

U.S. POLICY AND PORTUGUESE COLONIALISM: THE UNITED NATIONS FACADEIntroduction:

American attitudes towards Portuguese colonialism as expressed in policy statements and voting records at the United Nations are but an externalization of the multiple policy factors which make up the substance of continued U.S. support for Portugal. This paper outlines basically these United Nations facets of U.S. policy. In subsequent ACOA reports we will investigate American economic and military policy with particular attention to the U.S. imports of Angolan coffee and the role of American oil corporations in the Portuguese colonies, as well as the various forms of military aid to the Portuguese war effort.

The U.S. Voting Record at the United Nations

America has often proclaimed its abhorrence of colonialism, its rooted commitment to self-determination and freedom for all the peoples of the world. To the millions of Africans struggling for freedom and independence in the Portuguese-dominated territories in Africa, this must appear a commitment in words only. A glance at the U.S. voting record at the United Nations on the position of these Portuguese territories reveals the very limited practical meaning of this commitment. True, the United States voted "yes" to the early 'declaratory' resolutions which affirmed the rights of all peoples in the Portuguese-ruled territories in Africa and elsewhere to self-determination. But it has consistently refused to support any resolution which attempted action to achieve such self-determination for the people of Angola, Guinea (Bissau) and Mozambique.

The U.S. voted "No" when the General Assembly called on all Member States to "refrain forthwith from offering the Portuguese government any assistance that would enable it to continue its repression of the peoples of the territories under its administration and for this purpose to take all measures to prevent the sale and supply of arms and military equipment to the Portuguese government." (Res. 1807 c/1962) It has never subsequently given support to such a resolution.

The U.S. voted "No" when the General Assembly asked the Security Council to take appropriate measures, including sanctions, to secure Portugal's compliance with the demand for the granting of freedom and independence to its colonies. (Res. 1819 c/1962) It has voted "No" to all subsequent specific sanctions calls.

The U.S. voted "No" when the General Assembly condemned the role of foreign economic interests which act as "an impediment to the African people in the realization of their aspirations to freedom and independence" and called on all Member States to "prevent such activities on the part of their nationals" (Res 2107 c/ 1965). It has not supported any of the subsequent condemnatory resolutions on foreign economic aid to colonialism.

It has consistently refused to support all those resolutions which called on NATO members (Portugal and the U.S. are allies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization) to refuse military aid and assistance to Portugal for its colonial wars.

The arguments which the U.S. has used during the past ten years have varied, but the effect has been the same -- continued tacit support for the Portuguese in their defense of an African empire -- support for the colonialist rulers, not for the colonial people.

Thus the U.S. supplies arms and money in the form of loans to Portugal and defends such action at U.N. meetings. The proviso to the Portuguese, on the basis of which the U.S. makes such defense, is that the American military and financial aid may not be used for the prosecution of the colonial war in Africa. This can be scant comfort to Africans fighting in Angola who now face a non-American gun bought with escudos made available for guns in Africa because dollars helped pay for the butter in Portugal.

A clearer picture of the factors involved in the weak U.S. stance on Portuguese colonialism emerges from a closer examination of the major resolutions and debates at the United Nations in the last decade.

But lest the argument be raised, 'that was the past, today is different', it seems just to begin with the statement made on April 17, by U.S. Ambassador Seymour M. Finger at a meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the 10th Anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Peoples and Countries.

Having recalled that in less than three decades, 65 former dependent territories, 1/3 of the world's people, have become new independent states, he goes on: "this massive surge of independence took place largely without violence and essentially through voluntary action by the former administering power. There appeared to be a general recognition that colonialism had seen its day and that the independence of colonial territories was not only the right of the peoples in those territories but also was beneficial to the world in general, including the former administering powers."

Looking to the future he admits the existence of a "hard-core" problem in southern Africa, but proceeds: "Nevertheless, we believe that the problems of southern Africa do require more patience -- patience but not resignation. First of all, it is clear that countries outside southern Africa are in general not prepared to wage the major and probably catastrophic war which would be required to dislodge the regimes now in power. Secondly, as odious as the denial of human rights and self-determination in this area is, we do not believe that the situation in Namibia and the Portuguese territories represents a threat to international peace and security. Thirdly, we recall that most of the members of the United Nations became independent through peaceful means and, while such peaceful change remains possible -- however slow it may be -- we are convinced that such peaceful means are in the best interest of everyone concerned.

"Let us not proceed obstinately with tactics of the past -- of repeating year after year resolutions which are known to be ineffectual on the day they are adopted -- of adopting resolutions based on myths such as the red herrings of foreign military bases and foreign economic investment. Such outworn shibboleths cannot substitute for the hard thought we must all give to the solution of the remaining hard-core problems. Though it may appear elementary to say so, it would also be wise not to slander those countries whose cooperation is considered important in achieving the objectives of resolutions

to be adopted. This does not mean that there cannot be legitimate and constructive criticism; indeed, there must be. But it does mean that we should keep our eye on the real problems and act responsibly in terms of the real interests of dependent peoples."

Thus the Ambassador and the government which he represents appear willing to consign millions oppressed by Portuguese colonialism to a further indefinite period of such subjugation while they wait for the processes of peaceful change "however slow".

In fact, the African people of Angola, Mozambique and Guinea have already fought long bitter years of war because the Portuguese met their legitimate demands for self-determination and independence with brutality and violence. The Portuguese now have more than 120,000 soldiers, a network of vicious secret security police (PIDE) and thousands of armed settlers defending their empire in Africa. The U.S. position which insists that peaceful change, however slow, is in the best interests of everyone concerned appears to ignore this completely, as it also ignores the fact that the people of Angola, Mozambique and Guinea have already begun to exercise their right to self-determination. They have chosen to determine the nature of their future by fighting for their freedom now rather than accepting more years of colonial domination.

It is also ironic that the U.S. Ambassador should speak of "resolutions which are known to be ineffectual on the day they are adopted" when it is precisely U.S. refusal to support by word or deed such resolutions that frequently makes them ineffectual.

WHAT THE VOTES MEAN

Demands of time and space limit the extent of this review of expressed U.S. policy: detailed discussion of the reasons underlying particular U.S. positions must be postponed to later papers. This description is confined to what was said, extracting from that record a picture of the predominant characteristics of the U.S. posture of the last decade.

1. The U.S. has consistently adopted a "go slow" attitude which has almost inevitably led it to adopting a 'soft' position vis-a-vis Portugal. This stance has most often been phrased in terms of the American hope for peaceful change instead of a "blood bath". As we have pointed out above, it is the Portuguese determination to maintain their African possessions that invalidates this hope. Yet despite the evidence of eight years of conflict, the U.S. has clung to its original position, and the language has changed very little since Adlai Stevenson spoke at the first Security Council Meeting after the March 1961 rising in Angola. He said then that he felt sure that "Portugal recognizes that it has a solemn obligation to undertake the systematic and rapid improvement of the people of its territories". He also spoke of the need to avoid a Congo situation by "step by step planning" of change. (S.C., March 15, 1961)

Even when the U.S. voted for Resolution 1742 (Jan. 1962) which affirmed the right to "self-determination and independence" and condemned "repressive measures", arguments were raised against the use of "repressive" as "too strong" and "unwarranted",

despite strong evidence of Portuguese violence. Further, the U.S. was unhappy about the inclusion of "independence", arguing that possibly the peoples of the territories would choose to continue a close association with Portugal, thus the U.N. should not pre-judge the issue.

In other debates at that time (Res. 1699, 1962), the U.S. delegate defended Portugal, which was under fire for not complying with the resolutions requiring it to report on its Non-Self-Governing Territories to the Secretary General. The U.S. position was that as Portugal claimed that the status of the Territories was such that the reporting provisions were not applicable, there was no purpose in "singling out Portugal for destructive criticism". It had instituted some reforms...which were not unwelcome...it should be given more time."

This theme of Portuguese reform was echoed by Ambassador Adlai Stevenson at the 1963 Security Council Debates on the Portuguese Territories. Having stressed his belief in peaceful change, he continued, "The core of the problem is the acceptance and the application of the right of self-determination....Mr. Nogueira, the Foreign Minister of Portugal, has contended that the criteria and procedure defined by the United Nations cannot...be considered the only criteria for a valid and real self-determination. I hope that he does not fear that any of us are seeking to deprive Portugal of its proper place in Africa.... Portugal's role in Africa will be ended only if it refuses to collaborate in the great and inevitable changes which are taking place. If it does collaborate, its continuing rôle is assured, and I for one, sitting here, on my own behalf, would like to express with pride the gratitude of my Government for the progress that Portugal is attempting to make to improve the conditions of life among the inhabitants of its territories." (S/PV.1045, 26 July 1963)

2. The U.S. Opposes Sanctions.

Closely linked to this argument that Portugal was amenable to reason and would gradually introduce change peacefully is the consistent U.S. opposition to any form of sanctions, military or economic. (See voting chart) When the Committee of 24 on Decolonization, seeking ways to make effective previous General Assembly and Security Council resolution on the right of the people of the Portuguese territories to self-determination and independence, recommended that the Security Council should make military, economic and other sanctions mandatory, the U.S. opposed the suggestion, strongly preferring to adopt the position that as a result of negotiations in good faith, Portugal would be persuaded to put the provisions of the resolutions into effect.

Two other issues which may help to explain this position of extreme caution must be briefly referred to: the American stand on military involvement with Portugal and its attitude to foreign economic involvement in the Portuguese territories.

3. Military Involvement and the Role of N.A.T.O.

As will be seen from reference to the attached voting record and explanations, the U.S. cast a "No" vote for the first time on December 14, 1962, the crucial issue at that point being the following paragraph of the Resolution (1807). Paragraph 7 called on member states to "refrain forthwith from offering the Portuguese

government any assistance that would enable it to continue its repression of the peoples of the territories under its administration and for this purpose to take all measures to prevent the sale and supply of arms and military equipment to the Portuguese government." The first part of this paragraph was a type of formula that had already twice been accepted by the U.S. Government (Resolution 1699 of 1961, and 1742 of 1962). Only the second section was new, and it met with a very hostile response from the Americans.

Since Res. 1807, much attention has been focused on the continued ability of Portugal to find weapons with which to continue its colonial wars. The attack on countries which supply arms has sharpened over the years, and a spotlight has been thrown on the role of the NATO countries in this respect.

The U.S. has adopted the position that it does not supply arms for use in Africa, and in fact obtains an understanding from the Portuguese government that all military assistance supplied in terms of the NATO alliance will only be used outside Africa. To do more and apply a total arms ban to Portugal would amount to interference in Portugal's internal security.

The main arguments developed by the protagonists of a total (instead of partial) arms and aid ban can be briefly summarized as follows:

i. Arms supplied to Portugal tend to spill over into African territories. Much equipment is borderline in definition: heavy-duty trucks, for instance, can be supplied as trucks, but are easily converted into troop carriers. Most important of all, advice and training are indivisible. A man once trained cannot seriously be expected to forget his knowledge as he steps onto African soil. Yet the U.S., apart from its physical aid to Portugal as a NATO member, also maintains a permanent Advisory Military Mission (M.A.A.G.) in Portugal, and, as recently as February 1969, the Portuguese press reported a visit by the U.S. military attache in Lisbon to Guinea, Angola, and Mozambique.

ii. The Portuguese government now spends more than 45% of the annual national budget on military and security expenditure, primarily for the wars in Africa. Any aid in the form of guns, airplanes, ships or money given for use outside Africa releases resources which it can then devote to prosecuting the war. In November 1968 a new frigate, built in the Portuguese shipyards and 50% U.S. financed under a NATO agreement, was launched in the presence of Ambassador T. Bennett.

The U.S. contention that its military aid to Portugal in no way helps that country in its wars on the African people looks less and less convincing as the years pass, for America appears to be shaping its policy primarily in response to a concern for a stable Portugal which will serve as a friendly ally in the defense of Europe. Secondly, it places much weight on the maintenance of its bases in the Azores -- another reason for remaining on amicable terms with Portugal, despite the cost of such friendship. Thus in 1967, the Portuguese newspaper *Primeiro de Janeiro* (15.4.67) reported a statement made by Robert McNamara before a Committee in Congress: "The amount proposed for U.S. military support for Portugal is justified by the use of Portuguese bases which are of the greatest importance to American interests." In effect, the preservation of these friendly relations and of the military alliance means support for the Portuguese colonial wars.

4. The role of foreign investors in the Portuguese Territories.

The U.S. has totally rejected as untenable the belief held by an increasing number of African, Asian and other countries that the participation of foreign capital in the colonial territories tends to support and strengthen the colonial rulers, and impedes the African people in the realization of their aspirations.

Yet, for example, such companies all join in the profit benefits derived from using cheap African Labor. (In Angola, wages are often as low as \$23 a month for unskilled labor, may reach \$116 a month for skilled workers.

Foreign investors in plantations are a party to the continued land dispossession of the African people.

All corporations pay taxes, including special defense allocations; tax proceeds are used by the Portuguese to fight the colonial wars.

Foreign investors often provide strategic products or foreign exchange which strengthens the Portuguese colonial economy.

American investment in Portugal and the Portuguese territories has grown spectacularly since Portugal relaxed foreign investment controls in 1965, much of this investment concentrating in mineral exploitation. The major oil and petroleum-producing company in Angola, for instance, is a Gulf subsidiary -- 'Cabinda Gulf Oil Co.' which has a 50% profit-sharing arrangement with the Portuguese government. The importance of Gulf to the Portuguese is indicated by the recent statement of Premier Caetano to the Portuguese press that his government's income from Angolan oil in 1969 would be 500,000,000 esc. (\$17 million, appx.) and that oil production would double in the next two years. In fact, Portugal expects to be self-sufficient in oil and petroleum by 1970.

So vital is Gulf Oil that a large contingent of Portuguese troops has been stationed in Cabinda since 1967 to protect the installations, and even Portuguese war communiques admit increasing guerilla pressure in the area in 1968 and early 1969. Thus one giant American corporation depends on the Portuguese colonial army to defend it against the African people.

In effect, the United States is at present supporting Portugal in its attempts to maintain an African empire, despite the rebellion of its subjects in every area and the opposition of most of the world. The U.S. is allied militarily with Portugal; its economic interests in the African territories are growing; and its influence has already prevented meaningful United Nations action to aid the nationalist struggles for freedom.

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- Res. 1514 Declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples.
- Res. 1541 General principles determining obligation of a member state to transmit information re Non-Self-Governing Territories to the Secretary General and definition of such Non-Self-Governing Territories.
- Res. 1542 Decision that Angola, Guinea and Mozambique are non-self-governing territories and there is therefore an obligation on the government of Portugal to submit information to the Secretary General in accordance with Article 73 e of the Charter.
- Res. 1603 Following Angola mass resistance and violent Portuguese repression, called on the Portuguese government to introduce reforms leading to "transfer of all powers to the people of these territories...without any conditions...or distinctions...in order to enable them to enjoy complete independence and freedom."
- Res. 1699 Deplored non-compliance of the Portuguese government with either the Charter or General Assembly resolution 1542. Established Special Committee to collect information. "Requests member-states to deny Portugal any support or assistance which it may use for the suppression of the peoples of its non-self-governing territories."
- Res. 1742 Re-affirmation of the right of the Angolan peoples to self-determination, deplores "repressive measures"; called for reform and for no support and assistance. (similar to 1699)
- * Res. 1807 Reaffirmed peoples' rights, called on Portugal to grant independence and negotiate with political parties for transfer of power. Noting Portugal's non-compliance with previous resolutions and the extensive use of Portuguese military and other forms of repression, calls on member states "to prevent the sale and supply of arms and military equipment to the Portuguese government" that would enable it to continue repression.
- * Res. 1819 Condemned mass extermination in Angola, affirmed self-determination, again called for end of all aid and assistance which might be used for suppression, particularly "to terminate the supply of arms to Portugal". Further requested the "Security Council to take appropriate measures, including sanctions, to secure Portugal's compliance."
- Res. 1913. Similar to and confirming earlier resolutions - called on Security Council to give effect to its own and the General Assembly's resolutions.

- Res. 2105 Broad resolution on colonialism, noted effect of ongoing immigration and simultaneous dispossession of indigenous population--violation of rights. Deplored continued co-operation with Portugal and South Africa, requested all colonial powers to dismantle military bases, re-affirmed the right to self-determination.
- * Res. 2107 Much extended resolution, noting activities of foreign economic interests that acted as an impediment to the African struggle for freedom. Detailed call for sanctions -- including closure of ports and airports to Portuguese transport, and a boycott of all trade. Called on all states and particularly NATO members to stop the supply of arms and military equipment.
- * Res. 2184 Again condemned policy of dispossession, role of foreign economic interests. Called on Security Council to make Res. 2107 sanctions Mandatory.
- Res. 2189 Noted grave consequences of Entente (Portugal, Southern Rhodesia, and South Africa), called on member-states to withhold aid to the Entente, strong stand against role of foreign economic interests.
- Res. 2240 Characterized Portuguese colonial wars as "crime against humanity". Renewed condemnation of foreign economic interests, and called for mandatory Security Council sanctions.
- Res. 2288 Condemned foreign economic exploitation which is impeding the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence. (First time this issue is on General Assembly Agenda as a separate item.)
- Res. 2311 Requests specialized agencies of the U.N. and international institutions to effectively assist the people's struggle and grant no assistance at all to Portugal and South Africa.
- Res. 2395 Re-affirmed rights of colonial people, expressed concern at continued non-compliance of Portugal and continued destructive activities of foreign economic powers. Called on all members to end the supply of arms and aid for the colonial war. (This may be regarded as a 'softened' resolution. It limited the cessation of supply of arms section to "arms and aid for colonial war". It contained no specific sanctions call. Canada, Norway and Sweden all reacted by voting Yes, but the U.S. did not.

Major General Assembly Resolutions affecting Portuguese-held Territories in Africa.

G/Ass. : Date	14 Dec 1960	Dec 1960	15 Dec 1960	20 Apr. 1961	19 Dec 1961	30 Jan 1962	14 Dec 1962	16 Dec 1962	3 Dec 1963	20 Dec 1963	21 Dec 1965	12 Dec 1966	13 Dec 1966	17 Nov 1967	7 Dec 1967	14 Dec 1967	4 Dec 1968
<u>Resolution Number</u>	1514	1541	1542	1603	1699	1742	* 1807	* 1819	1913	2105	* 2107	* 2184	2189	2270	2288	2311	2395
[N] U. S.	Ab	Ab	Ab	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Ab	N	N	N	N	N	Ab	Ab	Ab
[N] U. K.	Ab	Ab	Ab	Ab	Y	Y	N	N	Ab	N	N	N	N	N	Ab	Ab	Ab
[N] France	Ab	Ab	N	Ab	Ab	Ab	N	N	Ab	Ab		Ab	Ab	Ab	Ab	Ab	Ab
[N] Portugal	Ab	N	N		N		N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Spain	Ab	Ab	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Ab	N	N	Y	N	Y		Ab
South Africa	Ab	N	N	N	N	N	N	N		N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
[N] Belgium	Ab	Ab	N	Ab	Y	Y	N	N	Ab	Ab	N	N	Ab	Ab			Ab
Brazil	Y	Y	N	Ab	Y	Y	Ab	Ab	Ab	Ab	N	N	Ab	Ab	Y	Ab	N
[N] Canada	Y	Y	Ab	Y	Y	Y	Ab	N	Ab	Ab	N	N	Ab	Ab	Ab	Ab	Y
[N] Italy	Y	Ab	Ab	Y	Y	Y	Ab	N	Ab	Ab	N	Ab	Ab	Ab	Ab	Ab	Ab
[N] Norway	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Ab	Ab	Y	Ab	Ab	Ab	Ab	Ab	Ab	Ab	Y
Sweden	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Ab	Y	Ab	Ab	Ab	Ab	Ab	Ab	Ab	Y

Analysis of Total Vote for each Resolution as listed

No							7	14	2	6	26	13	7	7	2	2	3
Yes	90						82	57	91	71	66	70	76	82	91	81	85
Abstain	9						13	18	11	2	15	22	20	21	17	18	15

N : denotes Non-voting in N.A.T.C

* Important Resolutions reflecting development of U.N. attitudes to Portuguese rule, see Index.