battle against colonialism, racism, and minority rule. The Angolan liberation movements appealed to transnational actors and multinational institutions for help. Angolan nationalists later used their respective international profiles as part of the legitimizing criteria for claiming control of Angola, and to provide material and military support for their guerilla operations.

Despite the myriad of changes in African politics, the constant push of decolonization, and the rising wave of Third World nationalism, few expected that an African movement of national liberation could affect the international strategic calculus. And yet Angolan nationalists and their allies were also acutely aware of the challenges they posed, not only to the receding European empires, but to postwar relations among states. This dissertation has argued that Angolan independence, located at the nexus of cold war and decolonization, is an ideal case for exploring the history of international relations and the blurring of epistemic lines between the ‘national’, ‘international’ and the ‘transnational’. For IR purists, transnational actors are ‘powerless’ unless they unequivocally produce change through their own efforts. For historians, however, perhaps this is an overly parsimonious definition of success. Successful transnational actors can be the ones who best learn to negotiate and navigate the international system, interacting with each other and with established nation-states to achieve their goals. And yet, Angola also clearly demonstrated the effects that the international can have on the

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transnational – and on national liberation. While various progressive states and organizations supported Angolan independence, an equally powerful bloc of status-quo powers colluded to undermine this process and to fuel the antagonisms between rival groups. As a consequence, the violence in Angola dragged on for decades. Examining Angolan independence sheds light on the relationship between a constellation of under-examined issues: race and revolution, nationalism and anticommunism, decolonization and fragmentation in the international system.

If independence movements are to be taken seriously, scholars must challenge Ernest Gellner’s assertion that “[n]ationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist [emphasis Benedict Anderson].” For independence movements, many of whom espoused a revolutionary or national liberation ethos (discussed below), the relationship between nationalism and state is often reversed. That is, the nation exists *prima facie* as an unintended consequence of subjugation, and it is nationalist expression and agitation that gives rise to the nation-state. In revolutionary nation-building situations, such as Angolan independence, oppression created a ‘synthetic’ nation, not defined by shared language, kin-group, or custom, but by a shared objection to Portuguese domination. Thus while it is true that the process of nation-building continued after the creation of the sovereign state (especially as the MPLA consolidated their rule and continued to fight UNITA for territorial control well into the 1990s), nationalism also existed before the formal creation of Angola. In some ways this is the essential task of the revolutionary process – fomenting and then channeling what may be diffuse nationalist aspirations into the creation of a single, territorially-bounded, internationally-recognized nation-state.

Revolutions are a critical concept in international relations and in international history. Most states are constructed, at least implicitly, with the aim of limiting and controlling revolutionary impulses and processes, as no state willingly leaves itself open to violent challenge from within. Revolutions are the most striking example of the intersection between non-elite and elite actors, between people and politics; a rare instance where non-elites participate in a radical

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23 As Azar Gat and Alexander Yakobson wrote, “Widespread resistance and mass rebellions by subject peoples were ever to be expected within empires and were often drowned in rivers of blood. It is impossible to deny the occurrence and popular scale of many such struggles for independence, as it is awkward to describe a people’s urge for collective freedom as anything other than national.” Azar Gat with Alexander Yakobson, *Nations: The Long History and Deep Roots of Political Ethnicity and Nationalism*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 249-250.
nation-building, state-making – and potentially state-destroying – process. By definition, revolutions are unique in their challenge to the status quo, their desire to completely alter their societies, and their challenge to the international system. Revolutions have been waged in the name of socialism, communism, nationalism, liberalism, populism, Islamism, and just about any other “ism” that can be identified. Twenty-first-century revolutions are varied in geography, actors, scale, and scope; thus, on first attempt it can be difficult to find a shared foundation. Still, the majority of twentieth-century revolutions can be roughly divided into three broad categories: anti-aristocratic, anticolonial, or anti-foreign in thrust. Indeed, if one considered what many revolutionary movements were reacting against, rather than agitating for, a faint pattern emerges. In all cases the revolutionaries reacted against perceived injustices when the existing order, however configured, had lost legitimacy in the eyes of a sector of the population that had the education, resources, and political will to do something about it. In every case the status quo is rejected, to be replaced with a different, often competing, vision of society.

Revolutions are at root local and national events; they strive to change the quotidian lived experiences of a given population, and the contours and institutions of a given state. For this reason fewer scholars have considered the international, or indeed transnational, effects of revolutionary processes. As Eric Selbin noted, “[r]ecognizing that revolution is inherently local and is fundamentally about the material and ideological conditions of people’s everyday lives does not mean that global teleologies are irrelevant: they remain useful heuristics and certainly help to explain international reactions to and behaviours toward revolutionary processes.”

Revolutions are rarely confined to a geographically delineated nation-state. As Patrick Chabal put it, “[a]nti-colonial wars have been inextricably bound up with regional and world politics because liberation movements have usually been dependent on sanctuaries in neighbouring countries and on outside aid, and because their very legitimacy has been a function of their international recognition.” Thus, revolutions are an instance of the local mapped onto the international, crossing the foreign-domestic policy divide. Against the tenets of realism, in this context smaller states often became if not ‘system-determining’, system-destabilizing. In the twentieth century, national liberation movements have often been the agents of these

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revolutionary, system-destabilizing events. Revolutions are perhaps the sharpest demonstrations of “the global interconnections underpinning contemporary violence, the violence at the heart of societal transformations and the frequent violence of the West in its expansionary modernism.”

And yet there is a paradox. As change-oriented groups, including anticolonial national liberation movements, challenged the international system they also reified its primary characteristic, state sovereignty. They posed a trenchant critique of the international system, and yet they sought full-recognition from the international community and the privileges afforded to states, such as formal recognition and membership status in international or regional organizations, such as the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity (now African Union) or the Non-Aligned Movement. This is especially true of African liberation movements, most of which pursued juridical statehood and formal independence as a precursor to more fundamental cultural, economic, and societal changes. Despite the purported ‘artificiality’ of the borders of postcolonial African states and their European origins (a problematic assertion since it implies that modern states in the rest of the world were somehow ‘authentic’ and ‘indigenous’), Africans themselves reified the postcolonial borders (this was one of the first major tasks of the OAU in 1963), and actively fought to create viable nation-states that would be recognized and accepted by the international community. While ‘national liberation’ could encompass an entire constellation of ideological, cultural and political goals, a sovereign state, fully-integrated into the international system was a necessary component of this process. Since independence did not necessarily lead to economic autonomy or an end to the exploitation of African peoples, there were those who questioned the very validity of the state as a category of analysis in African politics. Though challenged and questioned, so-called ‘flag independence’ was considered a precondition for radical social change. National liberation was an important part of a longstanding and multifaceted African anticolonial resistance. Especially in Angola, nationalists took Nkrumah’s counsel to “seek ye first the political kingdom” to heart, equating independence with national liberation.

26 Christopher Cramer, Violence in Developing Countries: War, Memory, Progress, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006), 21.
In telling this story, this dissertation has endeavoured to take the voices of Angolan nationalists seriously, in combination with the formal diplomatic record. Chapter 1 addressed the role that wider global historical processes had in the origins and articulation of the Angolan independence movement, and how Angolan nationalists situated their struggles within an existing anti-imperialist, antiracist global paradigm. Chapter 2 explored how the United States confronted its own uncertainties and biases about race and national liberation while navigating a global order in both rapid transition and no longer predicated on European colonialism. US attention to Angola was not solely a reflection of bilateral US-Portuguese relations or cold war concerns, but also needs to be placed in the context of the rapidly changing relations between Europe and Africa and the consequences of this shift for global stability (not to mention for the US’ own internal racial dynamics).

Chapter 3 demonstrated the relationship between formal and informal internationalism by investigating the Angolan liberation movements’ efforts to raise their international profile through a combination of assistance from non-governmental organizations and formal appeals to the UN and the OAU. In chapter 4, the revolutionary trajectories of the Angolan, Cuban, and Portuguese revolutions coincided in the difficult year of 1974-1975, when the Carnation Revolution ushered in a new and dangerous phase in the competition for control of Angola, again demonstrating that international events could profoundly shape the development of national liberation. Finally, chapter 5 has argued that the US preoccupation with cold war imperatives and fear of global disorder led it to adopt an Angola policy which ultimately helped discredit superpower détente. Despite the experience of the Vietnam War, US foreign policy decision-makers were still unwilling and unable to take seriously the aspirations of Third World anticolonial nationalists.

Through the lens of Angolan independence, this project explored and historicized three critical themes in postwar international relations: racialized geopolitics, national liberation and independence, and cold war bipolarity, which balanced US and Soviet power and aspirations during their fifty-year adversarial relationship. These key themes reflected not only elite political preoccupations, but also popular anxieties about a rapidly changing and increasingly globalized world. By placing African independence in a wider context, extending the chronological scope

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28 To borrow a phrase from Norrie MacQueen and Pedro Aires Oliveira. “‘Grocer meets Butcher’: Marcello Caetano’s London visit of 1973 and the last days of Portugal’s Estado Novo”, Cold War History, 10:1 [February 2010]: 29.
past 1965, and taking seriously the policies of the national liberation movements, this project differs substantially from previous assessments and contributes to the scholarship of the history of twentieth century international relations.

This dissertation has also countered the dominant narratives on Angolan independence, which focus almost entirely on external interventions and limit Angolan agency. Scholar Tiago Moreira de Sá’s take is typical, noting that “[d]uring the mid-1970’s, the superpowers decided to export the Cold War to Angola, at levels that were unprecedented in the African continent.”

While it is true that the level of external intervention in Angola was unprecedented for an African state, the superpower intervention was the culmination of a sixteen year process, and the cold war was already a factor in the politics of Angolan independence. As noted by historian Sue Onslow,

The existence of communism as a universalist creed – backed by the power of states whose rhetorical legitimacy was founded on the export of revolution – also enable[d] governing elites in Southern Africa progressively to denigrate advocates of black workers’ rights and intellectual critics of white domination, as well as to tar African liberation movements with the sobriquets of ‘radical’ and ‘subversive’.

Gleijeses’ major work, Conflicting Missions, went a considerable way to redressing the “excessive reliance on western sources [which led], inevitably, to an ethnocentric approach”, by incorporating Cuban sources. As such, it remains the key text on the subject. Yet perhaps Gleijeses has inadvertently introduced a counter-narrative that still privileges and centres the Cuban experience at the expense of Angolan actors? These tensions speak to the difficulties and contradictions of studying African international relations in general and movements of national liberation in particular.

To conclude, scholar William Minter’s assertion that 1980s “Angola and Mozambique feature[d] a complex interplay of internal, regional and global factors that refuse[d] to fit simple

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models of wars between nation-states or purely internal civil wars” is equally, if not more true of the 1970s. This dissertation has argued for the salience and importance of the international and transnational connections that animate – and inhibit – national liberation and revolutionary movements. The decline of empires and struggles for national liberation were some of the most significant sociopolitical challenges of the twentieth century, challenges that confounded even the cold war superpowers. More work is needed on the presence of national liberation movements as constituent elements of the twentieth century international system, their links to revolutionary politics, and the responses of status quo powers. Though both fields are growing, more work is also needed on the US’ peculiar relationship with African actors and the international history of the 1970s. Finally, more attention is needed to the rise of the Third World. Scholars should take seriously Vijay Prashad’s contention that the Third World was not a place (or indeed a series of places), but a project with a history of its own, similar goals and language, borne out of a shared understanding of the roots of injustice in the international system. This is not to present a degree of false coherence across the Third World. Indeed Prashad acknowledged that this tendency to gloss over differences was the Third World project’s “built-in flaw”, and ultimately led to its downfall in the 1980s. Yet it does seem legitimate to argue that even in 1975 many peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America were broadly united in a desire for a better world – an end to the indignities of colonialism, economic exploitation, and racial inequality. The multiple ways in which this Third World project was defined, produced, institutionalized, assembled, contested, fractured and reassembled is one of the most compelling and consequential stories of the twentieth century.

35 Prashad, xvii.
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